

# ask Dr Roshan Jain

Your *mental and emotional health* questions answered

**Q** I am a B.Com graduate preparing for Civil Service exams. I grew close to a friend and fell in love with her. I am not sure whether she loves me. Every time we meet she talks about her past relationship and how much she was in love. This disturbs me and is affecting my studies. I am unable to concentrate on my exams, and beginning to lose motivation. Please help.

It seems your friend may be grieving the breakdown of her relationship, and perhaps was in an emotionally fragile state at the time of meeting you. She seems to have found solace in discussing matters with you. You are inadvertently counselling her by offering an attentive ear and a shoulder to cry on.

In your situation, it's not uncommon for proximity turning into affection and love. You should be patient and slowly distract her to talk about other things, as this will help her to move on. Try and remain her caring friend who is available when needed. Nevertheless, it's important to be open and transparent in any relationship, especially with someone who has had heartbreak recently.

Love is an important part of life, but not the entire life. I suggest you prioritise your time on academics for now and reduce the amount of time you spend with her until after exams. Then, you should waste no time in expressing how you feel about her, and encourage her to let go of her past, if she has truly broken up with her previous boyfriend. It's great to fall in love and even better to be loved. To be honest, you should concentrate on the one who loves you rather than the one you love.

Examinations can be stressful no matter how many times you take them. So look after your self – study tactically, organise your time, exercise regularly, sleep well, take regular breaks and socialise with other friends.

**Q** My husband is very doubtful, and often has to check and recheck things he does. He fears causing unintended harm to others and doubly makes sure that he locks the door, as well as turns the gas and lights off. He is very particular about cleanliness and order. Since we had our son, a year ago, he is quite irritable and we often fight over trivial matters. We have been married for two years but I am already fed up. Please advise, what should I do?

I think he may be suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder (also known as OCD), a form of anxiety disorder wherein unwanted, unpleasant thoughts, images or urges (obsessions) repeatedly enter a person's mind and cause him or her anxiety. These are followed by compulsions, where one needs to carry out repetitive behaviours or acts to try to prevent an obsession coming true. Your husband has obsessions about contamination and harm, and he acts on those to prevent harm to others.

It is known that this condition may run in families, but certain environmental influences such as upbringing in an overprotective and strict family could increase your chances of developing OCD. Equally, life events such as a significant changes or bereavement or family break-up, may trigger OCD in people who already have a tendency to develop the condition.

This condition typically has problems for individual and his/her family. I think your husband may be finding it difficult to adapt to the new entrant in your family. Children are messy at best of times and this may be proving distressing for him, especially since some of his obsessions revolve around cleanliness.

I think his treatment should be primary entail behavioural therapy called exposure and response prevention (ERP) to change the way he behaves. Herein he and his therapist will identify tasks that will expose him to the situations that cause anxiety, but at a level he can cope. He will need to do the exposure tasks without carrying out anxiety-relieving compulsions (the actions usually taken to help cope with the situation). Additionally, there is a role for reducing baseline anxiety with medication, in order to engage better with above therapy.

I think he needs to consult professionally and seek formal therapy. You need to be patient and supportive, as this is a treatable condition.

Our doctors will answer all queries on emotional and mental health. Got mind trouble of your own? Drop us a mail at [bpositiveQA@apollolife.com](mailto:bpositiveQA@apollolife.com)  
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