

Breaking Down OCD, Once and For All

RASHA JAMEEL

When news of the coronavirus outbreak first broke, I did what everyone else at the time was doing: spreading awareness on social media out of a sense of responsibility as a global citizen.

I reposted official statements on the exponentially rising numbers of those infected and affected, and economic and social forecasts. I didn't realise for a very long time the toll the statistics were taking on me, on my mental health, and more specifically, on my OCD.

Before you roll your eyes at the mention of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or OCD, since you may not think it's really a disease, read on for a testimony from someone who has OCD.

OCD can be identified as an anxiety disorder, characterised primarily by anxiety-producing obsessions and anxiety-reducing compulsions. Think of it as a junkie chasing a high, only as a circle without a beginning. The compulsions of an OCD-ridden person can feel akin to a junkie's abnormally high tolerance levels for drugs, with the obsessions bearing a similarity to their desperate craving for a high. OCD works as both the insatiable beast and the nearest available prey. A snake incessantly chasing its own tail, an ouroboros from Hell, which knows no rest.

Most people diagnosed with OCD tend to wash their hands a lot. While it's a common symptom, reasons for doing so can differ. I wash my hands

in an effort to peel off imperfections. It calms me, despite not being a healthy coping mechanism. During the coronavirus outbreak, I convinced myself that I should wash my hands even more so as to wash away the virus molecules along with the imperfections. Two birds with one stone. The frequency at which I scrubbed my

hands rose exponentially with the rising numbers of infections. It wasn't until my skin began to dry out to the point of me developing a nasty rash that I came to my senses.

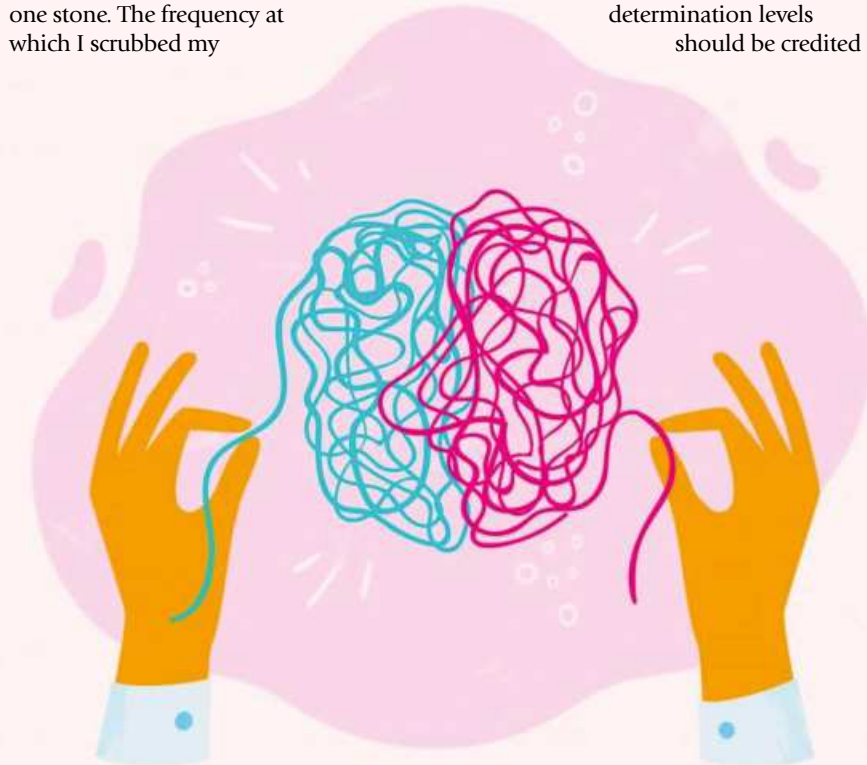
Sometime back, a teacher said my excellent organisational skills and strong determination levels should be credited

to my OCD. It took every ounce of the resolution I possessed to not yell at him for being so unabashedly ignorant about a mental health disorder. My OCD doesn't help me get my life in order, it helps to wreck it instead.

Leaving aside the frequent hand-washing factor, OCD symptoms can vary from person to person. Mine involve nightmarish thoughts of mindless overconsumption and an inexplicable demand for physical equality throughout my body. I associate the idea of overconsumption with gluttony and remind myself that I must not contribute to it, so I refrain from eating and purge whenever I eat. When I'm nervous, both my hands need to feel sweaty and clammy the same way. If I injure a body part, say one of my elbows, I require my other elbow to feel just as painful. So no, no flawless organization happening there.

Please understand, there is a major difference between being a perfectionist and actually having OCD. One is a state of mind, the other is a disease. It'd be nice if everyone's attitude towards people suffering from OCD and other mental health disorders, was more empathetic rather than sceptical.

Rasha Jameel is an overzealous Ravenclaw who often draws inspiration from mundane things such as memes. Send her your memespinal thoughts at rasha.jameel@outlook.com



THE PANDEMIC TO A GERMAPHOBE

BUSHRA ZAMAN

Have you ever wondered how life during a pandemic is for germaphobes?

You may think an easy answer is that germaphobes, such as myself, have adapted by being careful and cleaning more vigorously than before – but there is more to it than that. We have thought of the prevention of impending doom after infection by a germ so frequently, that some of us already have formed plans to keep things clean in case an emergency such as a pandemic occurs.

What may look like out-of-control cleaning, is actually a very structured, well-thought, "supposedly" fool-proof procedure being carried out, "supposedly" being on account of the presence of variables that are ignorant humans.

We may use social distancing as an excuse to steer clear of people, but pandemic or not at least one person will manage to sneeze and spray spit directly on your face. This tends to happen when your hand is occupied, preventing you from covering your face, such as when opening a door or going up a staircase. I'm trying to go upstairs, but not all the way up to heaven, thanks. Elevators are worse; I cannot distinguish whether the wheezing I'm hearing is from someone who is ill or from myself on account of the panic attack I'm having after noticing how dirty the elevator buttons are.

Dirt removal has never been this hard. My life has morphed into a never-ending handwash commercial, so cleaning products are precious to me right

now. If I loan you sanitizer willingly, it is the purest act of love I can offer to you from over three feet away. However, this love is highly conditional and subject to change. Don't be surprised by the death stares sent over a mask when you lose someone else's sanitizer.

Basic survival requirements such as eating food, drinking water, and using the bathroom while outside, is similar to being in a survival TV show – hunting to find a clean bathroom, guarding this resource with your life, and secretly bottling clean water.

Lastly, due to worries about being heard properly, people feel the need to take their masks off when speaking. But you can be heard clearly through a mask, and if not, can always speak a little louder than usual. The only difference with the mask off is that the risk of spit hitting my face is high. I understand feeling suffocated with a mask on is an issue, but breathing difficulties can also be caused after being infected due to not wearing a mask.

The purpose of this article is not a rant, but to hopefully increase awareness regarding the maintenance of proper safety procedures in the middle of the pandemic. Your actions can have detrimental consequences on others' lives, as well as causing inconvenience to germaphobes who may have otherwise been very resourceful acquaintances in a pandemic.

Okay, maybe this was a slight rant.

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ILLUSTRATION: ALIZA RAHMAN

STREAMING NOW

SHAHRUKH IKHTEAR

When I first started streaming, I had a swathe of misconceptions that held me back from producing content on a regular basis. If you're an aspirant streamer, I'm here to guide you through what truly matters in the world of being video game streaming.

Bear in mind, this is not an in-depth guide. This article will outline a general direction for you to follow to truly succeed in the world of streaming.

THE SETUP

There are a plethora of streaming apps and programs to choose from. The most popular ones are Streamlabs and OBS Studio. I recommend using Streamlabs for beginners since it is much easier to add Overlays and Alerts to your streams.

Once you've picked an app, really take the time to understand how to set up a scene. Always use Game Capture as a source for your core gameplay as it will allow you to play on fullscreen, thus reducing input lag. Also, make separate sources for your audio and apply Filters on them. Do not use the preset configuration for your microphone audio. You need to learn how to use audio filters as well. There are multiple YouTube tutorials outlining how to do so.

Make sure you run the streaming app in Admin Mode and always close unnecessary background processes when you're streaming.

Once you have all your scenes and sources ready, you'll need to set the output parameters. On Streamlabs, it's simply labelled "Output" in the Settings Tab. Here, you should go for Software (x264) if you do not have a 2000 series or 3000 series Nvidia GPU. If you do, go for Hardware (Nvenc New), it'll save your

than your upload speed in Kilobits. This will allow you some buffer room in case your upload speed drops for some reason. Set your Preset to Quality or Performance depending on your PC.

Let's move on to Video. You want to set your Base Canvas Resolution to 1080p and your output to either 720p or 1080p depending on your hardware. If you have relatively low-spec hardware, just go with 720p. 1080p is the highest for most platforms so it's the best you can get. Lanczos is the best Downscale Filter in Video but if your PC can't keep up, just go with a lower option.

Speaking of hardware, contrary to popular belief, you do not need a high-powered PC with an audiophile-grade microphone attached to a top-of-the-line interface to start streaming. Gear helps, but the core content is what attracts viewers to your channel.

That being said, there are still a few fundamentals you need to nail in order to produce quality live streams.

Firstly, your audio is quintessential in immersing the viewer into your content. You can have the crispiest image quality but if your audio sounds like it's being played through an 80s radio set, no one will have a good experience. It is paramount to have a decent microphone. USB condenser microphones can be found for around BDT 4000 to BDT 7000 and they do the job really well. Also, don't forget the Filters! They really do elevate your sound game and you should definitely spend some time learning about this.

A webcam is good to have but not necessary. If you can, try to go for grade A cameras. If you don't, your gameplay will look smooth but your camera feed will be laggy, creating a dissonance in the minds of your viewers that you do not want.

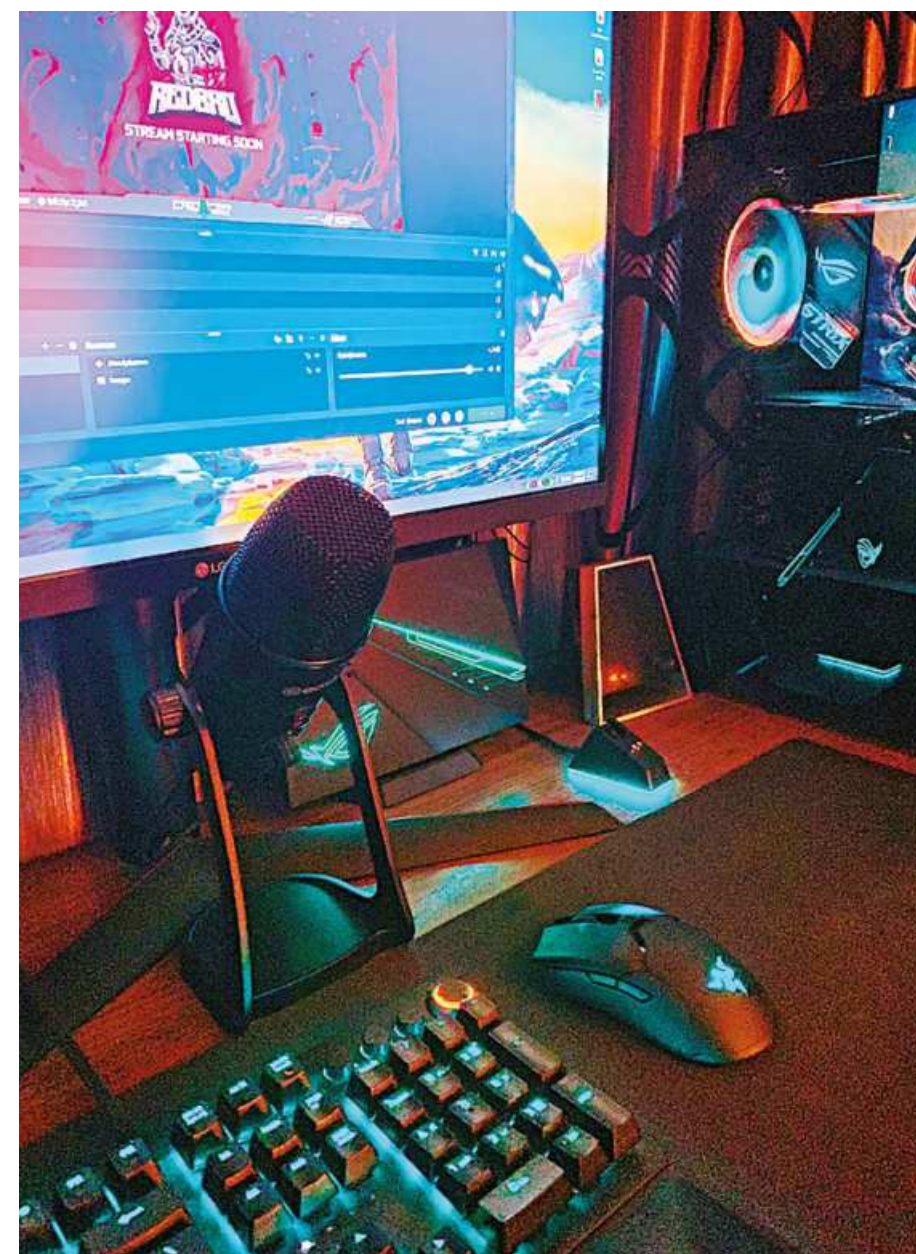


PHOTO: SHAHRUKH IKHTEAR

THE PLATFORM

Now that you have your setup ready, it's time to choose a platform to begin your streaming conquest. For Bangladeshis, I would definitely recommend Facebook as you will gain access to a large local audience who are hungry for quality video game streams. Twitch is great but it's not the best for building an audience at all. On Facebook, you can build a solid community through engagement, content production, and of course, streaming. This you can then snowball to other platforms by transferring them to content that you produce exclusively for certain platforms. This can be your YouTube or Twitch channel.

Make sure you use relevant groups for your gaming streams but do not spam! I see so many people just dumping their stream links with absolutely no description. Try to make sure that your stream aligns with the group you're posting it to. No one will watch you if you post a *Valorant* stream in a *League of Legends* group.

THE PERSONALITY

This section will be a little more personal. When you're streaming you have to put yourself in the mindset of producing your own live TV show, and just like any other show, you need to give your viewers value in order to draw them in. What kind of streamer do you want to be? Do you want

to be informative and educative? Do you want to be an entertainer? Or do you just want to talk to people? These burning questions need to be answered before you hit that "Go Live" button.

Interaction is key for sustaining viewers. Engaging them by asking questions, reading comments and actually making a conversation flow, and calling out names of people who share or like your streams is a great starting point. You should also talk frequently as nothing is more boring than silent gameplay. Be respectful to your viewers but deal with haters firmly.

The road ahead as a streamer is arduous. You will need to consistently keep producing content in order to be successful. Every big streamer you know now started off with zero viewers and you will be no different. It will take time for you, or anyone, to build a community.

So go out there and grace the world with your presence! They might not realise it now but consistency will ensure that one day, you stand with the biggest names in the business!

Shahrukh Ikhtear is an avid gamer who seldom gets time to play nowadays owing to his adventures in the mystical forests of adulthood. Help him in his search for true work-life balance at shahrukh.ikhtear@gmail.com