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## S3C2. Triggered vs. non-triggered states

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In this chapter, I am going to explain the critical distinction between the two states of being triggered and not being triggered. Sometimes people say distraction is important, and at other times they say distraction is a compulsion. Sometimes people talk about rationalizing the irrational thought and at other times call it a compulsion. Sometimes people stress on the importance of seeking clarification, while at other times call it a compulsion. So, what is it really? Are these things important or are these compulsions?

Welcome to the complexity of OCD, because they are both. They can be either, depending upon how they are used - or more importantly, when they are used. This brings us to the two states of mind - triggered versus non-triggered. Some of these actions can be done when triggered, others when not triggered. I shall explain how this works with an analogy first and then with specific reference to ROCD.

Think of having to write an exam. When you are sitting in the examination hall, which is likened to the triggered state, access to text books and reading material is disallowed. You are not allowed to access Google to search for your answers, or refer to notes or confirm with your friends if your answers are correct. But when you are preparing for the exam or after you are done with it, (the non-triggered state) all of these activities are not only allowed, but also highly recommended; so that you remember the stuff you are going to be tested on. Thus, you can refer to all course material before and after the exam.

Hence, in the case of your ROCD, all the rationalization and clarification that you would like to do is allowed only outside the triggered state. Doing any of these activities when you are triggered is the compulsion. For example, you may see a pretty girl and begin to think that your partner is not as pretty as this girl, making you wonder if you are in the right relationship. That is the triggered state.

In this state, as mentioned, there can be no rationalization. There can be no comparison for the sake of clarity. There can be no reassurance seeking for the sake of clarity. Doing any of this is similar to cheating in the exam. This is not allowed. If you do these when you are triggered, they become compulsions. At this point you are expected to power through with the resistance to compulsion without rationalizing the need to not do it. But when you are not triggered, that is when you understand the irrationality of your thoughts your therapist will engage you in cognitive therapy and rationalize these fears for you. Then, it is a technique to help you get better.

However, there is another important consideration. ROCD is not as distinct and compartmentalized as being inside or outside an examination hall. The state of non-trigger may easily segue into the state of trigger. If the rationalization process is on during the transition, something that started off as a technique could easily become

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a compulsion.

Hence, utmost care is needed to ensure that the rationalization is being done only when you are not triggered at all. I will keep emphasizing on this at various points throughout the course book so that you internalize it well and do not make mistakes. This distinction between triggered and non-triggered states is a critical distinction and needs to be understood well for recovery.

The MMA super vision will help you understand this distinction better. Make sure to have a clear demarcation between the two states, even though they seem to blend into one another most times.

In the next chapter we shall talk about the MMA super vision.