

Beating BDD Episode 11 – Oliver Butcher, part 1

This is the second part of my interview with Oliver Butcher. In it, you'll hear him describe the self-abuse that was part of his BDD, how that affected his family and the advice he'd give anyone suffering from the disorder. For another perspective on Oliver's story, episode 12 will feature a really frank conversation between his mum Debbie and his brother Daniel – so keep an eye out for that.

“Recovery is very up and down; a squiggly line. There are peaks and troughs. It's important to go a day at a time and not to forget when you've come from.”

How has Oliver's BDD affected his family?

[00:01.01] It put a lot of pressure on his relationship with his brother Daniel.

[00:02.10] The hardest thing was that Oliver used to verbally abuse himself by screaming for hours.

[00:04.20] The arrival of his stepdad Paul changed the dynamic too. He's been a rock.

[00:09.22] Daniel now understands the condition more and that it wasn't something Oliver could help.

The role of medication in treating BDD

[00:05.53] Medication has its place. Oliver is now on escitalopram – it got him to start talking about his BDD, which he'd denied for many years.

How did he find out he had the condition and start getting therapy?

[00:06.45] He'd Google 'Why do I hate my face/nose?' BDD would come up straight away but he didn't want to admit it.

[00:11.22] Oliver started by having some counselling, but he still didn't talk about his appearance issues.

[00:13.17] Things came to a head on his 22nd birthday when he couldn't leave the house to celebrate.

[00:14.11] Going to a support group was the real start of his treatment. After that he got a diagnosis by Professor Veale.

[00:18.49] Oliver's been having CBT therapy for a year. He saw massive initial progress, then realised you can't fix 10 years' worth of behaviours quickly.

What's helped him?

[00:10.07] Without the support of his family Oliver wouldn't be here.

[00:18.06] Having Professor Veale challenge what he was trying to achieve with his behaviours was really helpful.

[00:21.40] Doing exposures is key to beating or managing BDD, but it's challenging.

[00:25.04] Seeing the BDD voice as a separate entity has helped too.

How Oliver feels today

[00:08.32] He no longer feels depressed – day to day, he's in a pretty good mood.

[00:25.40] His life today is really different from even five months ago, thanks to exposure therapy.

[00:31.35] A bad day for him now is spending more than 10 minutes in front of the mirror.

What he'd recommend to others

[00:22.35] You can't expect yourself to go straight to doing the thing you fear.

[00:26.50] Don't give up on the exposures – they work, and the world won't end!

[00:28.09] There's light at the end of the tunnel. It's about taking little steps to get there.

Resources

- The BDD Foundation: bddfoundation.org