

Call for Papers – Conference



OCD in Society: Making Sense of a Hidden Illness

Queen Mary University of London

8th June 2019

Affecting up to 3% of the general population, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a debilitating disorder that has been conceptualized either as an anxiety disorder or belonging to an obsessive-compulsive spectrum which includes other mental disorders that share similar symptoms. Psychological studies have favored quantitative approaches to understand OCD and develop appropriate therapeutical approaches. As such, study participants are often given questionnaires with predefined responses. Such procedures do not allow participants to express themselves freely and this can have different implications on our understandings of OCD. Therefore, there is a need to conduct more intimate research *with* and *for* the OCD community *about* their mental health by examining how different meanings about OCD are created, circulated, and regulated in society.

Queen Mary University of London will host a one-day event that hopes to bring together the OCD community, specialized therapists, and academics from the humanities and social sciences (e.g. literature, linguistics, history, philosophy, media and communication studies, sociology, and psychology) who use **qualitative/discourse-based approaches** to look at OCD from different (non-clinical) perspectives.

The event is divided into two parts, each providing a platform to explore different perspectives:

- 1) **SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES:** We will have a roundtable discussing issues surrounding prevention strategies and raising awareness about OCD with Stuart Ralph (*The OCD Stories*), Olivia Bamber (*OCD Action*), and Catherine Banfield (*OCD Advocate*); Psychotherapist Dr Jan van Niekerk presenting a workshop about cognitive behavioral therapy and inference-based therapy; and *The Secret Illness* presenting performances and exposing artwork by OCD sufferers throughout the day.

- 2) **ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE:** Social scientists who are doing qualitative research on OCD will present their work. Dr Olivia Knapton (*King's College London*) will give a keynote lecture on linguistic approaches to OCD narratives followed by **4-6 academics who use qualitative approaches to the study of OCD**. If you would like to be part of the 4-6 academics who will present their work (15-20min presentation with 10min Q&A), please send a **300-word abstract** (references not included in word count) to e.coimbragomes@qmul.ac.uk by **24th March 2019**.

Suitable topics for presentations include, but are not limited to:

- OCD sufferers' language use (e.g. narratives, metaphors, stance-taking, word choice, etc.)
- OCD and self/identity (e.g. identity construction and its intersections with gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, etc.)
- Reflections about the categorization of OCD in mental health manuals (e.g. questioning definitions or sub-types of OCD)
- History of OCD (e.g. different conceptualizations of OCD symptoms through time)
- Representation of OCD in literature, film, or media (e.g. coming out stories, memoirs, news articles, etc.)
- "OCD" and its derivatives (e.g. HOCD, ROCD, POCD, Pure-O, Harm OCD, etc.) as a diagnostic label (e.g. its implications and usefulness for sufferers, therapists, society)
- Reading OCD through critical or social theory (e.g. Marxism, Feminism, Queer Theory, Crip Theory, Mad Theory, etc.)
- OCD and stigma
- OCD and emotions
- OCD and normativity
- OCD and social relationships
- OCD community's/charities' as actors in raising awareness
- Questioning therapeutic assumptions in treating OCD
- Prevention strategies for OCD
- OCD sufferers' access to treatment

For more information, visit <https://ocdinsociety.wixsite.com/home>.