#### N000

## A Dragon Differential Diagnosis

Compulsions, Tics, or Stims! Oh My! Know the Difference To Direct More Effective Treatment

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## CASE #1

Smaug is sick, we sees him, all day, all night, inside the caves with his treasuressss he issss. Must have OCDs he has, yesss. Moving the stonessss and we sees him touching them, stroking them, he goes on and on and on he does, not leaving them alone everssss.



## What is Smaug's Diagnosis?

### CLARIFYING QUESTIONS ABOUT REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS....

## What does it feel like for you?

What would it be like if you were forced to stop?

#### IT'S TRICKSY

If you were able to stop, would you miss it? Who is most bothered by the behavior? You or other people?

What does this behavior do for you?



I see that Arkenstone and dread comes over me. IF I don't have it facing just right, something terrible will happen. Maybe my friend drogon will die. Then I have to fix the other gems. If I touch one side, I must touch the other side the same way. If I don't, I might be stuck with this 'not right' feeling forever. I want to stop, I just can't."

# OCD ANSWERS TO CLARIFYING

IT FEELS LIKE OVERPOWERING DREAD! I FEEL TRAPPED!

IF I DIDN'T DO IT, I WOULD FEEL NOT RIGHT FOREVER! IF I STOPPED, WOULD I MISS IT? What the F\* kind Of question is That? I DON'T KNOW HOW ELSE TO MAKE THESE THOUGHTS GO AWAY.

I FEEL TRAPPED ALONE WITH MY THOUGHTS. Smeagol can't see How much it plagues me.

#### OCD LOOK-A-LIKES

I am fire! am death!

That is an Iguana!



ASHAMED; THAT IS GROSS NEGLIGENCE!"

# OCPD ANSWERS TO CLARIFYING

I FEEL GREAT! MALEFICENT IS A SLOB.

> MISS IT? WHAT THE F\* KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT?

NO ONE CAN ACCUSE ME OF SHODDY PILLAGING. I FEEL COMPLETED AND ACCOMPLISHED.

I'M NOT BOTHERED! I'M ONLY HERE CAUSE SMEAGOL AND MALEFICENT KEEP GETTING UPSET.

IF I STOPPED, IT wouldn't be Right!



perfectionism

intense delayed gratification

preoccupation with orderliness/detail

BOTH

need for control

bothers people around them

Dread/Fear/Disgust Dread/fear

> preoccupation with neutralizing intrusive fears

> > hidden

stop

Core Fear

source of selfesteem

> may be egosyntonic/source of pride

Rules for reacting to the world often ashamed intense selfcriticism

Urgency Wish they could

OCPD VS OCD

## TREATMENT STRATEGIES FOR OCPD VS OCD



#### https://www.ocpd.org/

 May supplement exposure and cognitive work with acceptance and commitment therapy and compassion focused therapy.

> increase openness and mental flexibility Challenge perfectionistic rigid thinking Increase distress tolerance

May need to work on willingness, flexibility, and values prior to engaging in exposures.
Often including family members is beneficial



"When the outside world overwhelms me, I can escape to my treasure pile and research my artifacts and find new ways to arrange them! Species of origin, chronology, material composition, so many options. I like to create new systems. This helps me recharge. When I have to go out and talk with other dragons, it's really a drain .... unless I find a dragon who wants to talk about Elven artifacts from the elder days, before valar was driven from arda! Then, I could go on forever, and wonder 'where did all that time go?"

> Special Interest

# AUTISTIC ANSWERS TO CLARIFYING

I FEEL REJUVENATED WHEN I GET TO SPEND TIME ORGANIZING MY TREASURE.

IT WOULD BE TERRIBLE IF I WAS FORCED TO STOP! Yes, I WOULD MISS ORGANIZING MY TREASURE; IT BRINGS ME COMFORT. IT HELPS ME RECHARGE AND I ENJOY IT.

I don't Know! I don't know what you want me to say! IT SEEMS TO BOTHER OTHERS MORE THAN ME. I'M HERE CAUSE SMEAGOL COMPLAINED ABOUT IT. I'M FINE HONESTLY.



Experience greater distress and dysregulation if forced to stop

Repetitive behaviors (stimming, routines, special interests) are emotionally regulating

Differences in socialization and communication Difficulty tolerating uncertainty

BOTH

Heightened sensitivity to sensory stimuli

> Repetitive behaviors

Wish they could stop

#### Repetitive behaviors are fear-driven

preoccupation with neutralizing intrusive fears

Monotropic attention style

## Autism vs OCD

#### **HOW TREATMENT DIFFERS:**

We collaborate with Smaug to find ways to do more of what is regulating for his nervous system (organizing his treasure), while balancing this with the needs of family members and friends.

We help Smaug decide which situations he wants to mask in, while also finding safe environments and other dragons with whom he can be authentically autistic and unmasked.

Treating Smaug's treasure organizing and artifact research as an OCD compulsion when really it is an autistic special interest can heighten an internalized sense of brokenness/wrongness and increase emotional dysregulation.

Before I knew I was autistic, my first therapist told my family to discourage my treasure sorting and elven artifact collecting and I really felt ashamed of it.

Fortunately after my autism diagnosis, I Smeagol found a neurodiversityaffirming therapist for me who understood the difference between an autistic special interest and an OCD compulsion. I enjoy sorting treasure and it regulates me emotionally. I understand that Smeagol isn't interesting in treasure the same way that I am and that's ok. I balance my need to spend time with my treasure with doing something Smeagol likes too, like murdering hobbits because keeping Smeagol as a friend is important to me.

### NEURODIVERSITY AFFIRMING OCD TREATMENT

### HOARDING

Don't come inside Drogon! I'm really sick..

"At first I feel a rush of excitement when I find a new elven artifact. I can't leave it. I have to bring it back but I have no space for it. drogon tries to come over but I make excuses why he can't come inside...I'm too ashamed. Bilbo urged me to donate things but the thought of losing a single piece forever just

overwhelms me with grief. What if I regret it later

## Hoarding Answers to Clarifying questions....

IT FEELS EXCITING WHEN I GET A NEW ARTIFACT BUT THEN I GET HOME AND HAVE NOWHERE FOR IT.

> IF SOMEONE MAKES ME STOP I GET SO ANGRY.

IF SOMEONE TRIED TO MAKE ME THROW THINGS AWAY, I COULDN'T STAND THE GRIEF AND PAIN. I feel alive when I find a new treasure.

IT SEEMS TO BOTHER OTHERS MORE THAN ME. MOSTLY ITS EMBARRASSING. Hoarding

Enjoy acquiring

Poor impulse control

fear of wastefulness or loss of sentimental value

Items have intense meaning

Disorganization

Attention difficulties

may anthropomorphize objects

BOTH

Hidden behaviors often ashamed

Distress upon // threatened discarding of objects OCD

preoccupation with neutralizing intrusive fears

> Not an impulse control disorder

> > Executive Dysfunction Only when in OCD Cycle

## HOARDING VS OCD

## HOARDING

# Breaking News

WHILE SPRING CLEANING, LOCAL SHIRE RESIDENT DONATES OLD RING BELIEVED TO BE WORTHLESS TRINKET, LATER TO DISCOVER THAT HE HAS DOOMED MIDDLE-EARTH TO TOTAL ANNIHILATION BY EVIL LORD.

REGRETS DECISION FOREVER, CRUSHED UNDER THE WEIGHT OF HIS OWN GUILT. "If only I hadn't given the ring away!"

## "TYPICAL" DRAGON BEHAVIOR

"I love showing off my elven artifacts to my friend drogon. I like to carefully plan out how I can trade certain things out for new things to enhance my collection." Hurry inside! I want to show you my new collection of mithril armor!

### DRAGONS OF A DIFFERENT COLOR... Sociocultural Biases

Diagnosis and care should be individually tailored considering sociocultural variables.

Persons of color (POC) were not represented proportionally in large landmark studies.

Cultural differences in cleaning, grooming, and related attitudes should also be considered. This also affects the validity of several self-report measures such as that for African Americans with OCD.

# DAWN'S MUM

# **CASE #2**

#### **OVERLAPPING PRESENTATIONS**

Obsessive

Autistic

Compulsiv Tourettes Syndrome

Clarifying questions to help us prioritize and provide best treatments Autoimmune Neuropsychia tric Disorder Associated with Streptococcal Infections

Pediatric

Medical Psychological Familial Sensory Environmental/

### CLARIFYING QUESTIONS ABOUT REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS....

When did this start and when does it occur during the day?

> Any recent upper respiratory infections or other illnesses?

What does this behavior do for you?

Who notices this behavior?

What precipitates it and what stops it?

# **TOURETTE'S**

Mother Dragon: "We're flying along to visit Hiccup and Astrid and she twitches her left wing so hard she veers off into a circle, sometimes a few times, and she's flying along again just fine."

Baby Dragon: "I feel an urge building in my left wing and when I twitch it several times, it goes away for a while, but then it comes back. Sometimes the feeling builds up in my throat and I have to grunt and puff out fire at the most embarrassing times! I try to hide it but people still notice. I wish it would go away."

#### Tourette's Answers to Clarifying Questions....

It started when she was 5 years old and definitely gets better and worse at times.

If we say something about it, it definitely gets worse.

No, she hasn't been sick lately.

I can only stop it for so long and then I have to do it even more!

Sometimes, I think she can hide it for a while and then she starts doing it a lot when we get back to the cave.

#### **Tourettes**





Gradual onset

involuntary movements (motor and vocal)

Can suppress movements for short time

Urge or sensory feeling before tic

Triggers for tic exacerbation

Can be benign or interfering

overlapping neural circuitry repetitive

**Emotional Lability** 

Milestones are intact

Avg age of onset around 10yrs

Theme varies

commonly be comorbid

Intrusive thoughts

## TOURETTE'S VS OCD

#### **Tourettes**



CBIT - focused treatment for tics Detailed Medical History

Identify triggers and any muscle injuries

Education and Family Support CBT with ERP, Supportive Therapy, Skill building

Understanding OCD Cycle

Guanfacine, Clonidine, Aripiprazole, Risperidone,

School Communication

SSRIs/SNRIs

TOURETTE'S VS OCD



Mother: She gets the zoomies whenever we meet a new dragon. She races around and around in a circle and flaps her wings excitedly and makes these weird cute little noises.

Baby Dragon: "It gets my energy out when I'm nervous or excited. I feel better afterwards."

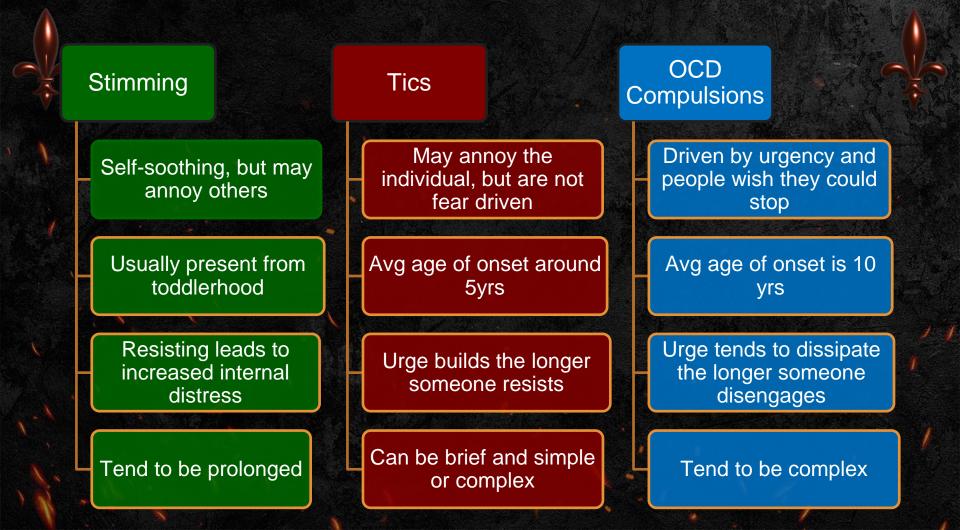
#### AUTISTIC STIMMING ANSWERS TO CLARIFYING QUESTIONS....

I think she's always done it since she was a little hatchling. Before she could fly even, she would flap her wings over and over.

> When she gets excited or frustrated or scared, she definitely flaps more.

No, she hasn't been sick lately.

It's like my body just needs to do it! When I'm excited or I'm upset, it helps me.



#### Stimming



#### OCD Compulsions

- Collaborate with an individual to help them do more of what is regulating for their body, find alternatives to stims that cause harm, and decide when they want to mask/suppress their stims in order to meet their needs.
- No meds for this.
- Family Accommodations

- CBIT (has HRT)
- CoPs (O'Conner/Leclerc)
- Psychoeducation
- Evaluation (neurologist)
- Physical Therapy (injury)
- Guanfacine
- Clonidine
- Aripiprazole
- Risperidone

- CBT/ERP/ACT
- I-CBT\*
- SPACE
- SSRIs/SNRIs, clomipramine
- Aripiprazole, Risperidone, Memantine, and Riluzole augmentation

DIFFERENT TREATMENT APPROACHES

## **PANDAS/PANS**

My little baby won't eat and she's so agitated. She was flying around just fine and now it's like she doesn't remember how to fly and she's wetting nest again. It just came on overnight all of a sudden.

Now that you mention it, she did have this terrible cough and her little body was just burning up with fever about 5 weeks ago, but she got completely better from that.

#### PANDAS/PANS ANSWERS TO CLARIFYING QUESTIONS....

It came on abruptly after she got over being sick.

The compulsive behaviors are new and her anger is really intense.

I think she has been sick lately or her sister was ill last week. If we ask her to do her schoolwork, she gets really upset and sometimes she doesn't know how to do it.

I feel really anxious all the time and my thoughts keep coming. They don't stop.

Antibody levels to streptolysin O and DNase B remain elevated for several months after an acute infection.

PANDAS PHYSICIANS NETWORK A Division of THE FOUNDATION FOR BRAIN SCIENCE AND IMMUNOLOGY

## PANDAS OR PANS

PEDIATRIC AUTOIMMUNE NEUROPSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS ASSOCIATED WITH STREPTOCOCCAL INFECTIONS

- Autoimmune syndrome in which antibodies to strep attack the nervous system
- Acute and dramatic onset of symptoms in young children
- Often demonstrate severe behavioral regression, food restriction, tics, aggression, enuresis, motor abnormalities
- Treatment can include short term antibiotics for infection (3-4 wks) (only consider long term in select severe recurrent cases)
  Corticosteroids, NSAIDs (naproxen)

# CASE#3

"Andarna spends hours at the lake washing. I don't know what she's doing. She won't tell me. And the teachers say she's not focusing in class. Her grades are getting worse."



# **ANDARNA'S FATHER**

### CLARIFYING QUESTIONS ....

When your mind wanders at school, what is it wandering to mostly?

What's happening for you at the lake?

What does it feel

like?

What does this behavior do for you?

What precipitates it?

"The pandemic of dragonpox is getting better but I need to make sure I survive. I have to clean myself properly otherwise I risk getting Tairn and Sgaeyl sick. I wash my body symmetrically and then I wash between my claws 10 times but when I get out of the lake, I still feel unclean so I have to get back in. It's distracting in school when someone coughs or sneezes and I wonder if that's it for me!"



# **BFRBS (BODY FOCUSED REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS)**

The scale pimples that came with hitting puberty were NOT pretty. So, at first, it was just I wanted to look good and pick off the uneven scales. Then, I would just get in the zone, finding the spots that aren't the right texture and where my scales aren't in the right orientation. I get carried away at the lake picking off the softer pubic scales. I think it's actually making my scales look worse now but I can't stop. I even do it at school sometimes and it distracts me.

Sometimes I'm picking without even thinking about it and sometimes it is on my mind, I can't wait to get back to the lake.

> I feel some relief when I pick off my scale but then afterwards I feel really ashamed and regret it.

### BFRB (BODY-FOCUSED REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS) ANSWERS ....

If my scale feels uneven, I just can't leave it that way. I need it to be smooth so I pick it off, but that makes it even more bumpy.



May get some pleasure/relief from picking/pulling

Driven by need for evenness, need to relieve tension, or pleasurable sensation Feel like they can't stop

BO

Often exacerbated by stress/anxiety/boredom

Triggered by boredom & sedentary activities

Time consuming

Compulsions are not enjoyable

OCD

Repetitive behaviors are fear-driven

preoccupation with neutralizing intrusive fears

May have an addictive quality May dissociate during the behavior

BFRBs vs OCD





<u>OCD</u>

Exposure to Triggers

Avoid Triggers gloves, vaseline, hat..

Habit reversal training Decoupling

Glutamatergic strategies are first-line N-acetyl Cysteine Riluzole Naltrexone

Antipsychotics alone

CBT

Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Antipsychotic & memantine augmentation

TCA (clomipramine) ERP and I-CBT

Serotonergic strategies are first-line

# Treatment Strategies

# ADHD

I went to take a bath and a met this turtle named Crush and he told me about this fish named Nemo and we had to find Nemo! Oh my gosh, there was this whale! Dory was teaching me to speak Whale. Did you know that whales are mammals and they're almost as big as dragons, but they eat the tiniest foods called plankton, except killer whales, they eat seals and I met Marlin and went to Sydney and that's why I didn't actually bathe. I meant to take a bath, but I got lost.

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### ADHD ANSWERS ....

It feels kinda random what my mind wanders to in school...

There's just

so many

interesting

creatures at

the lake, it's

hard to focus

on bathing.

You went to take a bath **THREE DAYS AGO!!** You came back even more a mess!

It feels exciting meeting new creatures but... later I feel so frustrated and ashamed when my dad, my teacher, everyone is so mad at me...

Just anything that interests me can take me away from what I'm supposed to be doing.

#### ADHD



Symptoms present from birth though may go unrecognized

Mind wanders randomly

Stimulant medication is first-line

Easily bored novelty seeking

Impulsive

Difficulty Focusing

Collateral reports from teachers are helpful Gradual onset

OCI

Mind wanders to fears/doubts

SSRIs are first-line

ADHD VS OCD

What people think stimulants are like for ADHD with tics and OCD ....

#### What stimulants are actually like...

Methylphenidate Amphetamine/dextroamphetamine

Methylphenidate Amphetamine/dextroamphetamine

VS

MUSHU'S MOM

I'm not eating that mom!

"He's gotten so picky about what he eats and he's losing weight. He just says it tastes funny and he doesn't want to get sick."

Wise choice, you don't know where I've been...

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# **CASE #4**

### CLARIFYING QUESTIONS ....

If you had to eat it, what would it be like for you?

# What are you afraid will happen?

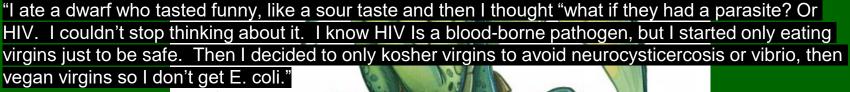
What does it feel

like?

What does this behavior do for you?

What precipitates it?





OCD

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### OCD ANSWERS....

If I ate it, I'd be terrified that I would get sick.

> I feel scared that anything might be contaminated.

Sometimes I get triggered if I read a story about someone getting sick or a food has a funny taste.

### HEALTH ANXIETY VS OCD TREATMENT

#### Illness Anxiety Disorder (Health Anxiety)

Psychoeducation on anxiety sensitivity Identifying catastrophization of sensations Normalization of body sensations/experiences Interoceptive Exposures

#### **Health Focused OCD**

ERP

Interoceptive/In-Vivo/Imaginal Exposures Response Prevention for Reassurance Seeking I-CBT, ACT, Etc. SPACE

ARFID (AVOIDANT-RESTRICTIVE FOOD INTAKE DISORDER)

Nope, we're all extremely hairy people.

Ugh, I hate the

hairy ones? Do

you have any

bald friends?

ARFID (avoiding Restrictive Food Intake Disorder) Transcript: "I can't stand the hairy ones. I have pieces of hair or clothes caught in my teeth, and it doesn't feel right. I don't eat anything with clothes or hair anymore. Can't stand things with scales either. I don't want to risk gagging and vomiting so I only feel safe eating bald, naked dwarves from a specific clan that I trust."

## ARFID (AVOIDANT RESTRICTIVE FOOD INTAKE DISORDER) ANSWERS....

If dad makes me eat it, it's gross, disgusting, I want to vomit.

I don't want to feel grossed out so I only feel safe eating hairless dwarves from clan Ironfist. Sometimes, I just don't feel hungry or thirsty.

I don't want to feel the hair in my throat and choke or vomit.



OCD

Sensory-based avoidance

Fear of adverse feeding reaction: Choking Vomiting GI discomfort Difficulty eating new foods

BOTH

Nutritional Deficiency Fear of getting ill/sick

May need to check food labels obsessively

Lack of interest in food

Fear associated with eating

May compulsively research food safety

# ARFID vs OCD



#### Anorexia

Sensory-based avoidance

> Limited range of foods

BOTH

Fear of adverse feeding reaction: Choking Vomiting GI discomfort

Nutritional Deficiency May compulsively: Exercise Count calories Abusive laxatives

Fear of gaining weight

Check weight

Lack of interest in food

Fear associated with eating

Distorted body image

## ARFID vs Anorexia

### ARFID TREATMENT

CBT-AR (ARFID-Specific CBT)

Medical Treatment could include: Gastroenterology Dietitian OT (Occupational Therapy Speech-Language Pathology (SLPs)

COULD YOU STOP? I HATE IT WHEN MY FOOD TOUCHES.

HILARY B. PRICE



My dad had a heart attack and I decided to eat healthier. No more red meat like dwarves, just fish. But then I learned about high levels of mercury in fish so I stopped eating fish. I was eating only chicken, but then I found out about how many farmers use hormones and antibiotics so I only eat wild turkey now.



Focus on purity or healthiness of food

Orthorexia

\_imited range of foods

BOT

May compulsively: Read labels Research source of food Research processing of food Avoid food groups (carbs)

Fear of getting sick

Nutritional Deficiency

May criticize other people's eating habits

ear associated with eating

Intrusive Fears Vary in Content

OCD

More Variety of Compulsions

More reassurance seeking

# Orthorexia vs OCD

"Simply Having the most impressive hoard in Middle earth does NOT make me a hoarder!"

> BASE DIAGNOSIS ON PATIENT'S INTERNAL EXPERIENCE, NOT JUST THEIR EXTERNAL BEHAVIOR!

Dragon Differential Diagnosis for Restrictive/Repetitive Behaviors

# CONTACT US! OR ELSE.....

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### RESOURCES

#### https://www.bfrb.org

#### https://tourette.org/

https://neurodivergentinsights.com/

https://pandasnetwork.org/

https://www.youtube.com/@stacygreetermd

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