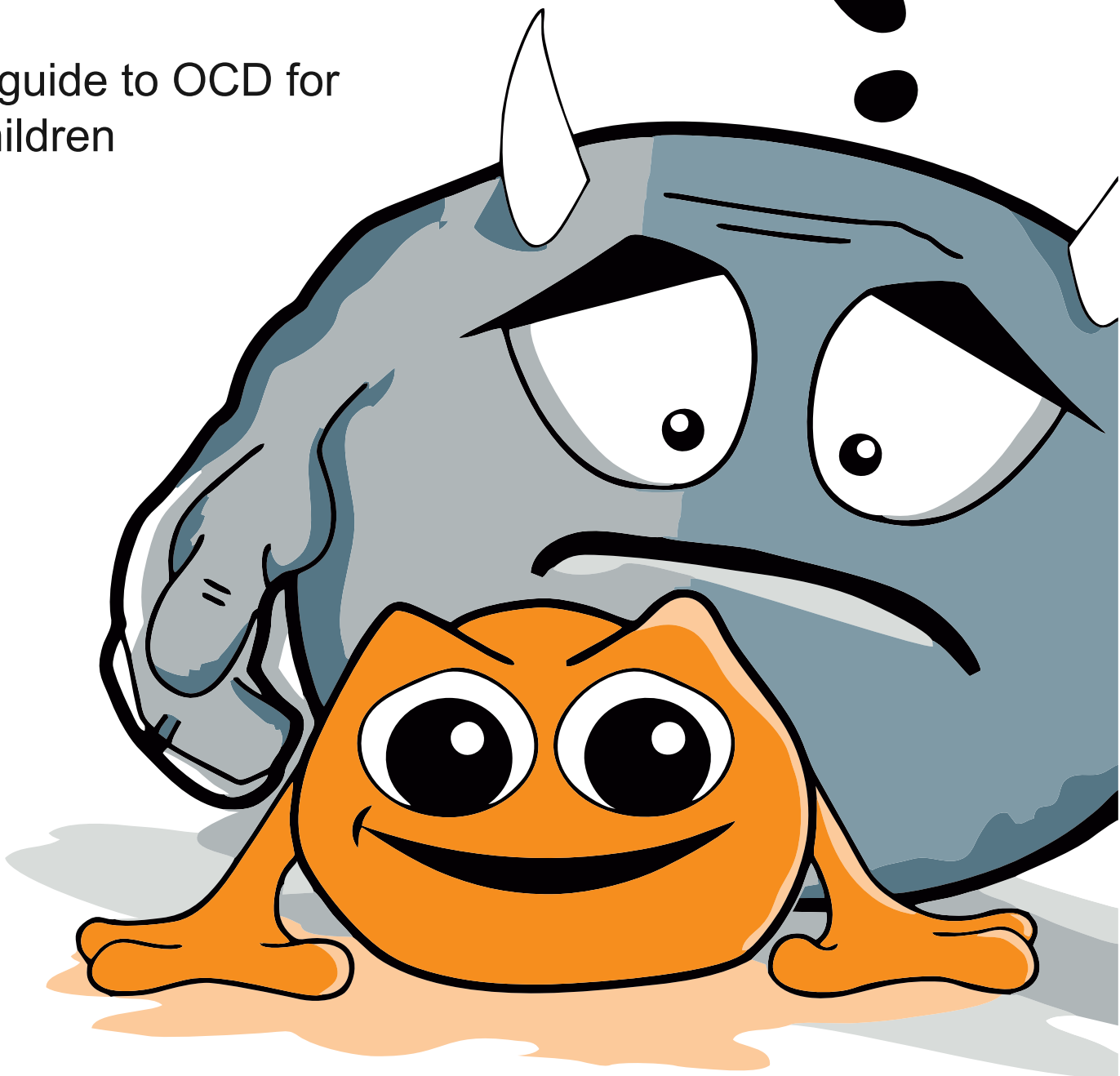
OCD ?

A guide to OCD for children



Come and meet

jolly and GRUMP

as they explain what OCD is

Do you worry a lot? A whole lot!

Everyone worries about things in their lives: family, school, friends and so on. But for some people, these worries become so BIG that they make them do things they do not want or need to do.

These worries can take up so much time that there is little time left for the things they enjoy, such as playing with friends or spending time with family. The worries can make us do particular things to try to feel better, but they keep coming back and disturbing us.

There is a name for this: OCD, or obsessive-compulsive disorder, if you want to use the long, complicated name!

Meet

Jolly and GRUMP



Jolly is usually happy, but Grump bothers him a lot.

What is OCD?

Everyone worries about something sometimes. But OCD can make people worry FAR TOO MUCH. OCD is a nasty bully that pushes you around and makes you unhappy. OCD can make people feel very distressed. Some people with OCD feel worried, others feel sad, and some feel that things simply do not feel quite right.

OCD thoughts

OCD has two sides. One side is OCD thoughts—another name for worrying thoughts. The worrying thoughts keep filling your head, no matter how hard you try to make them go away.

OCD thoughts can take many different forms:

- feeling that your hands are not clean
- worrying about germs
- worrying that you might harm someone you care about
- feeling that you have to count to a particular number
- feeling that certain numbers are lucky or unlucky
- feeling that everything has to be neat and tidy
- worrying that something bad will happen to you or someone you care about, such as your mum or dad, brother or sister, or a cuddly toy
- or something completely different



But you do not need to worry. These nasty, unpleasant thoughts are exactly that: just thoughts!

Don’t let OCD win!

OCD responses

“OCD responses” are things OCD makes us think we have to do. We do what OCD wants us to do in order to feel better and safer.

These actions may include:

- washing your hands again and again, or in a particular way
- counting or saying things in your head
- asking the same question again and again
- avoiding particular numbers while counting
- tidying your room or cleaning again and again, even though everything is already neat and clean
- avoiding knives and scissors
- checking electrical sockets again and again
- checking again and again that the door is locked



OCD can make you feel under pressure when you are at school, at home, out with your family, trying to fall asleep or at any time.

Try to resist the OCD responses!

How OCD can make you feel

OCD is cruel and relentless and will try to upset you whenever it can. For example, it may stop you from going to a birthday party because you think something bad will happen if you go. It may also make you think you will do badly at school if you think of a particular number or word, or make a particular movement.

OCD can make you feel anxious and nervous, giving you butterflies in your stomach or making you feel sick. Sometimes it can make you want to run away, hide or cry. OCD can make some people feel very sad, upset or embarrassed; you may feel that no one can understand how you feel.



Sometimes, OCD is all you can see

Why do I have OCD?

No one really knows why some people develop OCD and others do not. But one thing we know for certain is that it is not your fault. It is like having asthma or a stammer.

OCD does NOT mean that:

- you have been naughty
- your mum or dad is angry with you
- you are crazy
- you are mad
- you are weak

OCD is not unusual. It is estimated that about 1–2 in 100 children and young people have OCD. So if you have OCD, you are certainly not alone.



What can I do?

REMEMBER that OCD is not your fault. OCD is a mental health condition, just as asthma and diabetes are physical illnesses. And REMEMBER that you can learn to manage OCD, just as you can learn to play football.

If you have worries like these, remember that you are certainly not the only one who feels this way. About 1–2 in 100 children and young people have OCD. The good news is that many people can help you. It may feel frightening to tell someone about the worries, but it is very important to tell someone how you feel so they can help you.

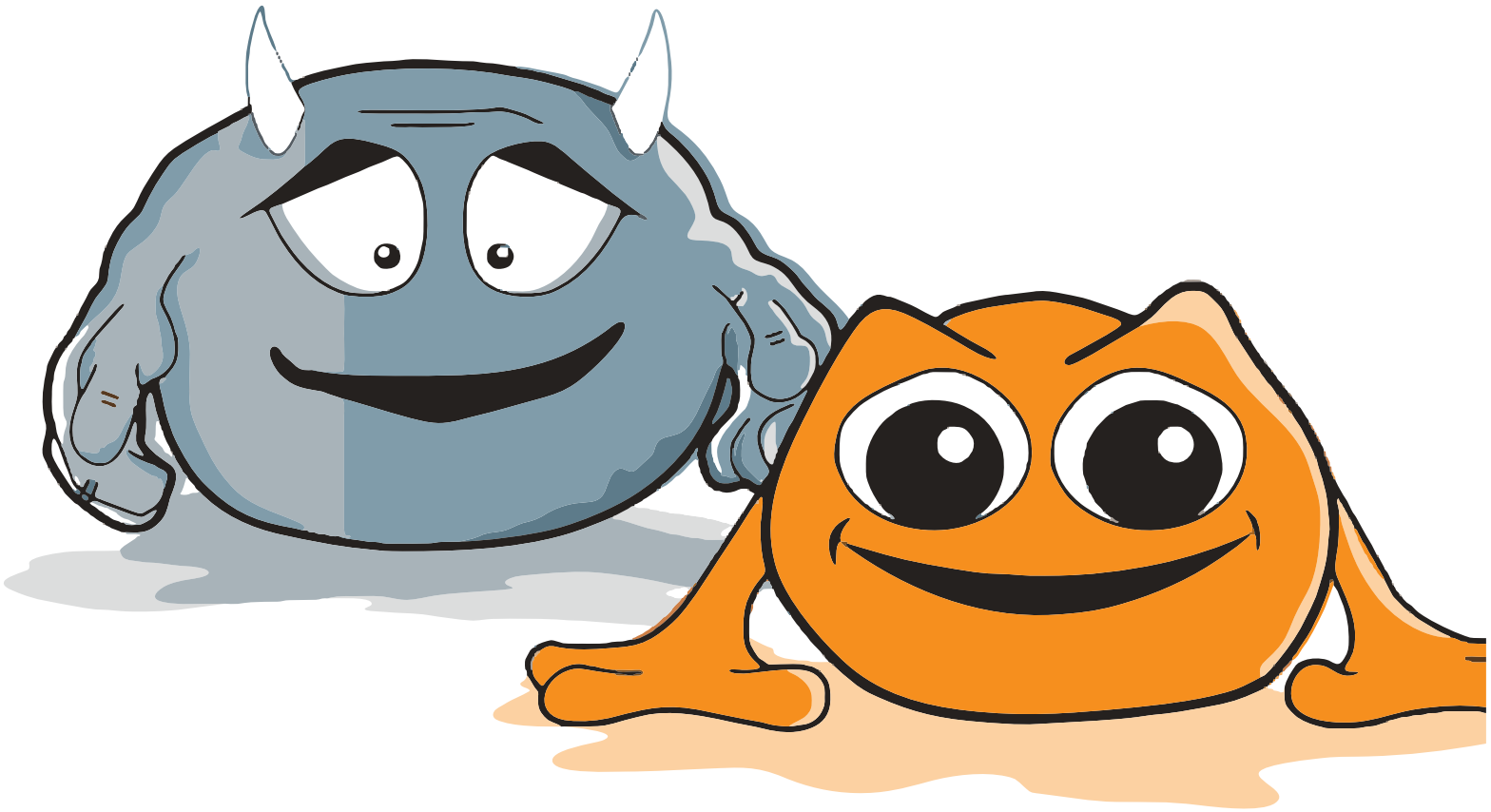
You could talk to:

- your mum or dad
- your grandmother, aunt or uncle
- an older sister or brother
- your teacher at school
- your football coach or music teacher
- or someone else you know will listen to you

What happens if I tell someone?

If you tell someone about your worries, they will help you get help. You need a special kind of help so you can understand OCD and learn not to listen to Grump.

A psychologist helps people who feel sad or frightened, just as a doctor helps people who are ill. The psychologist knows a great deal about OCD and is good at helping children who worry a lot.



With help, you can beat OCD!

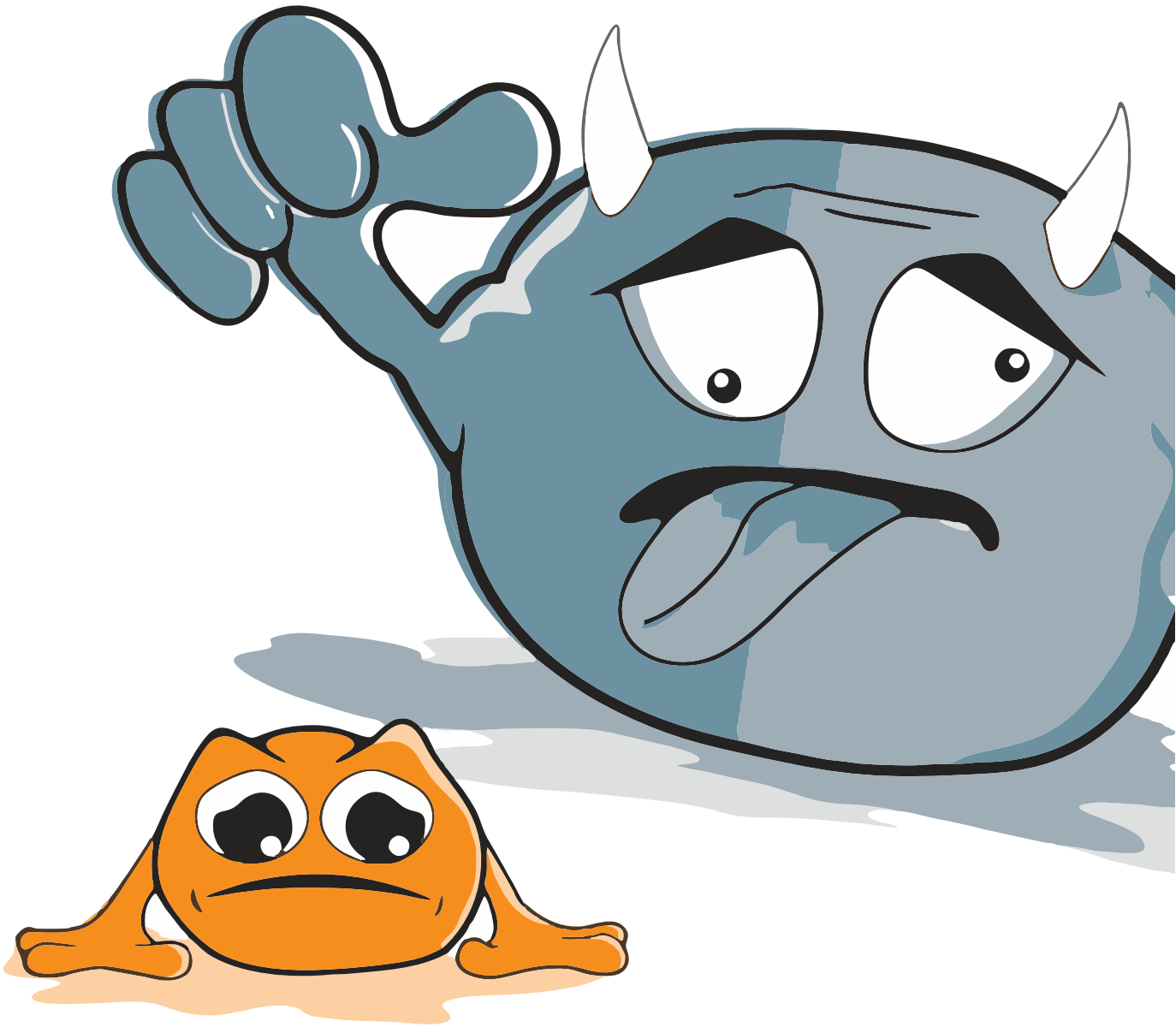
What happens if I talk to the psychologist?

The psychologist will talk with you about your worries and ask how you feel. Do not worry—it is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. The psychologist simply wants to understand so you can get the right help.

It is very important to remember that OCD is not you; it is a bully trying to frighten you. The psychologist may ask you to give your OCD a name or draw what it looks like.

Here are some names you might choose:

- Grump
- OCD monster
- Bully
- Idiot OCD
- Silly Thoughts
- or another name you think is good



Special OCD training

The psychologist will want to talk with your mum and dad so they can help you as well as possible. It can be hard for parents to know how to help, so they also need to learn from the psychologist.

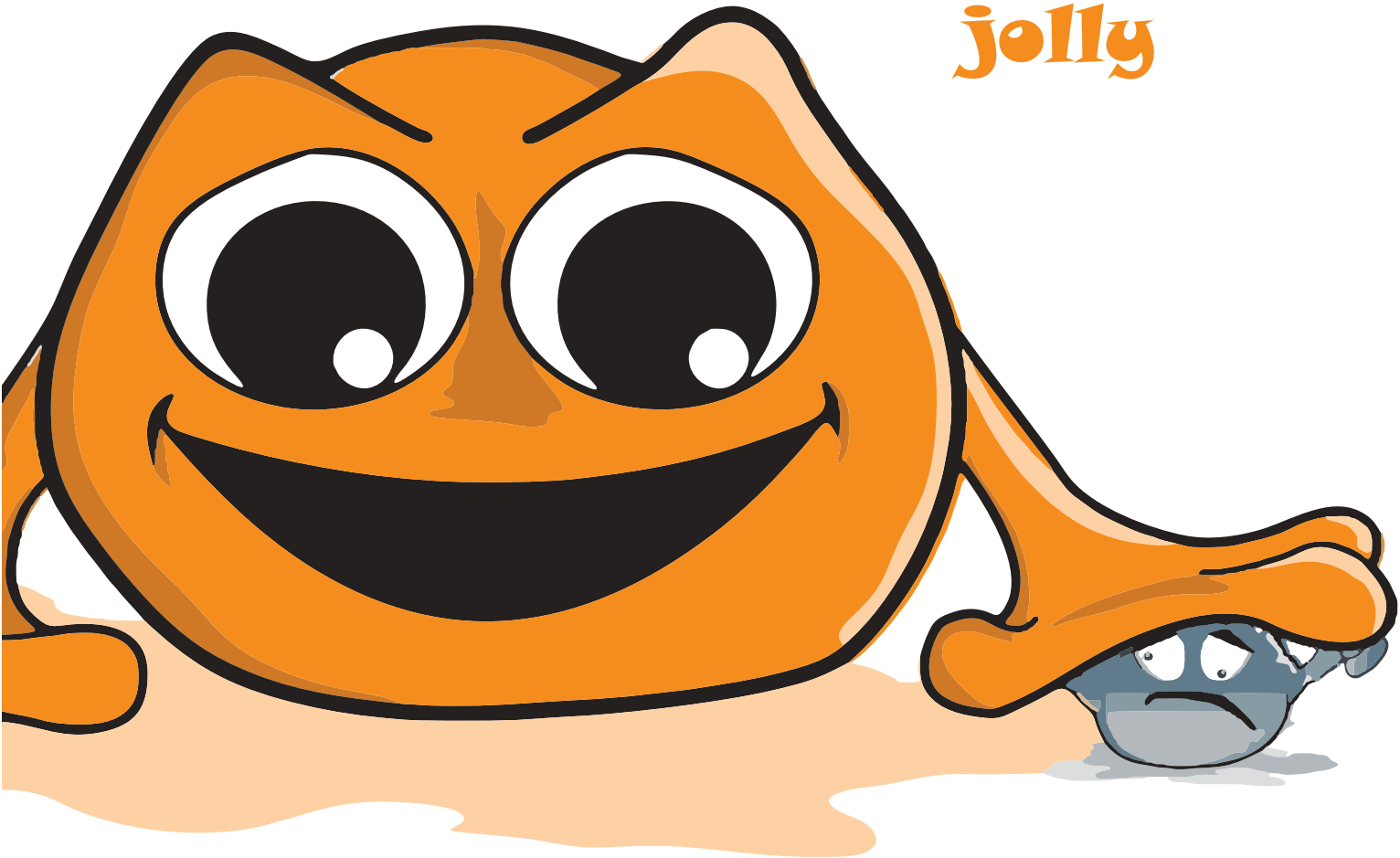
You and your parents will receive special OCD training from the psychologist to help you feel better. This is called CBT, short for cognitive behavioural therapy. The psychologist will help you practise in small steps that you agree on together. The exercises may feel frightening. Say if a step is too hard, so you can adjust it together.

If you find it particularly hard to fight OCD, the psychologist may recommend medication to reduce the anxiety. The medication gives you a little extra help, just as an inhaler makes it easier to breathe if you have asthma.

Will I always have these worries?

With help from the psychologist—and your mum and dad—the worries and distress can lessen. Many children feel better with treatment.

The thoughts do not have to disappear for you to feel better. You can learn to let them be without doing what OCD says. Getting help early gives you a chance to practise managing OCD and make more room for things you enjoy, just like…



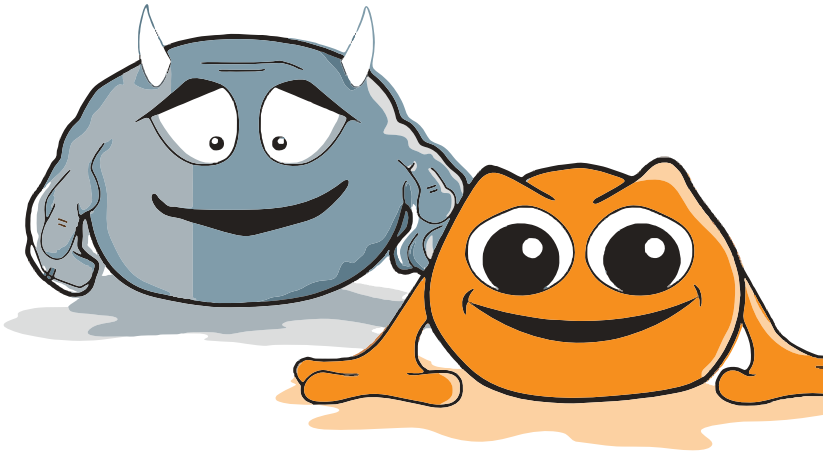
jolly

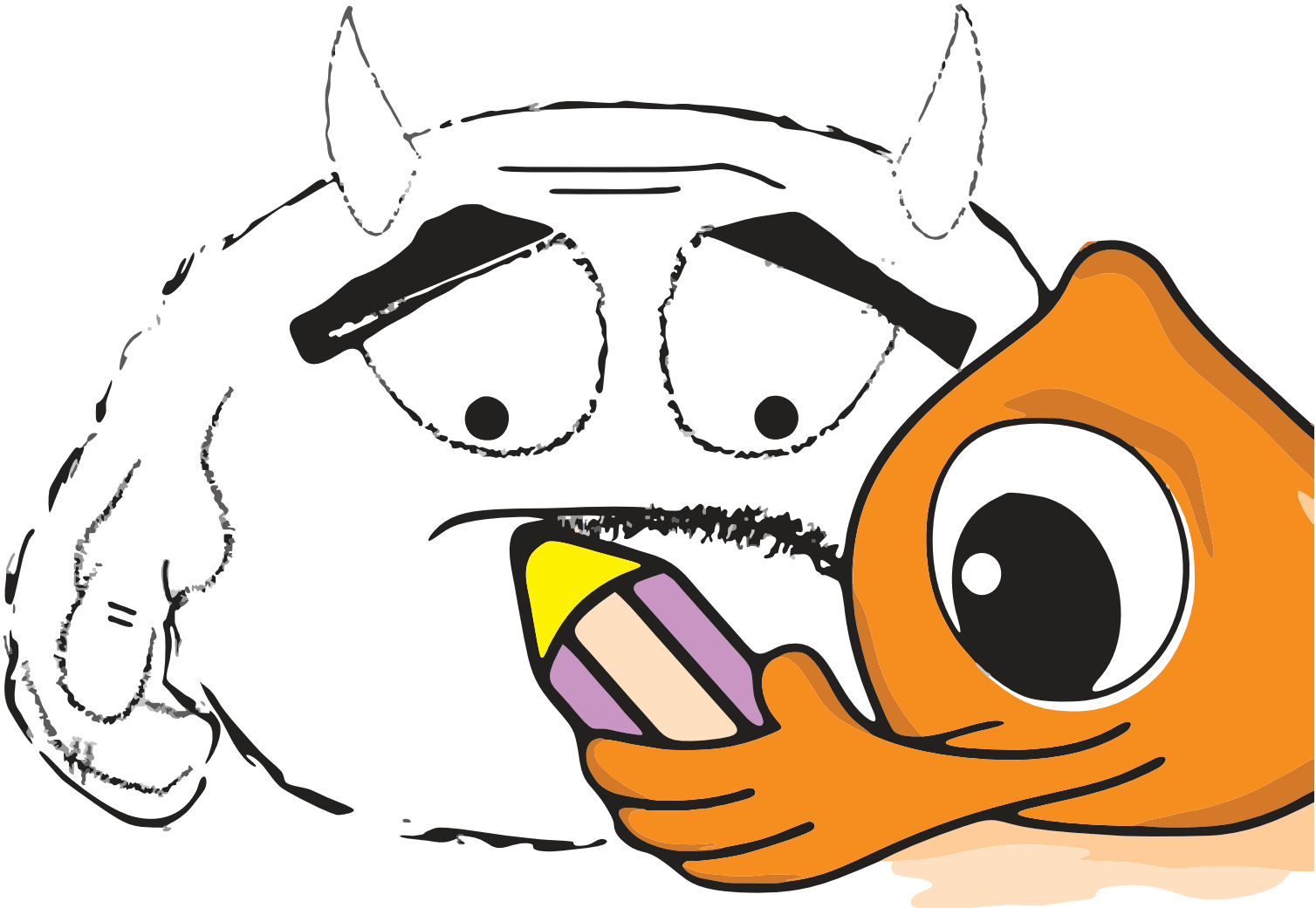
Make a drawing of your own

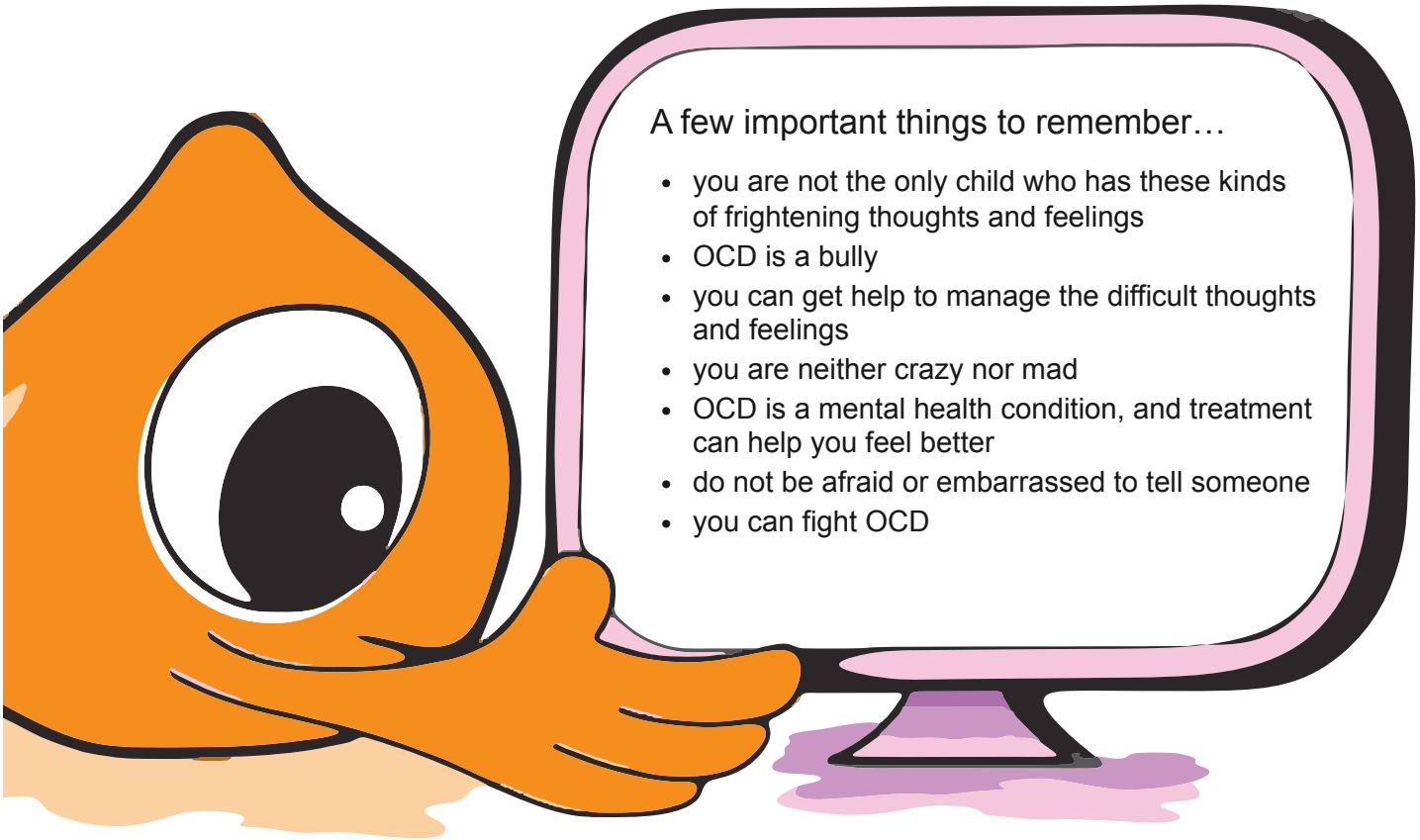
You can draw what OCD looks like to you, or how it feels. You could also draw Jolly, Grump or something you enjoy.

You can use colours, shapes or characters. Your drawing does not need to look like the pictures in this guide.

You can keep your drawing somewhere safe, or share it with a grown-up you trust if you would like to.







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