

OCD Action Site Guide

OCD Action is the largest national charity focusing on Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). We provide support and information to anybody affected by OCD, work to raise awareness of the disorder amongst the public and frontline healthcare workers, and strive to secure a better deal for people with OCD.

This section acts as a user-guide for all visitors that frequent www.ocdaction.org.uk.

Our website allows you to set up your own user profile, and seek active support on our forums for OCD related issues. It works well to enable people with similar interests to connect and communicate and ultimately help each other. Below are just some of the features we have:

Profiles

Each member of OCD Action will have their own profile, allowing you to describe yourself in more detail, and personalize your experience on our site. Friends can also post on each other's wall.

Friend Connections

All users can make connections with other members so they can track the activity of others, or filter on only those users they care about the most.

Private Messaging

Private messaging will allow users to talk to each other directly, and in private. Not just limited to one on one discussion, your users can send messages to multiple recipients.

Discussion Forum

All members can freely post discussion topics on our forum and submit support requests for support with our active moderators.

Submit Stories & Creative Posts

As part of the community spirit of OCD Action, we often turn to existing users who may wish to share their own stories with the wider world.

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Navigating Around the Site

One of the key aspects to OCD Action is providing an easy experience for visitors to our site. Whilst we endeavor to make changes to help aid this task, there will be a learning curve for those that have not yet registered, or experienced the site. This section will outline the main areas, and explain essentially what each section does, and how you can interact with it.

The navigation bar

This is a vital aspect of navigating around the site. Moving the mouse over each of the light blue buttons will pop up a menu that allows you to visit other sections of the site. We've tried to ensure that the site is clean and functional – here is a brief summary of each section:

- **Support & Info:** allowing visitors to read more information of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and where they may seek further help.
- **Help Us:** In this section of our website, you can find out about how you can help us through fundraising, donating, becoming a member and volunteering.
- **Health Professionals:** This area focuses on resources to help health professionals support a person affected by OCD.
- **Press & Media:** This is the first port of call for all media agencies requiring details about OCD, or to attain expert commentary information from leading professionals.
- **Community:** The central point from which visitors can interact with other users, or read personal experiences through stories, videos and forum discussion.
- **About OCD Action:** you can find out more about what we do from here, including our strategy, list of trustees, contact details and site policies.

For a more detailed layout of all pages and sections on our site, please refer to the sitemap by clicking on the blue “sitemap” button next to the search bar. At any stage users may also scroll down to the footer where they can navigate to all of the main areas of the site by clicking on the footer links.

Site Policy & Rules

The following factors apply to this site when interacting with other members or posting on our forum:

- While debating and discussion is fine, we will not tolerate rudeness, insulting posts, personal attacks or purposeless inflammatory posts.
- Multiple or repeated posting in order to increase your post count is not allowed.
- Advertising, spamming and trolling is not allowed. This includes using the forum, email, visitor messages, blog comments, picture comments and private message systems to spam other members.
- Bumping posts.
- We also do not allow posts or links to sites that are sexual in nature or that violate community standards.
- Discussion of illegal activities such as software and music piracy and other intellectual property violations are not allowed.
- Each member is allowed one login account. Registering with multiple accounts is not allowed and will be removed.
- While we are quite happy to have constructive comparative conversations about competitor's sites, we do not tolerate advertisements.
- Non-English posts on these forums – or at the very least they must have an English Translation.
- Posts arguing about charity policies are not allowed. Users can fill out a support ticket if they have issue with charity policies, or email us directly and we'll be happy to help.
- Posts discussing moderator actions are also not allowed – at all times we attempt to act as a neutral party, but due to the nature of OCD Action moderators must uphold strict guidelines to ensure that the vast majority of users can browse without exposure to offensive material.
- While these rules cover most common situations, they cannot anticipate everything. Consequently we reserve the right to take any actions we deem appropriate to ensure these forums are not disrupted or abused in any way.
- We also reserve the right to ban anyone who wilfully violates the site rules, as access to our support forums are a privilege and not a right.

Please also refer to our official policy here for further details. At any time, users may report misbehaviour via our forums, or by contacting one of the moderators directly.

Registering as a User

Visitors who have not yet registered can do so at any time, and with the minimum level of fuss. All that is required from you is a few details followed by verification via an 'Activation Link' in an email and you'll be able to join in on forum discussions, befriend others, and create your own profile.

Required Details

We need 4 small pieces of information in order to successfully register you. These are:

1. A username (This is used as your login username when the system prompts you for a username and password to access your profile, or post on a forum. **Once chosen, this cannot be changed**).
2. A nickname (This is what users will see when you post comments, or on the forum etc. This follows Facebook's nickname system, and can be changed at any time).
3. Email Address (Needed to successfully register a user and send notices when Private Messages and other notifications are sent).
4. Password (Required for authentication. This can be changed at any time via your Profile settings, and is encrypted on the database, so personal security is always maintained).

The Process

At the top of the page you'll notice a set of blue buttons sitting directly underneath the OCD Action logo. Unregistered users can simply click on the "Register" button to be forwarded to the registration page. From here, you can fill out the form with a username, nickname, email, and password. Optionally, visitors can type in further details (such as a biography of themselves, their current location and hobbies) which will be transferred to their profile once registration is complete.

Email Verification

Once submitted, a verification email is sent to the email address you supplied when signing up. This is to ensure that spammers do not frequent the site. Within the email is a simple link which you need to click on to authorize on the system.

That's it! You can now log in and join in our community.

Logging In & Out

Like many websites, we use cookies to ensure that users remain logged in when they return to the site, however on occasion you may wish to log in or out of the site. There are 3 ways which users can achieve this.

1. The most common way to log in and out is by using the appropriate buttons situated under the main OCD Action logo. If you're logged out, then you will see "Login", and if you're logged in then this will change to "Log Out".

2. At the footer of the page you'll see a mini list of links to all of the key pages on the site. In here there's a "Users" column that allows users to not only control their login status, but also view their profile and visit user-specific areas of the site.
3. Within the forum section of our site, if you are not logged in then you will see that you cannot reply to a topic unless you are logged in. A link appears at the base of all topics under "Reply" with the notice "you must log in to post".

User Profile

The profile section allows members who have signed up to the site to write a bit more about themselves, and display the latest Wire posts and activities. It is the central point for all users who have registered. It can be reached by clicking on the blue “My Profile” button located beneath the OCD Action logo at the top of the page.

Editing the Profile

Editing the profile is an easy process that enables users to make changes to important aspects of their user area. These may include:

- Your Avatar
- Nickname
- Website
- Location
- Occupation
- Interests

There are also further settings which you can enable/disable such as notifications, and password, but these will be covered later in this guide.

When entering the Profile, the user is presented with their profile page containing information on themselves. The page is divided into 3 columns –the first is **“My Profile”**, which contains a set of links for controlling your profile area. The second column is “choices” where users can choose their action regarding that section, and the last column is the main page with all of the section details.

For example, in order to edit the Location, you can simply click on **“Profile” > “Edit Profile”** and then in the form under Location you can change your current location.

For your avatar, you simply need to click on **“Profile” > “Change Avatar”**. This will present a page containing a large image of your current avatar followed by a second smaller one. You may either delete it to revert to a default avatar graphic, or click on browse and select an image from your drive. You will then be guided to a second section where you need to crop the image in to a square. Once submitted you will be able to see your avatar change immediately.

Status Updates

Users may show their current status in their profile. This allows you the freedom to write a small sentence on your current activities, mood and feelings. In order to submit a status update, you need to ensure that you’re on your Profile page. Within the **“OCD Action Users”** column, and underneath your name, you will see a small link entitled **“Update Your Status”**. If you click on this then a small form will appear allowing you to write a short sentence. This is much like a simple tweet or message that others will see when they visit your profile.

At any time, you may delete your status update by clicking on the **“clear”** link.

The Wire

The wire is our equivalent of Facebook's wall system, or a Twitter's tweet, where users can write on each other's profile to encourage discussion and help drive the community. Only friends and moderators can write on other member wire, so we encourage you to introduce yourself on to the forum and befriend others where needed. Please note that at any time you can also write on your own profile, which is useful for sharing your feelings amongst people you have befriended here.

The Wire page consists of a single form, which expands as you write text. All you need to do is write your message and then click on submit. It will then be posted to the individual's wall. At all times the owner may delete the message if he or she feels it is inappropriate. Users have total control on what is on their Wire.

Adding Friends

One of the key aspects to OCD Action is giving visitors control on their environment and creating a friendly social atmosphere to help those affected by OCD. A big part of this is the ability for users to befriend each other and share stories in a safe and secure manner.

Befriending someone can be a big step, so we encourage all new users to introduce themselves on our forum - other members are always here to give you a helping hand and support. There are currently two ways in which a user can befriend someone:

1. Searching users in the Users Directory (only visible to registered members), and clicking on **“Add Friend”**.
2. Going to a users profile (either directly, or via the forum by clicking on their name/avatar) and clicking on the **“Add Friend”** button underneath their name & status update.

Please note that once a friend request has been sent, the recipient will be sent an email by the system whereupon they can either accept or reject the friendship invitation.

Once friends, you will be able to write on each other's profile and send private messages with ease.

At any stage, you can also cancel friendships with other members. This gives you control at all times. We also encourage all users to report bad behavior to moderators of the site - we'll deal with the matter in accordance to our guidelines.

Private Messages

Once users have joined they are able to message other members on the site. These are private messages sent only to the recipients you have defined. This can be useful for support group leaders who wish to mail a range of people regarding a meeting, or for individuals who wish to chat with other members privately.

If at any time you feel that a user on the site is sending you inappropriate messages, then please report this to one of our site admins/moderators and we'll be happy to investigate the problem. Also in the near future users will have the option to totally ignore members should they cause a problem.

As with friends, there are a number of ways you can send a message to another member.

1. Logged in users will notice that when they use the forum that each post has a user avatar followed by their username. Underneath this is a small blue button marked **"Send Message"**, which transports you to the message page with their name already inserted in to the **"Send to"** box.
2. If you click on **"My Profile"** under the OCD Action logo, you'll be transported to your profile. From here you can click on the **"Messages">"Compose"** to be shown the composition page. In the subsequent form you can type in the recipient, subject and message. Finally click on **"Send"** to send the message.
3. The final method of messaging someone is to view their profile and click on the **"Send Message"** button above their Basic Information section. As with method 1. You will be transported to the composition page with the users name already in the **"Send To"** box.

Editing Settings and Notifications

In order to ensure that you have complete control over your account, we have included two sections that allow you to change the way in which you work with your account. These are:

1. Settings – for changing your password
2. Notifications – for complete control on when you are notified about messages, notices and posts.

General

This is a form that allows you to alter your password. When signing up the system you may have used a password that is temporary, or may frequently change your password over time. This is all carried out using this page. Simply input the new password twice and it will change with immediate effect.

If at any stage you have lost your password, then you can retrieve it by going to <http://www.ocdaction.org.uk/wp-login.php?action=lostpassword> and typing in either your username or email.

Notifications

The notifications page contains all of the communications between our site and your email. If at any time you would not like to receive notifications for various features on our site then you can disable them on this page. The page is divided in sections, with YES and NO columns.

- Profile
 - A member posts on your wire

- Messages
 - A member sends you a new message
 - A new site notice is posted
- Friends
 - A member sends you a friendship request
 - A member accepts your friendship request

Other options may appear as features are added to the site, but essentially all users' need to do is define exactly when they wish to be contacted depending on activities upon the site.

The Forum

One of the most visited sections on the site is the forum. From here, users can post support and will find that other members are supportive to each other's needs. Because of the nature of this site, we have moderators who keep an eye on the forums at all times, and any reported behavior will be dealt with swiftly!

If at any time you have any concern regarding a post then please notify us and we will be happy to investigate for you. This will be described in further detail later in this guide under "Reporting Abuse".

What are forums, topics and posts?

A forum consists of a tree like directory structure containing at the lowest end **topics** (commonly called threads) and inside them **posts**. Logically forums are organised into a finite set of generic topics (usually with one main topic) driven and updated by other members, and governed by a group known as moderators. In order to help understand how the forum works, this following general rule of thumb can be applied:

- A post represents 1 individual post written by a user to a given topic.
- A topic can be started by anyone, and is made up of a collection of posts – it is always part of a forum.
- A forum represents a particular subject area such as General Discussion, Support Groups etc.

As soon as a user registers they are free to post topics and reply to threads by simply going to our forums page (<http://www.ocdaction.org.uk/forums/>). The page is divided in to two main sections, with the forum listings in the upper section, followed by the latest discussions listed underneath. Users can click on any of the forum sections to read their respective topics.

Getting Started

As with many forum sites, there may be a slight learning curve when using some of the features on this site, however this section will concentrate on tackling some of these functions to help you get started. When you click on a forum section such as "**Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)**", you'll be presented with a page that resembled most other forum sites, with a Section title, followed by a table of topics that other users have posted.

Just below the title, you will be presented with a set of numbers (representing pages) which allow you to navigate the pages to view older topics. On the left-hand side is a button that is used to post a new topic. If you are logged in then clicking on it will forward you to the "**New Topic**" form where you can type your message, otherwise you will be sent to a login screen and required to input your username and password before progressing.

As a logged in individual, you may also notice an extra button entitled "**Update all topics read**". When you log on and off, you'll notice that new posts/topics are bold, however if you wish to reset this then you can do so by clicking on this button to reset all bold formatting, and mark all topics as read.

Below is a set of glossary terms that may come in handy for the forum.

- **“Stickies”** - These are topics which are promoted to the top of the Forum section. These are denoted by the orange link colour and star icon. These stickies are typically for moderators and admins who wish to announce news or notify other users of changes.
- **Hot Topics** -These are represented by small stars next to the topic title, and essentially let user know that the topic is popular with other members.
- **Support Question** – At any time, users can submit a support question whenever they are in need of help. These are denoted by a small, yellow person symbol next to the topic title.
- **Locked Topics** – on very rare occasions the moderators or admins may have to lock a topic for breaking site & forum rules. This is usually denoted by a red cross next to the topic title. If in doubt, please refer to our site policy for official rules on using the forum.

Tags

Tags are used in forums to quickly get an idea of the most popular topics available, and are based on keywords users can type in when they post a topic. When entering the forum, you should see on the right-hand side of the page a section entitled **“Hot Tags”**. This is a cloud of tags, where popular tags are written in the biggest font-size, with lesser topics in smaller sizes. Clicking on these links will take you to another section displaying all topics that contain that tag. So for instance if you were interested in finding more on **“medication”**, then clicking on the medication tab will show you a list of topics that use the tag **“medication”**.

Searching the Forum

At any time users can search the forum for topics they wish to refer to. This may help those that want to check for symptoms, or search for answers to pre-defined questions. As with tags, on the right-hand side of the page you will see a section marked **“Forum Topic Search”** when you are in the forum section. All you need to do is type in the search term and see if results come back.

Submitting a new topic

There are numerous ways in which users can post to the forum. Each is done via a simple form box that allows basic formatting such as **bold**, *italic* etc.

1. If you wish to write a post as quickly as possible, then you can do so by going to the forums main page, and simply clicking on the blue **“Add Topic”** link in the Topics column within the Latest Discussions section. Please note that using this method requires you to select a Forum category.
2. The second main method is to navigate to a Forum section ([Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder \(OCD\)](#), [Advocacy](#), [Related OCD Spectrum Disorders](#) etc.) and simply click on the **“Post New Topic”**, or scroll down to the bottom of the section to be shown the post form.

The post form itself has a couple of extra features to help shape your topic/reply.

- **Title:** Set the title of your given topic.

- This topic is: which allows you to designate the post as a support question.
- Post: This is where you type in your content. Above the form is a selection of formatting options such as bold, italic, underline etc. and a selection of smiley faces.
- Tags: This is where you can designate tags which help to categorise the topic, and show up within the tag cloud on the right-hand side of the forum section.

Once you are happy with the way the message looks, then you can simply submit it to the forum.

Replying to a topic

There are a number of ways users can reply to a particular topic. If you happen to be on the front page of the forum area, then you need to click on a topic. A topic is made up of numerous posts, usually from different users. By scrolling to the bottom of the topic, a “Reply” form will appear with formatting options (as with submitting a new topic).

If you are not logged in, then the message “please log in” will appear.

Moderators

It is very important for users to feel safe when using the forum, and whilst we maintain a good level of spirit with things there are sometimes individuals who make break site policy and cause trouble. To help with this, OCD Action use moderators and admins to ban topics that go against forum policy. As of writing the moderators are as follows:

ADMINS & KEYMASTERS

- Joel
- Caps
- Sysop

MODERATORS

- Bluefreddy678
- Soxon
- Christiano22

If at any time you require assistance from one of our moderators/admins then please feel free to message us and we’ll help as much as possible. The forum also has a few tools at hand to ensure that any bad behavior can be reported. This will be explained a little later in this guide.

The duties of a moderator are as follows:

1. Transparently observe the latest posts made to the site & forum, and edit/move topics where needed.
2. Log read posts on the system for other moderators.
3. Check user submitted reports for any suspicious activities. Resolve any outstanding issues.

4. Give warnings, and (if appropriate) ban users that break the site policy.
5. Help and advice other users where appropriate.

Submitting a Support Request

A key aspect to using the forum is being able to post support questions. A support request is when a user needs help answering a question they may have, or have an urgent issue that's related to OCD. Support requests are denoted by small yellow icons (with a miniature individual) situated to the left-hand side of the topic title. These let admins and moderators know that a question has been raised and is in need of answering. Other users are also encouraged to help answer support questions and share their own thoughts.

If you wish to submit a support request, then all you need to do is start a new topic on the forum (either by clicking on the **"add new"** link, or by going in to a forum section and clicking on the **"Post New Topic"** button). Once you are presented with the submission form, you will see under the **"Title"** a drop-down box with the label **"This topic is:"** and **"Not a support question"** selected. By default this is the selected option, however you can click on the drop-down and choose an alternate option. To request support, simply select **"A support question"**. Once you have typed in your message it will be marked accordingly, and a moderator or admin should help resolve the issue.

Reporting Bad Behaviour

OCD Action always have moderators and admins monitoring the site to ensure a smooth running process for all members, but sometimes there are one or two situations where we need to take action against topics or behaviour that break the site policy.

As explained previously in the guide, every forum topic is made up of a collection of posts. A post can be submitted by any user. If you look at any post, you should a link at the bottom entitled **"Report"** which acts as a panic button if you feel a user has written something that breaks our policy. Users are encouraged to click on the link where needed, as moderators will check the reports on a regular basis and act accordingly.

Submitting Stories & Creative Community

We often get people sending us poems, stories, books, art and a whole range of creative and inspirational work. For many people, being creative is an excellent way to express their feeling about OCD and how it impacts on their lives. We invite you to submit your own creative work and share it with a wider audience.

If you are interested in sending us something then please don't hesitate to do so. At the moment this feature only supports basic words, but in the near future we're rolling out a new version that allows you to run your own blog with videos, images and of course text.

There are currently 2 ways to submit a story.

1. On the front page, simply head for the "Recent Creative Posts" section which is on the right-hand side of the screen underneath the "Research Centre" box. You'll see a list of the latest posts made by our users, and a link at the bottom marked "Submit a Creative Post".
2. The second method is to simply head for our menu. Under the "Community" section is a button entitled "Creative Community", which also takes you to the submission page.

Upon entering the section, you'll be presented with a small introductory text, followed by a form for typing in your story. Upon Pressing the submit button our editors will take a look at the copy and publish the material accordingly.

Reporting Technical Errors

If you find a page contains a bug or error, then please feel free to message Sysop (short-hand for System Operator) via the messaging system. This can be done by going to your Profile, selecting **“Messages > Compose”** and typing **“Sysop”** in the **“Send to”** box.

Once submitted, Sysop will try to help resolve bugs. An entirely new version of the site will be due out shortly that should resolve a few current issues.

If you have any general questions, the please feel free to contact us at: support@ocdaction.org.uk