

TAMING OLIVIA

YOUTH SPACE



LET'S WRITE ABOUT OUR CHARACTER

INSIDE THIS PACK

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- **Letter to supporting adults.**

Adults, please read the note at the back of the pack before you begin!

LET'S GET STARTED

www.tamingolivia.com



INTRODUCTION

HI, AND WELCOME TO OUR 'CREATE A CHARACTER' PACK!

We're so glad you're here!

This pack has been designed to help you create a character that represents your big emotions, worries, or experiences with a mental health condition in a way that is creative, playful, and gentle. As you work through this pack, I'll use examples of my own character, Olivia. I'll show you why I chose the characteristics she has, and from there, you can develop your own character!

We've given loads of examples throughout this pack, but remember that yours can be shorter, longer, or more or less detailed; it's totally up to you! The whole point of this activity is to help you understand what you are feeling and have a little fun. There's no pressure!

And please remember you don't have to do everything in order, or at all. You can dip in, pick and choose, and use whatever feels most helpful for you.

We hope you enjoy creating your character as much as we did!

CREATING A CHARACTER TO HELP US REPRESENT OUR BIG FEELINGS, WORRIES OR EXPERIENCES WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION HELPS BECAUSE:

1. By giving feelings a name, a look, and even a story, we can begin to understand them with curiosity rather than fear.

2. It allows us to practice skills that help us feel better, such as compassion, patience and self-love!

3. It encourages us to see them as something separate from us!

TURN THE PAGE TO MEET MY CHARACTER, OLIVIA!



MEET OLIVIA

**SO, IN CASE YOU'VE
NOT MET US BEFORE ...**



THIS IS ME AND OLIVIA!

Olivia came into my life when I was having a really tough time with OCD and all the big, messy feelings that came with it. Those feelings could be loud, confusing, and overwhelming, and I didn't always understand what was happening to me.

I created Olivia to represent my OCD and those big emotions. She helped me see OCD as something separate from who I am, not something that defined me. And because Olivia is small, gentle, and sweet, it made it easier to practice kindness toward something that was making me feel sad and stuck.

Something really awesome happened next: the kinder and more patient I was to Olivia, the kinder and more patient I became to myself. It made a huge difference to me.

Having Olivia around helped me feel calmer and more hopeful. I also had loads of fun imagining what she should look like and deciding what kind of personality she'd have. That's why I've created this pack, to help you create your own character too.

Your Olivia can help you understand your big feelings, practice compassion, and remember that you are so much bigger than whatever is bothering you.

Turn the page to see a breakdown of Olivia and why I made the choices I did when creating her.

**THERE IS A MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF HER IN THE
'INTRODUCING YOUR CHARACTER' SECTION AT THE BACK OF THIS PACK!**

MEET OLIVIA

I wanted Olivia to be a cross between a hare and an alien. I thought a hare showed fright well, with its big eyes and ears. The alien part of Olivia represents the fact that there is an element of the 'outer world' about her. She's different, and I love that about her. Although she is drawn here, I could have created her just with my imagination and written about her.

Olivia has large ears to help her hear danger from far away. They are a bit scruffy because she sometimes gets a little frazzled and stressed and it makes her fur stick out.

Olivia has large eyes, so she can see danger coming. I have blue eyes, so I chose for her to have blue eyes too!



Olivia has very long eyelashes so she can hide behind them when she becomes overwhelmed!

Olivia has long arms, legs and fingers to help her be extra speedy in case she needs to run away quickly.

Olivia is strong which represents the fact that she can stand up for herself and is brave.



PLAN YOUR CHARACTER

PROMPT SHEET

You can use these questions to help you plan your character! Remember, this is about having fun and getting creative, so use it however suits you best, whether that means drawing your answers, jumping between questions or scribbling your ideas all over the page! And don't worry if it takes a few goes to get your character just right, you can come back and change things whenever you like.

What potential names do you have for your character? (Sometimes it's easier to find a name after you've drawn your character.)

Are there any animals or cartoon characters you would like to take inspiration from?

What colours would you like to use?

PLAN YOUR CHARACTER

PROMPT SHEET

What is the character's bio? For example, what's their history, what are their likes, dislikes, hobbies, etc.

Does your character have any fears or challenges? What scares your character and what gets in their way?

Goals and dreams. What matters most to your character and what are they hoping for?

What would you like to feel when you see your character? e.g. hopeful, not alone, understood.

PLAN YOUR CHARACTER

PROMPT SHEET

Personality is how your character thinks, feels, and responds to the world. Are they kind, shy, brave, cheeky, funny, thoughtful, stubborn or a mixture of everything? How do they react to challenges? What feels easy to them and what feels tricky?

Are they wearing clothes or accessories? If they are wearing clothes, what clothes are they wearing? Is there a reason they are wearing what they are wearing? For example, a hoodie to hide their faces if needed, a heart badge to show they are brave, or a fidget bracelet to help them stay focused or calm?

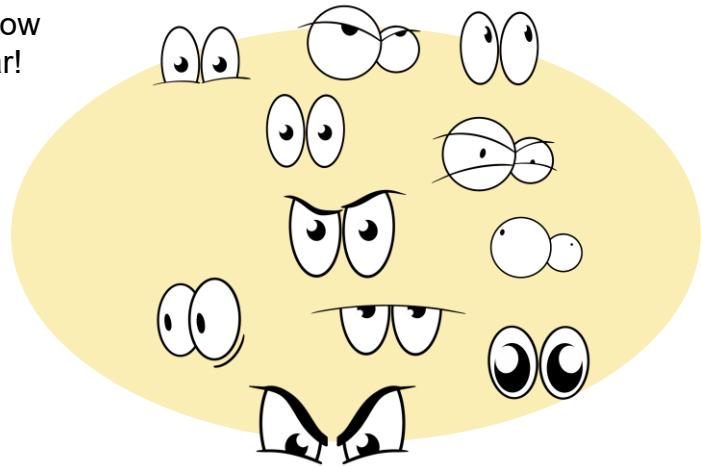
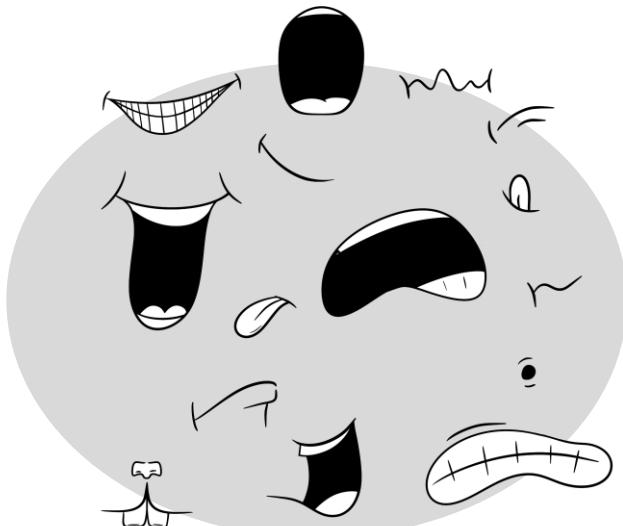
Do you really, like reaallllyyy enjoy a certain style that you'd like to use? E.g., Pokemon, Manga, Disney, street style with graffiti?

DEVELOPING YOUR CHARACTER

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

THINK ABOUT THE TYPE OF FEATURES YOU'D LIKE YOUR CHARACTER TO HAVE!

Eyes and mouths display the most amount of emotion in your characters. They can easily show anger, sadness, excitement, happiness or fear!



Colours can represent personality and emotions! Which ones would you like to use? Or you can always choose your favourite colours. You're the boss!



Brave - Determined
Proud - Trusting



Cheeky - Surprised
Curious - Distracted



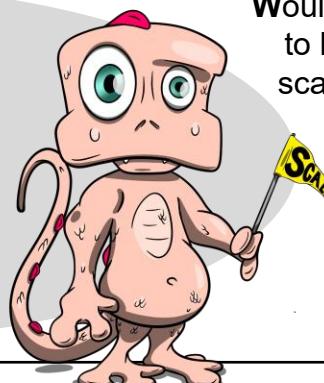
Excited - Joy
Hopeful - Silly



Anger - Annoyed
Frustrated - Mad



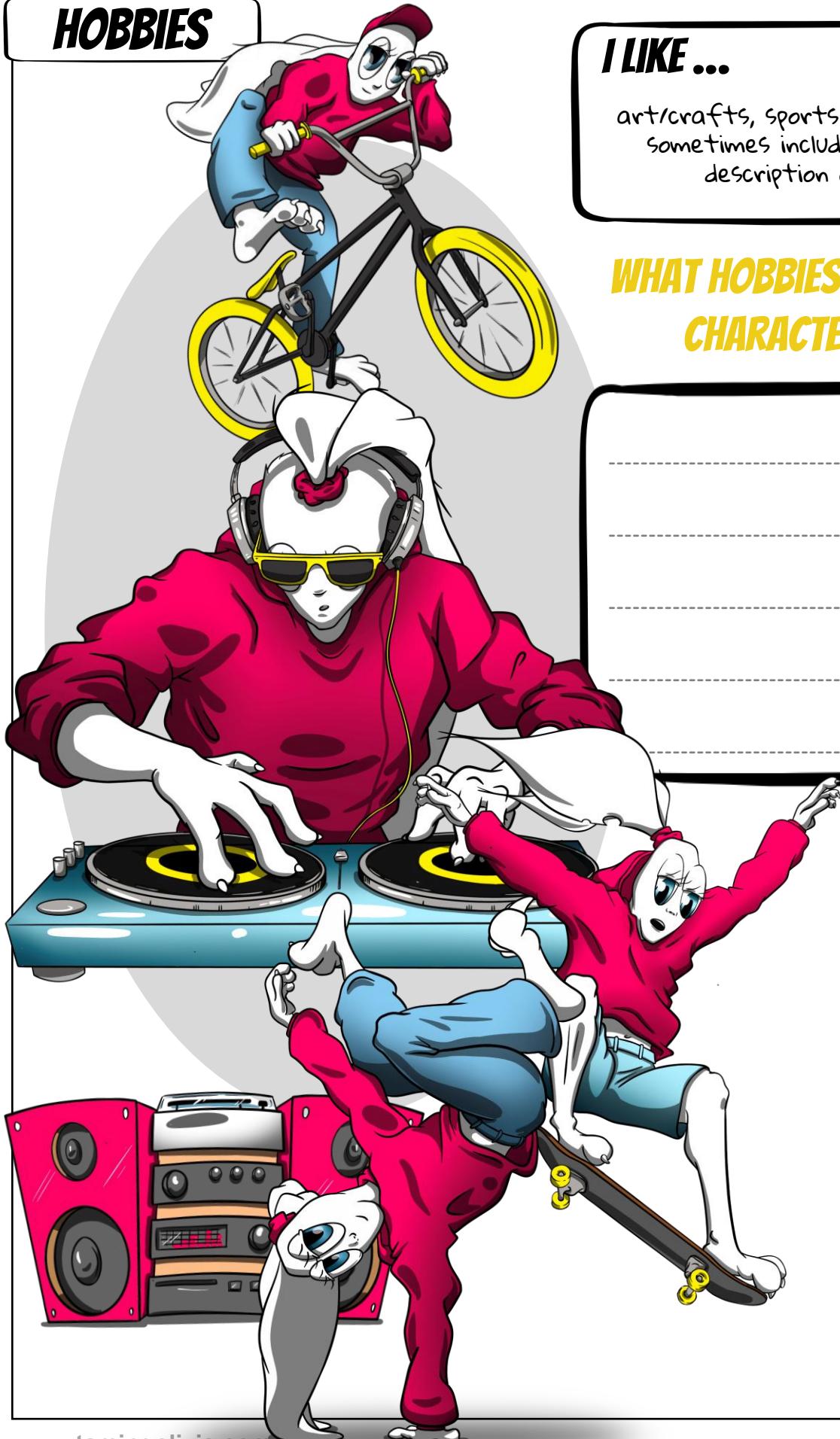
Hurt - Lonely
Upset - Tired



Would you like your character to be covered in skin, fur, scales or something else?

DEVELOPING YOUR CHARACTER

HOBBIES



I LIKE ...

art/crafts, sports and music, so I sometimes include those in my description of Olivia.

WHAT HOBBIES COULD YOUR CHARACTER HAVE?



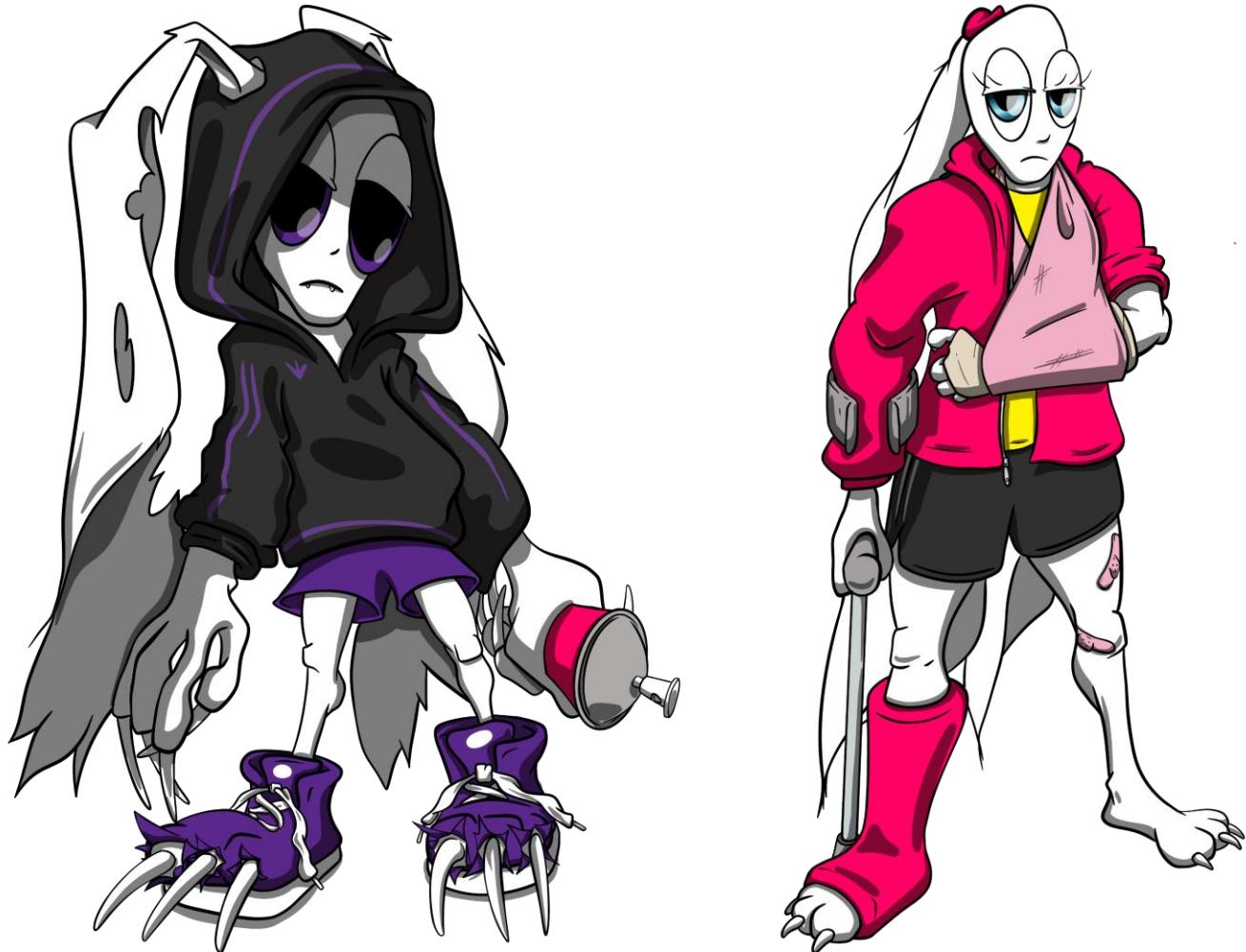
DEVELOPING YOUR CHARACTER

EXPANDING YOUR CHARACTER

Even though Olivia causes me trouble sometimes, I prefer to think of her as she looks in the previous pages. She's okay, and she's getting on with life. I think if I drew her looking very scary or super angry all the time, it would make me feel sad.

BUT!

I do have a version of Olivia that comes out when she is really hurting and causing me lots and lots of trouble! Here are a couple of examples. Both represent Olivia going through a difficult patch.



Representing Olivia this way really highlighted what a tough time she was going through, which encouraged me to show her compassion. This, in turn, helped me show myself compassion when I was going through a difficult time. You can choose how your character is feeling in your picture. Or even better, you can create more than one picture of them feeling different things! It's totally up to you.

DESCRIBING YOUR CHARACTER

Your character description can have as much or as little detail as you like.

YOU CAN INCLUDE:

- A description of your character's physical appearance.
- A description of their personality and biography.
- Information about how you made the choices you did.
- An explanation about how the character helps you.

YOU'RE THE BOSS!

Take a look at the three character descriptions coming up. They give you examples of short, medium, and longer descriptions of Olivia. You can choose how long you would like yours to be!

MEET OLIVIA

HERE'S A SHORTER EXAMPLE THAT BRIEFLY EXPLAINS WHAT SHE LOOKS LIKE AND WHY I CREATED HER TO LOOK THIS WAY.

Olivia is what my OCD looks like when I imagine it as a character. She's completely white, with big blue eyes, so she can spot danger quickly and because my eyes are blue too. She has long eyelashes to hide behind when she feels overwhelmed.

Her big ears help her hear danger from far away. They get a bit scruffy when she's stressed, and she sometimes ties them up in different styles to show her mood or hides behind them when she feels uncomfortable.

Olivia has long arms, legs, and fingers, so she can run away fast. She's strong, brave, loyal, and protective because she cares a lot, but she's also a big worrier, a bit dramatic, and can be bossy when she's anxious.

She has lots of energy!

DESCRIBING YOUR CHARACTER

MEET OLIVIA

HERE'S A MEDIUM-LENGTH EXAMPLE, WHICH INCLUDES MORE DESCRIPTION AND A FEW MORE DETAILS.

Olivia is what my OCD looks like when I imagine it as a character. She is completely white apart from her large blue eyes. They're big to help her see danger coming, and I chose blue eyes because mine are blue too. Olivia has very long eyelashes, so she can hide behind them when she becomes overwhelmed.

Olivia has large ears to help her hear danger from far away. They're a little bit scruffy because when she gets frazzled and stressed, the fur sticks out. She sometimes ties her ears up like they're hair with different hairstyles. This helps show what mood she's in. She can also hide behind her ears if she is uncomfortable.

Olivia also has long arms, legs, and fingers to help her run away quickly if she needs to. She is very strong, which shows that she can stand up for herself and is brave. She's determined, loyal, imaginative, and very protective. She cares a lot. But she's also a huge worrier, very dramatic, and can be quite bossy when she's anxious.

She has lots of energy!



DESCRIBING YOUR CHARACTER

MEET OLIVIA

HERE'S A MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF OLIVIA, WHICH INCLUDES HOW I USE HER TO HELP ME DEAL WITH OCD SYMPTOMS.

Olivia is what my OCD looks like when I imagine it as a character. She is completely white apart from her large blue eyes. They're big to help her see danger coming and I chose blue eyes because mine are blue too. Olivia has very long eyelashes so she can hide behind them when she becomes overwhelmed.

Olivia has large ears to help her hear danger from far away. They're a little bit scruffy because when she gets frazzled and stressed, the fur sticks out. She sometimes ties her ears up like they're hair with different hairstyles. This helps me show what mood she's in. She can also hide behind her ears if she is uncomfortable.

Olivia also has long arms, legs, and fingers to help her run away quickly if she needs to. She is very strong, which helps me show that she can stand up for herself and is brave. She's determined, loyal, imaginative, and very protective. She cares a lot. But she's also a huge worrier, very dramatic, and can be quite bossy when she's anxious.

She has lots of energy!

Olivia thinks her job is to keep me safe. The problem is, she worries about everything. She takes normal thoughts – thoughts that everyone has – and turns them into something scary. If a thought makes her nervous, she wants me to check it again... and again... and again. She believes that if I don't keep checking, something terrible might happen.

The more I try to argue with Olivia or push her away, the louder she gets. She pops up a lot; it can be during the day, at bedtime, or when we're trying to leave the house. She hates uncertainty and wants everything to feel "just right" before we move on.

Sometimes Olivia changes. Instead of worrying about unlocked doors or switches left on, she starts worrying about me. She questions my thoughts and tries to convince me they mean something bad about who I am. When this happens, she can be really frightening – but she still does it because she thinks she's protecting me.

I'm learning a new way to live with Olivia. Instead of fighting her or running away, I'm practising noticing her without doing everything she wants me to do. Like checking all the time. I'm learning that thoughts are just thoughts, not actions or truths. Visualising my OCD as Olivia helps me understand it, manage it, and show myself compassion – all without letting Olivia run the show.



MY CHARACTER

MEET



Handwriting practice lines (dashed lines for letters) are repeated 10 times down the page.



PARENT • CARER • MEDICAL PROF. LETTER

HI! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR USING OUR RESOURCES. WE HOPE YOU FIND THEM HELPFUL.

This resource was designed to support your young person in creating a character that represents their big emotions, worries, or experiences with a mental health condition. The activities are designed to be creative, playful, and gentle. They have been designed in the hope that they help your young person externalise their experiences and big feelings, and to begin building a compassionate view of those feelings and of themselves. Please just take a few minutes to read through the rest of this section to help make sure this is a positive activity all around!

WHY THIS PACK CAN HELP

When worries and big feelings stay stuck inside, they can feel confusing, frightening, and very personal. Giving them a character can help young people to:

- *Feel less alone and less ashamed.*
- *Understand their emotions more clearly.*
- *Talk about difficult thoughts more easily.*
- *See worries as something they experience, not who they are.*

Please remind your young person that their character doesn't need to be an enemy. Emotions are part of being human, and they often show up because they're trying to help in some way. These activities gently encourage young people to meet their character with curiosity and compassion, which can help them learn to offer that same compassion to themselves.

YOUR ROLE AS THE ADULT

It's really important that this is a positive experience for your young person. The best ways you can support them throughout it are to:

- *Listen with interest and care.*
- *Follow the child's lead.*
- *Keep the experience calm, steady, and reassuring.*
- *Let the activity stay creative, playful, and pressure-free.*

THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY FOR A CHARACTER TO LOOK, FEEL, OR BEHAVE.

We often find that creating our own character beside the young person can be a really positive experience, so feel very free to roll up your sleeves and grab a pencil!

KEEPING IT SAFE

These activities should always feel optional and supportive. Just remember:

- *The child can stop at any time.*
- *You can pause or stop between pages.*
- *Some children may only want to do one activity, or none at all, and that's completely okay.*



PARENT•CARER•MEDICAL PROF. LETTER

If the child stops enjoying the activity or becomes upset, overwhelmed, or distressed, please stop immediately.

Whilst doing this activity, you may feel concerned about something that comes up or something your young person says, and that's absolutely okay - it's great they're sharing with you. Have a chat with your Dr or medical professional if you are worried about anything, they can help you get the support your young person deserves.

This activity isn't designed to be therapy and should only be used as part of a therapeutic intervention if done so by a health professional who has been trained on young people's mental health.

JUST A GENTLE, LITTLE REMINDER.

The character is not the child, and it is not bad or naughty. It is simply a way of understanding how big emotions can show up and how they can be met with kindness, curiosity, and compassion.

We hope this pack brings both you and your young person joy and relief.

With the very warmest of wishes,

Catherine

TAMING OLIVIA



TAMING OLIVIA



YOUTH SPACE

Thank you so much for using our resources. We really hope you found them helpful!

If you're looking to build your own wellbeing toolkit, our Etsy shop has a range of adult-focused packs. From self-compassion to relapse prevention and boundary-setting, they're designed to help you strengthen skills that support your long-term mental wellbeing. All within the colourful and compassionate world of Taming Olivia.

Stay tuned because we have a children's and young people's section coming very soon too!

WEBSITE

www.tamingolivia.com

EMAIL

catherine@tamingolivia.com

ETSY

www.etsy.com/shop/TamingOliviaStore

Taming Olivia started eight years ago as a blog discussing how self-compassion, kindness, and creativity helped in OCD recovery. Throughout these eight years, it became clear that the majority of resources given to people hoping to build positive mental well-being were plain and uninspiring. Where were the colourful, engaging, and impactful resources that helped promote the growth of the new skills we were working towards?

As one specialist social, emotional and mental health qualified teacher with OCD, and one artist who lives with someone with OCD, we thought we might have the right combination of skills to create some. We had a go, shared them with a few people, received incredible feedback, and decided to open a shop in the hope that we could help even more people.

And here is the result! Our packs are designed to inform, engage and encourage people to develop skills all within a space that is compassionate, bright and uplifting.

Taming Olivia has a simple goal: to create feel-good, engaging, and impactful resources that help people build positive mental well-being and to help address some of the needs arising from mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression and OCD. It is our mission to make resources that are accessible and enjoyable for all.

Please note that neither of us is a therapist or medical professional, and these printables are not a substitute for professional advice, professional training, or therapeutic services. If you feel you need professional support, please seek it. You are way too important not to.

IOCDF - Hero Award
WINNER 2024



International
OCD
Foundation

NHS Who Cares Wins
Mental Health Hero
Runner-up



Catherine x

Taming Olivia