9.10: IX Glossary

Agoraphobia: Intense fear of two or more of the following situations: using public transportation, being in open spaces (e.g., parking lots, marketplaces, or bridges), being in enclosed spaces (e.g., shops or theaters), standing in line or being in a crowd, or being outside of the home alone.

Anxiety: A universal human experience that includes feelings of apprehension, uneasiness, uncertainty, or dread resulting from a real or perceived threat.

Compulsions: Repetitive behaviors that a person with OCD feels the urge to do in response to an obsessive thought.

Coping strategies: An action, a series of actions, or a thought process used to address a stressful or unpleasant situation or modify one’s reaction to such a situation.

Defense mechanisms: Reaction patterns used by individuals to protect themselves from anxiety that arises from stress and conflict.

Exposure and response prevention (EX/RP): A type of psychotherapy effective in reducing compulsive behaviors in clients with OCD. EX/RP includes spending time in the very situation that triggers compulsions (for example, touching dirty objects) but then being prevented from undertaking the usual resulting compulsion (handwashing).

Exposure therapy: A type of psychotherapy that focuses on confronting the fears underlying an anxiety disorder to help people engage in activities they have been avoiding.

Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD): Excessive anxiety and worry occurring for at least six months about a number of events or activities (such as work or school performance).

Obsessions: Repeated thoughts, urges, or mental images that cause anxiety.
**Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD):** A common chronic disorder in which a person has uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts (obsessions) and/or behaviors (compulsions) they feel the urge to repeat over and over. Performing the compulsive behaviors often brings the person brief relief from the anxiety the obsessive thoughts cause them.

**Panic:** The most extreme level of anxiety that results in significantly dysregulated behavior. The individual is unable to process information from the environment and may lose touch with reality.

**Panic attacks:** Sudden periods of intense fear that come on quickly and reach their peak within minutes. Attacks can occur unexpectedly or can be brought on by a trigger, such as a feared object or situation.

**Phobia:** An intense fear or aversion to specific objects or situations (e.g., flying, heights, animals, receiving an injection, or seeing blood).

**Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD):** A disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, frightening, or dangerous event where they feel stressed or frightened even when they are not in danger.

**Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS):** Treatment that uses a magnet to activate specific sites in the brain.

**Selective mutism:** A condition when people fail to speak in specific social situations despite having normal language skills.

**Separation anxiety disorder:** A condition where an individual has a fear about being separated from people to whom they are attached.

**Social anxiety disorder:** Significant fear or anxiety about one or more social situations in which the individual is exposed to possible scrutiny by others.