

# TAMING OLIVIA



## Identifying and Addressing Overwhelm.



# When might I be vulnerable to overwhelm?

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Think about some of the times you are most likely to feel overwhelmed. There could be social, situational, professional, personal, physical, mental and emotional reasons behind those feelings and list them below. We've given you a few examples to help you get started.

Being around lots of people - spending a long time socialising -

Experiencing your boundaries being crossed

Being away from home and/or routine - Being in a noisy environment -

Jet lag or lack of sleep - Experiencing Long days - Multi-tasking

Lack of downtime and breaks - Overload of responsibilities - Experiencing hunger or thirst

**ADD ANY ADDITIONAL TIMES YOU GET OVERWHELMED BELOW...**

Handwriting practice area with ten sets of dashed lines on a light blue background.

**NOW THAT WE'VE EXAMINED WHAT MAKES US FEEL OVERWHELMED, LET'S EXAMINE HOW WE CAN IDENTIFY THOSE FEELINGS!**



# What does Overwhelm feel like?

When you do something new or something that pushes you out of your comfort zone, it is totally natural to feel overwhelmed and anxious. Although these feelings can be uncomfortable, they don't mean you have to stop trying new things or stretching yourself. They just mean that it might be a good idea to take some steps to protect your energy.

Try the following activity to help you identify when you might be feeling overwhelmed and what you can do to address those feelings. We've provided you with a couple of examples, but add as many ideas as you want to each section!

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS I AM GETTING OVERWHELMED AND/OR ANXIOUS?

### CHANGES TO MY BODY

E.g. faster heartbeat.  
Tight muscles.

### CHANGES TO MY THINKING

E.g. Losing concentration.  
Increase in negative thoughts.

### CHANGES TO MY BEHAVIOUR

E.g. Being short-tempered or snappy.  
Asking for additional reassurance.  
Increased people-pleasing behaviour.



# Addressing Feelings of Overwhelm

**NOW WE'VE IDENTIFIED TIMES WHEN WE MIGHT BE PRONE TO OVERWHELM,  
AND LOOKED AT HOW WE CAN RECOGNISE OUR OWN SIGNS, LETS THINK  
ABOUT HOW WE CAN ADDRESS THOSE FEELINGS!**

We all have our own ways of resting and recharging. Have a think about some of the things you find helpful and jot them down below. We've given you a few examples to get you started!

Taking time out - Breathing exercises - Taking a nap  
Practicing acceptance - Spending some time alone - Gentle exercise  
Reading - Creative activities - Drink water - Have a snack  
Practice mindfulness - Speak to someone



A large light blue rectangular area containing 15 horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.



# Identifying Overwhelm

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## REMEMBER!

The purpose of this activity is to help you and to lessen anxiety and overwhelm

**B**ut please remember that for those of us with OCD, any tracking activity can turn into a compulsion. Compulsions make you feel more anxious and overwhelmed; they tend to get more intrusive over time, and you may feel very uncomfortable if you stop doing them.

**T**ry to keep mindful of whether this activity is helping you, and if it isn't, stop. There will be other well-being activities that you will find helpful!

**B**eating anxiety often involves facing your fears. So also try to be mindful to make sure you are taking breaks so that you can return to what you are doing rather than avoiding the anxiety. Avoidance is a particularly sneaky compulsion!

**S**o there you have it! I hope this little freebie has helped you to:

- Identify times in which you may feel overwhelmed.
- Recognise the signs that you are starting to get overwhelmed.
- Give you the space to consider how you can lower your own feelings of overwhelm.





# WELL DONE FOR LEARNING YOUR WAY THROUGH THIS PACK!



*If you have any ideas about packs that you would like to see in the future, please get in touch with us via the details below. If you haven't already, please sign up for our newsletter on the website for more content and freebies.*

## TAMING OLIVIA

*Website*

[www.tamingolivia.com](http://www.tamingolivia.com)

*Email*

[catherine@tamingolivia.com](mailto:catherine@tamingolivia.com)

*facebook*

[@tamingoliviaMH](https://www.facebook.com/tamingoliviaMH)

*Instagram*

[@Taming.olivia](https://www.instagram.com/Taming.olivia)

*Twitter*

[@TamingOlivia](https://twitter.com/TamingOlivia)

*LinkedIn*

[www.linkedin.com/in/catherinebenfield](http://www.linkedin.com/in/catherinebenfield)



**Catherine  
Benfield**

*Illustrated by Pete Benfield*

Thank you so much for supporting our small business - it means the world to us!

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 new skills we were working towards?

As one qualified social, emotional and mental health 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.

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.