

## ARE YOU SUPERSTITIOUS?

*When you believe in things you don't understand, Then you suffer  
Superstition ain't the way... Stevie Wonder*

### WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Superstition is a belief in causality by a supernatural force, that is, one event leads to another by means other than natural science such as omens, lucky charms, etc.
- ❖ According to a Gallup poll, more than 50% of Americans admit to being superstitious
- ❖ Most people occasionally participate in superstitious thinking or behavior often without even realizing they are doing it
- ❖ Common superstitious behaviors include wearing lucky clothes, carrying good luck charms, throwing spilt salt over one's shoulder, knocking on wood, not walking under a ladder, not breaking a mirror, and touching/rubbing specific statues
- ❖ Research shows that the amount of superstitious or magical thinking increases under conditions of stress
- ❖ Rituals common to OCD behavior often interfere with a person's life but are not necessarily superstitious
- ❖ The driving force behind superstitious behavior is a desire to have more control or have more certainty in a situation
- ❖ When anxious, people tend to look for some kind of a rule or explanation and sometimes a false certainty is better than no explanation
- ❖ Often, superstitious beliefs allow people to feel that they have some control, that they did one more thing to influence the outcome or uncertainty
- ❖ Superstitious thoughts help to relieve feelings of anxiety and helplessness and can promote positive thoughts that may actually enhance performance
- ❖ It is easier to rely on superstitious beliefs than to develop coping skills
- ❖ Fearful superstitions such as Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> can interfere with people's lives as they may not leave the home or cancel an appointment on that day
- ❖ Women tend to be more superstitious than men because in our society today they tend to feel that they have less control over their lives than men
- ❖ People demonstrate superstitious behaviors in gambling, playing sports, etc. in the hope that their ritual increases their performance although most times, it doesn't
- ❖ Research found that superstitious behavior increases as the difficulty of the event and the importance of the outcome increases

### WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Don't believe in bad luck and own whatever control you do have in situations
- ❖ Accept that there will be uncertainty and little control in some situations but that doesn't mean it will turn out bad
- ❖ Be decisive and proactive and have confidence in oneself
- ❖ Don't rely on luck, omens, objects, rituals, or magical behaviors to believe you can influence an outcome
- ❖ Do not be upset with yourself if you have some superstitious belief, more than 1/2 of Americans do
- ❖ Seek professional help if you have excessive magical thinking or rely too much on luck or on omens rather than on oneself

### WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at [\*\*DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com\*\*](mailto:DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com)

**Joel I. Kimmel, Ph.D. P.A. and Associates**  
**5571 N University Drive, Suite 101**  
**Coral Springs FL 33067**