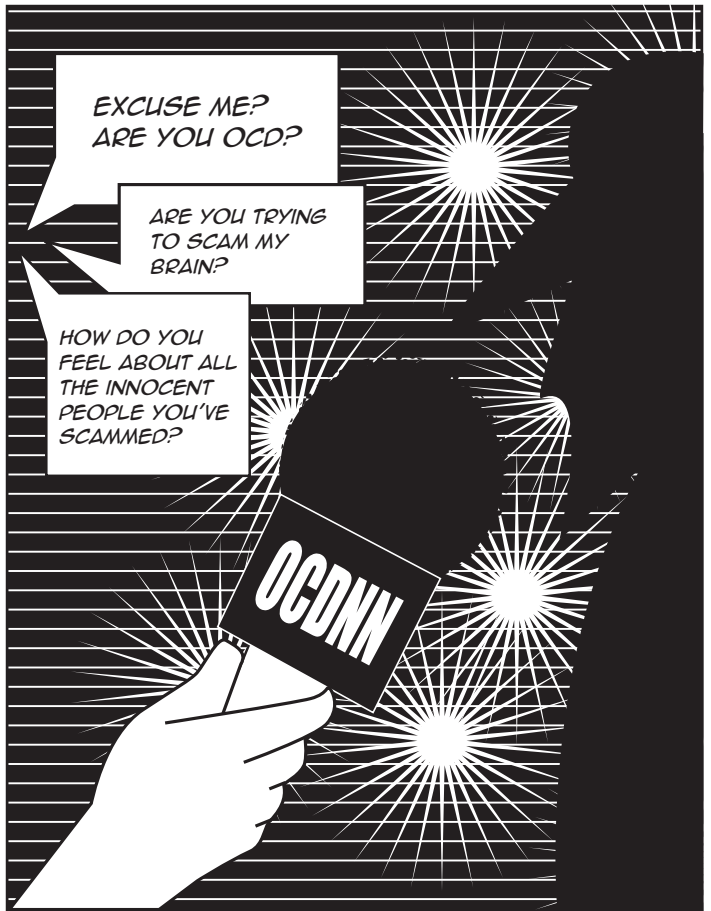
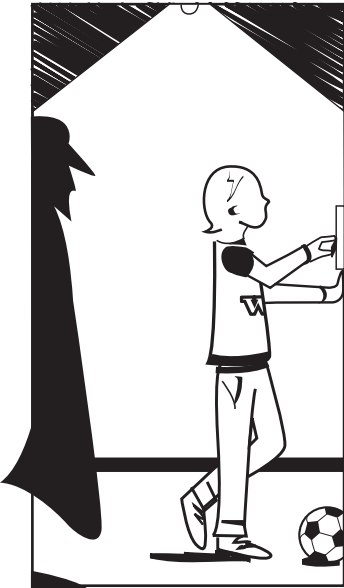


# The BRAIN SCAM

IS OCD SCAMMING YOU?



THIS GRAPHIC NOVEL HAS BEEN CREATED AS AN AWARENESS-RAISING RESOURCE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD) AND HELPSEEKING.

IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN BY A YOUNG PERSON WITH OCD, IN COLLABORATION WITH ORYGEN YOUTH HEALTH STAFF.



*Opening minds to a brighter future*

© Orygen Youth Health Research Centre 2010.

Content was written by a young person with OCD, with the assistance of Orygen Youth Health staff.

Design & illustration by OYH Design & Digital Media.

For more information about Orygen Youth Health, publications & resources please visit our website

**[www.oyh.org.au](http://www.oyh.org.au)**

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 2.5 Australia License.

To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/au/>

You are free to share (to copy, distribute and transmit the work) provided you attribute the work to the publisher (Orygen Youth Health) and do not use this work for commercial purposes or alter, transform, or build upon this work.

To contact the publisher visit us online, mail or ph:

**Online:** [www.oyh.org.au/brainscam](http://www.oyh.org.au/brainscam)

**Email:** [info@oyh.org.au](mailto:info@oyh.org.au)

**Mail:** Orygen Youth Health  
Training & Communications  
Locked Bag 10, Parkville VIC 3052 Australia

**Phone:** (+61) 3 9342 3744

ISBN: 978 - 0 - 9805541 - 9 - 9



To read this publication online or print it yourself on your home printer visit [www.oyh.org.au/brainscam](http://www.oyh.org.au/brainscam) and follow the instructions for printing and assembly.

# The BRAIN SCAM

OCD FIRST APPROACHED ME WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND DIDN'T KNOW ANY DIFFERENT...



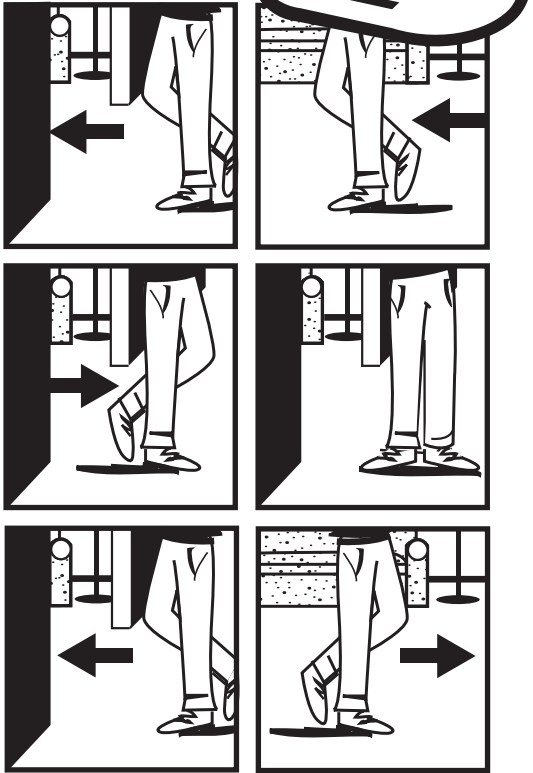
LOOKING BACK I OFTEN DID LITTLE THINGS LIKE TURNING LIGHTS ON AND OFF. IT DIDN'T SEEM TO MATTER MUCH BUT SATISFIED SOME UNIDENTIFIABLE URGE.

I HAD NO REASON TO STOP...



I WAS ABOUT 12 WHEN THE BEHAVIOUR BECAME APPARENT TO MY FAMILY. THEY STARTED TO NOTICE ME DOING ODD THINGS LIKE WASHING MY HANDS ALL THE TIME AND WALKING IN AND OUT OF DOORWAYS OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

I REALISED SOME OF THE STUFF I WAS DOING WASN'T 'NORMAL' BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM TO MATTER. AT FIRST IT WASN'T HURTING ANYONE...



BUT IT STARTED WITH LITTLE THINGS AND GREW...  
MY THOUGHTS BECAME MORE FRIGHTENING  
AND DISTRESSING. IT WAS FREAKING ME OUT.  
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS WRONG WITH ME.

IT REALLY UPSET MY FAMILY TO SEE ME SO  
DISTRESSED. THEY TRIED TO REASON WITH ME,  
TO TELL ME TO SNAP OUT OF IT, BUT I KEPT  
GETTING THE AWFUL THOUGHTS...

DON'T SIT ON THAT CHAIR!  
IT'S BAD! YOUR FAMILY  
WILL ALL GET SICK IF  
YOU DO.

WATCH OUT! IF YOU WALK  
THROUGH THAT DOORWAY  
SOMETHING TERRIBLE WILL  
HAPPEN TO YOUR PARENTS!

DON'T DRINK  
FROM THAT CUP.  
IT'S BAD!

# HELP!

# I need help NOW!

THAT'S WHEN I AGREED  
TO GET HELP AND FIRST  
LEARNED ABOUT OBSESSIVE  
COMPULSIVE DISORDER,  
OR OCD.

# OCD

MY PARENTS TOOK ME TO  
OUR GP WHO REFERRED  
ME TO A SPECIALIST.

I THEN MET MY  
PSYCHOLOGIST WHO  
PROVIDED THERAPY AND  
MY PSYCHIATRIST WHO  
PRESCRIBED MEDICATION.

TOGETHER WITH MY FAMILY  
THEY FORMED MY SUPPORT  
TEAM AND WERE VITAL IN  
HELPING ME INVESTIGATE  
AND COMBAT WHAT I  
CAME TO KNOW AS  
'THE BRAIN SCAM'.

THErapy WAS STRANGE AT FIRST BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW MY THERAPIST BUT WAS EXPECTED TO TALK TO HER ABOUT PERSONAL THINGS AND ANSWER LOTS OF QUESTIONS, BUT THIS WAS JUST SO THAT SHE COULD GET TO KNOW ME BETTER AND FIND OUT HOW OCD WAS IMPACTING ON MY LIFE.



SOME DAYS I REALLY DIDN'T FEEL LIKE GOING...

MY THERAPIST ASSURED ME IT WAS NORMAL TO FEEL THIS WAY, BUT REMINDED ME THAT THE GOAL OF GOING TO THE SESSIONS WAS TO MAKE THINGS BETTER FOR ME, AND THE MORE I WORKED ON IT THE QUICKER THINGS WOULD START TO CHANGE AND IMPROVE.

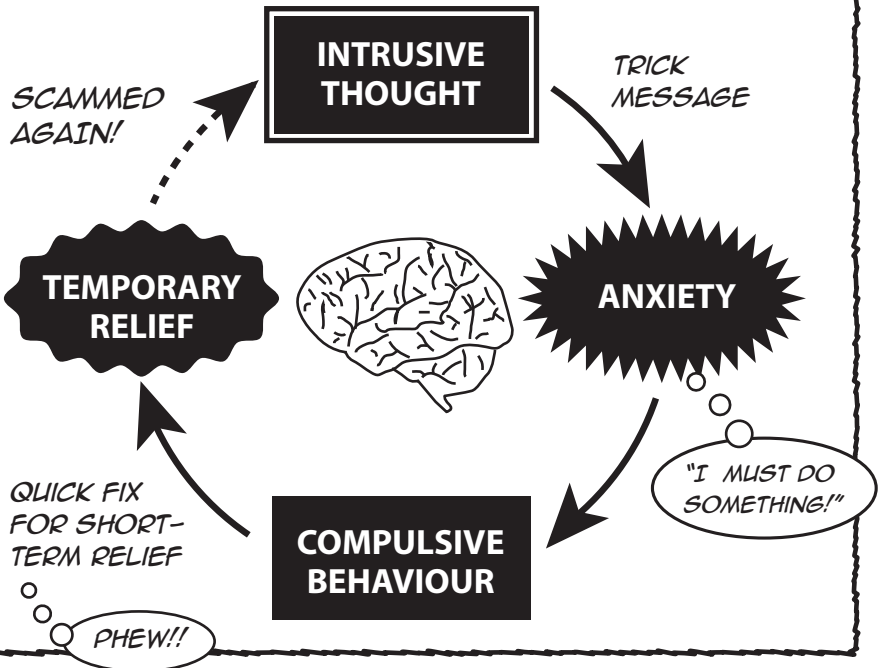
WE CAUGHT UP ONCE A WEEK AT FIRST, BUT AS TIME WENT ON I DIDN'T NEED TO COME IN AS OFTEN. I FOUND THAT AS I GOT TO KNOW HER AND TRUST HER I WAS ABLE TO LEARN A LOT OF NEW THINGS ABOUT THE BRAIN SCAM.

I LEARNT THAT OCD IS AN ANXIETY DISORDER. OCD CAN TRICK YOU BY PUTTING THOUGHTS IN YOUR HEAD THAT AREN'T TRUE AND THAT STRESS YOU OUT. THESE ARE CALLED OBSESSIONS. IT CAN MAKE YOU THINK THAT IF YOU DO SOMETHING TO COUNTERACT THE THOUGHT, LIKE A BEHAVIOUR, OR THINKING CERTAIN THOUGHTS, THEN THE STRESS WILL GO AWAY. THESE ARE CALLED COMPULSIONS.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE SCAM IS THAT THESE BEHAVIOURS AND THOUGHTS CAN TAKE UP **WAY** TOO MUCH TIME, AND GENERALLY ONLY WORK TO TAKE THE STRESS AWAY IN THE SHORT-TERM. AFTER A WHILE THE WORRYING THOUGHTS COME BACK AND THE CYCLE STARTS ALL OVER AGAIN.

I LEARNT THAT BRAIN SCAMS ARE NEVER EXACTLY THE SAME BUT THEY TEND TO OPERATE IN A SIMILAR WAY.

## BRAIN SCAM MAP





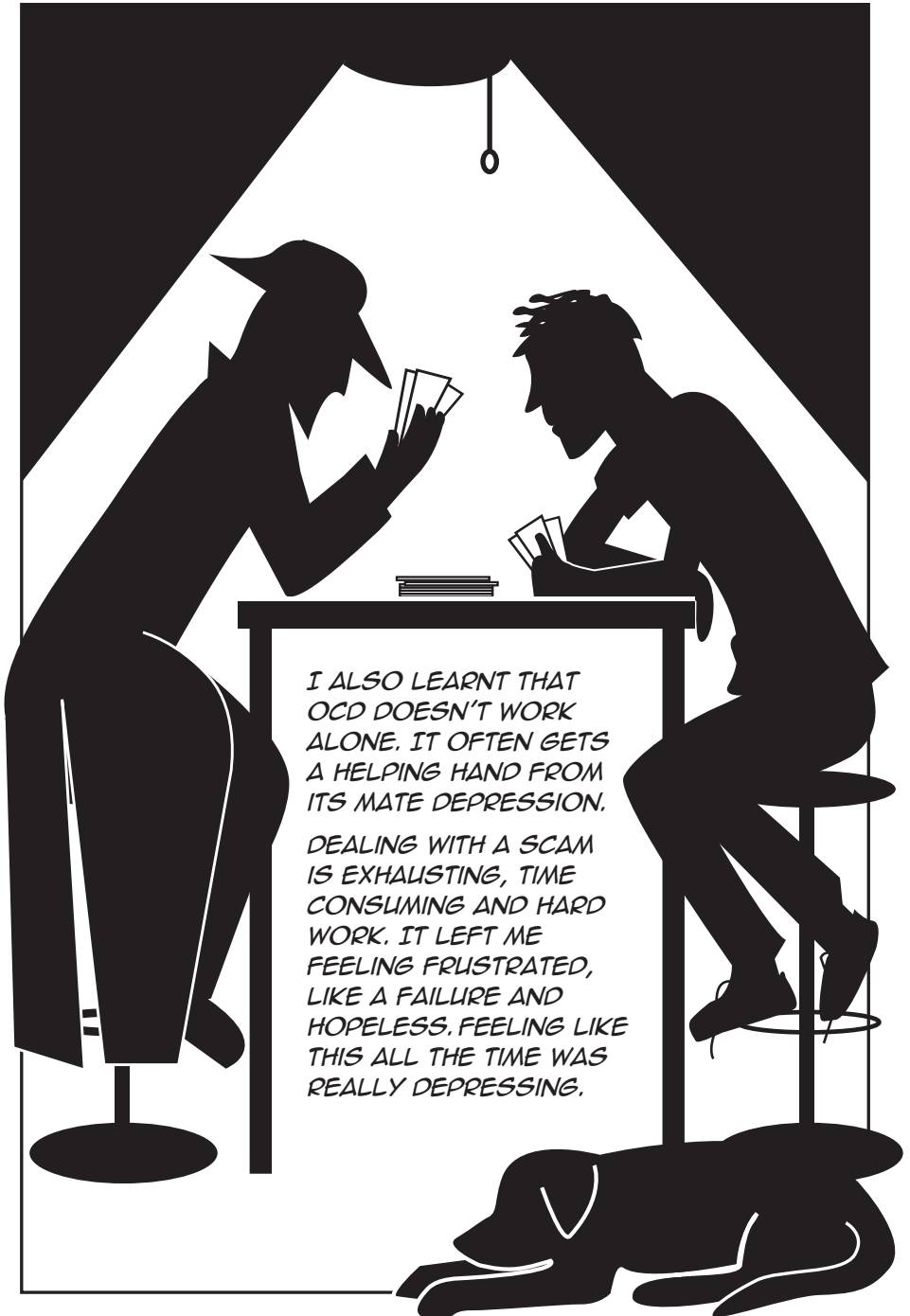
I DISCOVERED THAT OCD IS A SNEAKY AND UNSCRUPULOUS CON ARTIST. IT HAD BEEN HANGING AROUND FOR YEARS BEFORE I RECOGNISED IT WAS SCAMMING ME.



MY 12TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

TEACHING RUSTY TO SIT

SOCCER FINAL, WE TIED!



I ALSO LEARNT THAT  
OCD DOESN'T WORK  
ALONE. IT OFTEN GETS  
A HELPING HAND FROM  
ITS MATE DEPRESSION.

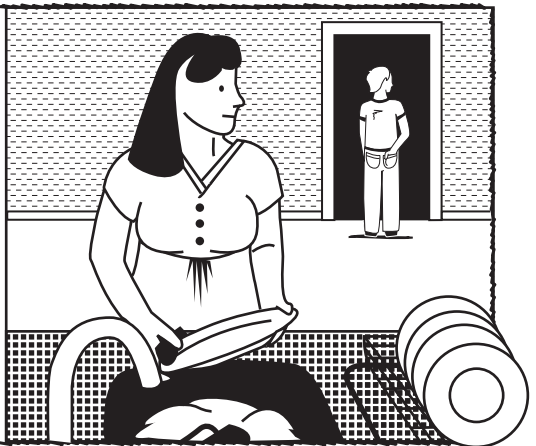
DEALING WITH A SCAM  
IS EXHAUSTING, TIME  
CONSUMING AND HARD  
WORK. IT LEFT ME  
FEELING FRUSTRATED,  
LIKE A FAILURE AND  
HOPELESS. FEELING LIKE  
THIS ALL THE TIME WAS  
REALLY DEPRESSING.

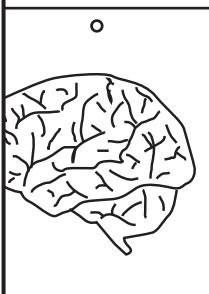
WITH THE HELP OF MY THERAPIST I GRADUALLY LEARNT TO COMBAT THE SCAM BY PRACTICING SOME BRAIN TRAINING STEPS. THIS WAS A CHALLENGE AT FIRST, BECAUSE I HAD TO DEFY THE SCAM AND STOP MYSELF FROM DOING THE THINGS THAT HELPED TO KEEP MY STRESS DOWN.



MY PARENTS HELPED BY KEEPING THINGS CALM AT HOME, REDUCING THE FOCUS OF THE OCD AND BY JUST DOING NORMAL THINGS.

IT DIDN'T HELP IF THEY DREW ATTENTION TO MY ODD ACTIONS OR ENCOURAGED THEM.

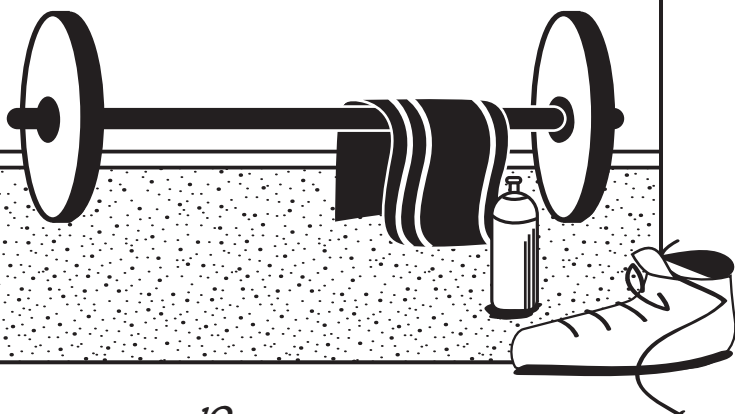




## **BRAIN TRAINING TIPS**

### **HOW TO COMBAT THE SCAM**

- 1. IDENTIFY THE OCD THOUGHT WHEN IT OCCURS**
- 2. DISOBEY THE OCD. DON'T LISTEN TO THE TRICK MESSAGES.**
- 3. RATIONALISE WITH THEM. TELL THE SCAM 'YOU'RE NOT REAL!' OR 'THOUGHTS ARE NOT FACTS!'**
- 4. PROVE THE SCAM WRONG**
- 5. REMEMBER THAT FEELING BAD INITIALLY WILL MEAN FEELING GREAT LATER. THE MORE YOU DO IT THE SHORTER THE WAITING TIME TO FEELING GOOD.**
- 6. PRACTICE. SOMETIMES I DELIBERATELY SOUGHT OUT THE OCD TO DISPROVE IT.**



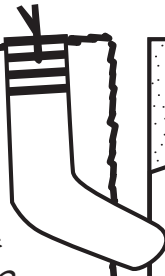
ONE SCAM TRIED TO TRICK ME INTO THINKING THAT MY SOCKS WERE 'BAD'... AND THAT IF I CHOSE BAD SOCKS TO WEAR THEN SOMETHING BAD WOULD HAPPEN.

SOMETIMES I CHANGED MY SOCKS SEVERAL TIMES AS I WAS DRESSING, TRYING TO FIND THE 'GOOD' SOCKS.

WHAT A BRAIN SCAM!!! HOW CAN SOCKS BE 'GOOD' OR 'BAD'? HOW CAN THERE BE A CONNECTION BETWEEN MY SOCKS AND SOMETHING BAD HAPPENING?

SO I TOOK ON THE BRAIN SCAM AND PUT ON ALL MY SOCKS, ONE BY ONE, AND SKIDDED AROUND THE HOUSE IN THEM LIKE TOM CRUISE IN 'RISKY BUSINESS'! I WAS WORRIED SOMETHING BAD WOULD HAPPEN BUT IT DIDN'T!

BRAIN TRAINING IS REALLY HARD AT FIRST BUT AFTER A FEW SUCCESSES I FELT STRONGER AND MORE ABLE TO TAKE ON THE CHALLENGE.



YOU'RE A BAD SOCK!



IT'S EASY TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THE SCAM SO I'VE LEARNT TO STEP BACK AND CREATE SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN ME AND MY THOUGHTS. I IMAGINE MYSELF AS A ROVING REPORTER EXPOSING OCD.

EXCUSE ME?  
ARE YOU OCD?

ARE YOU TRYING  
TO SCAM MY  
BRAIN?

HOW DO YOU  
FEEL ABOUT ALL  
THE INNOCENT  
PEOPLE YOU'VE  
SCAMMED?

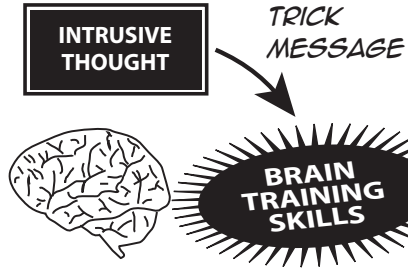
OCDNN

A hand holding a microphone with 'OCDNN' on it, set against a background of fireworks and a grid pattern.

I NEED TO BE ON CONSTANT ALERT FOR THE SCAM AND ANY OPPORTUNITY TO DISOBEY THE TRICK MESSAGES OVER AND OVER AGAIN... BUT I AM PROOF THAT YOU CAN UNCOVER AND OUTSMART A BRAIN SCAM.

AFTER GOING TO THERAPY AND HAVING MEDICATION FOR THE PAST 2 YEARS I FEEL 85% BETTER.

THE TRICK MESSAGES STILL COME BUT I CAN RESPOND TO THEM IN A TOTALLY DIFFERENT WAY AND THEY RARELY CAUSE ME MUCH ANXIETY OR DISTRESS.




I NOW HAVE THE SKILLS TO MANAGE THE BRAIN SCAM ON MY OWN.

OCD BARELY IMPACTS ON MY LIFE ANYMORE. IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T STOP ME FROM DOING ANYTHING I WANT TO NOW... LIKE GOING TO UNI, HAVING A PART TIME JOB, STUDYING, HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS AND DOING ALL THE DAILY STUFF.

GETTING MY LIFE BACK WHEN OCD USED TO INFECT EVERY PART OF MY DAY MEANS I CAN REALLY ENJOY AND APPRECIATE THE THINGS THAT OTHERS TAKE FOR GRANTED.





*This graphic novel is based on a young person's experience of OCD. We thank him for sharing his story.*

To get help see your local GP or call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

---

More information is available at the following resources.

[WWW.HEADSPACE.ORG.AU](http://WWW.HEADSPACE.ORG.AU)

[WWW.REACHOUT.COM](http://WWW.REACHOUT.COM)

[WWW.BEYONDBLUE.ORG.AU](http://WWW.BEYONDBLUE.ORG.AU)