

The reflective function in obsessive-compulsive disorder

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Abstract

Psychoanalytic approaches to obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) are often considered irrelevant, contraindicated, or primarily supportive, and no psychodynamic treatments aimed specifically at OCD currently exist. Psychoanalysis still has much to contribute to the area, notwithstanding the evidence supporting a biological basis to the condition. One of the potential areas of contribution concerns the role of reflective functioning. This article traces central theoretical conceptualisations of the reflective function in OCD and discusses areas which may benefit from further investigation. In so doing, the value of continued psychoanalytic engagement with the conceptualisation and treatment of OCD is illustrated.