

# Understanding Intrusive Thoughts for Teens and Parents

## What Are Intrusive Thoughts?

Intrusive thoughts are unwanted, involuntary thoughts, images, or urges that can pop into the mind unexpectedly. They can be distressing or confusing, often involving themes that feel disturbing or out of character. It's important to understand that having these thoughts does not mean a person wants to act on them.

## Why Do Teens Experience Intrusive Thoughts?

Teens may experience intrusive thoughts due to stress, anxiety, or underlying mental health conditions. These thoughts can be repetitive and cause significant distress, but they are a common experience and can be managed with the right support.

## How Can Parents Help?

- Listen without judgment and reassure your teen that intrusive thoughts are common and not their fault.
- Encourage open communication about their feelings and thoughts.
- Help them develop coping strategies such as mindfulness, distraction techniques, or grounding exercises.
- Seek professional help if intrusive thoughts become overwhelming or interfere with daily life.

## Where to Get Help in the North of England

- **YoungMinds:** Offers resources and support for young people and parents.
- **Kooth:** Free online mental health support for young people.
- **Mind:** Provides mental health information and local support services.
- **Childline:** Confidential helpline for children and teens.
- **Samaritans:** 24/7 support for anyone in distress.
- **NHS Mental Health Services:** Local NHS services for mental health support.
- **The Mix:** Support for under 25s with mental health and wellbeing.

## Helpful YouTube Videos

- "Teens Struggling with Intrusive Thoughts" - Explains what intrusive thoughts are and how to manage them.
- "Reframing Unhelpful Thoughts" (NHS Every Mind Matters) - Practical tips on challenging negative thoughts.
- "How I Deal With Intrusive Thoughts" (YoungMinds) - Personal story and coping strategies.

- "OCD Videos for Parents and Carers" (Nip in the Bud) - Understanding intrusive thoughts related to OCD.

If you or your teen are struggling with intrusive thoughts, remember that support is available and you are not alone.