

## Meet Steve who had Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

He had unwanted and persistent obsessional thoughts about dirt and germs and being responsible for making his family unwell. He would try to suppress the thoughts, but they kept coming back and he had to carry out intensive hand washing and cleaning rituals to reduce the distress they caused, often with bleach until he felt 'right'. These obsessions and carrying out his cleaning and washing compulsions took up several hours a day and his hands were raw from the washing and scrubbing. This was affecting his work as a retail salesman and he was embarrassed to let people see his hands. The cost of cleaning products was also taking up a lot of his salary. He used an evidence based CBT approach called Exposure and Response Prevention to help with his difficulties.

### Steve's physical symptoms

Heart racing  
Sweating  
High physical distress, sometimes leading to panic attacks  
Unease

### Steve's behaviours

Trying to suppress his thoughts  
Excessive use of cleaning products  
Avoiding contact with dirt and germs  
Washing his hands with bleach and scrubbing them until raw

### Steve's altered thoughts

"I am contaminated and they will get ill"  
'I must clean until the feeling goes away"  
"I am responsible; I must prevent it happening"