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G.O.A.L. (Giving Obsessive-compulsives Another Lifestyle) Support Group Description

G.O.A.L. is a support group model for OCD sufferers that was originated by Jonathan Grayson, Ph.D., a psychologist, and Gayle Frankel, an OCD sufferer, in the early 1980's. The group empowers those with OCD to help themselves, as well as to help others with OCD. It is a structured support group model that allows members to support one another, as well as to stay focused on freeing themselves from OCD (or staying healthy). G.O.A.L. empowers and encourages individuals to take active steps in addressing their own OCD. G.O.A.L. is rooted in the principles of Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP).

Main aspects of the G.O.A.L. group: Each meeting is broken into three parts –

- The Question: Leaders pre-select a question or topic related to OCD before each meeting. This helps keep the focus on learning from each other, and on examining one's OCD from different perspectives.
- GOAL Planning: Dr. Grayson refers to this as “the heart of the meeting.” At this point, members break into smaller groups which are led by members who have more experience. Each member, with the support of the other members, chooses a behavioral GOAL to work on before the next meeting. This will, most often, be some form of exposure and response prevention. The focus is positive and is on moving members toward their own objectives with a belief that individuals can help themselves and others.
- Informal Socializing: Socializing with others in the group allows members to build community and trusting relationships. By building these relationships, members connect with others who understand the hard work of fighting OCD, and who they can reach out to for help and support.

Does Everyone Have to Choose a GOAL?: While everyone is encouraged to choose a GOAL, even a very small one, they are not required to. Hopefully, over time, all individuals will come to want to choose a GOAL for themselves. Watching others choose goals and make progress can be very encouraging and motivating, and is likely to create a desire to set a GOAL for oneself.

Who is a G.O.A.L. Group for?: G.O.A.L. is intended for three groups of sufferers –

- Sufferers who are afraid to begin Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) treatment. While ERP is hard work, living with OCD can be tougher. Some sufferers may feel

hesitant, though, to begin treatment. Attending the group can help introduce them to the process and gain confidence that they can undertake treatment.

- Individuals who are in the middle of an ERP treatment program: G.O.A.L. can help solidify what individuals are learning and doing in treatment. It can add an additional dimension to treatment and help support sufferers to persevere in treatment.

- Those who have overcome their OCD : G.O.A.L. can help individuals maintain gains made in treatment and help with relapse prevention. Much like the individual who has gone on a fitness and weight management program, a person who has overcome their OCD must continue to utilize new habits to prevent themselves from slipping back into OCD patterns.

Who Runs the G.O.A.L. Group?: The group is therapist assisted. While I am present at every meeting, and will assist as needed, the goal is for group members to take on a greater role in leading the group as they become more experienced.