

Ideas for *TEMPORARY* accommodations

*Please note that students with OCD may need *time-limited* school accommodations. As students meet their OCD treatment goals and their symptoms improve, school accommodations may be reduced or terminated (depending on the case). It is essential that school accommodations be developed in collaboration with the student, his/her family, and a mental health professional.

Area	Strategy
Assignments/Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra time • Reduced workload • Alternative format (voice dictation software; computer) • Time limit for work • Prorate grade on completed work • Avoid grading work on neatness • Flexible deadlines
Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra time • Alternative format (e.g., oral) • Separate room
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce public speaking • Use taped presentations • Have one-on-one presentation • Pre-arrange calling on the student
Following Direction & Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate reasonable expectations • Have alternatives for avoidant behaviour • Use timer to signal start/end of new task • Use checklist with steps for a task
Note Taking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide prepared notes to highlight • Give a copy of class notes

Area	Strategy
Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prearrange signal system • Have a safe person that the student can go to when struggling with OCD • Have a safe place for the student to calm down
Preferential sitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit in the front (depending on triggers) • Sit in the back

Other classroom strategies and interventions that target the OCD:

- Consider educating the class about OCD if the student and his/her family approve it. Make sure you obtain written consent from the family and carefully plan with the family and a mental health professional what it will be discussed.
- To decrease social isolation:
 - have structured classroom activities to build social relationships.
 - partner the student with empathetic and respectful peers.
 - eliminate teasing or bullying by talking generally and openly about it, discussing diverse scenarios, and building empathy in students.
 - educate all students about diverse disabilities and illnesses.
- With the help of a mental health professional and the student's approval, develop a plan to try not to engage in compulsive behaviour while empathizing with the students' difficulty. Below are some examples:
 - **Reassurance:** When you realize that the student's request for reassurance or repetition is related to OCD, use a nonverbal signal previously discussed in private with the student that indicates that this is an OCD question. Repeat or explain it one more time and after that encourage the student to try his/her best to work on his/her own.
 - **Perfectionism:** If you notice that the student is stuck on a question, cannot complete the work, or keeps erasing it because it has to be "perfect," verbally praise the work the student has accomplished so far and then encourage him/her to move on. When appropriate, you can state one time that the expectation is not for the work to be 100% correct and that "perfection does not exist."

- **"Just right"**: If you notice that the student is excessively erasing, rewriting or crossing out letters/words because these need to be "just right," reinforce the student that his/her work will not be marked on neatness if it's readable.
- **Checking**: When you notice that the student is spending too much time checking his/her work, emphasize the need to move ahead and finish the work. You can also negotiate a strategy to help the student spend less time checking (e.g., the student covers the lines as he/she reads a paragraph or completes a problem).

This handout was based on the following resources:

Websites:

- AnxietyBc: <https://anxietybc.com>
- OCD Education Station: <http://www.ocdeducationstation.org/>
- OCD in Kids from IOCDF: <http://www.ocfoundation.org/ocdinkids/>
- OCD at school from ADAA: <https://www.adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/obsessive-compulsive-disorder/ocd-at-school/hidden-symptoms>

Books:

- Students with OCD: A Handbook for School Personnel (by Adams)
- Teaching Kids with Mental Health and Learning Disorders in the Regular Classroom: How to Recognize, Understand and Help Challenged (and Challenging) Students Succeed (by Cooley)
- Teaching the Tiger: A Handbook for Individuals Involved in the Education of Students with Attention Deficit Disorders, Tourette Syndrome or Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (by Dornbush & Pruitt)

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¹For reference list regarding the section "Facts about OCD," please contact the author.