

In the second grade, I was diagnosed with OCD, or obsessive compulsive disorder. I think that whenever people think of OCD, a general stigma pops up into their head and they think it just concerns germs, cleanliness, and keeping things neat. However, it's much more exhausting than that and it can be mentally draining, ranging from ongoing compulsions to intrusive thoughts. I want to educate those who think that OCD isn't a big deal, and share a little bit of my experience.

When I was in elementary school, my bed had an abundance of stuffed animals on it which others can probably relate to. However, before bed each night, I had to organize my stuffed animals along the headboard or beside my pillow in a very specific order. I could not go to bed comfortably without completing this ritual, and I ended up going to therapy to try and end this habit. This proved to be successful. This ritual was due to OCD telling me that I had to organize them that way, otherwise things just didn't feel right. I decided to use my final project to reflect this. I piled up stuffed animals, which when stood in front of a spotlight, reflect a shadow of a monstrous looking figure. I used both a yellow and blue light because I thought it looked as if the shadow figure had a shadow itself, which really intrigued me. The stuffed animals are meant to represent the meticulous way I used to organize them, and the shadow monster is meant to represent my OCD, showing how it hides behind these routines.

I still face new challenges that my OCD creates, and sometimes struggle with old ones. Despite this, I know that deep down it's just my head playing tricks on me and that I am capable of getting through it, no matter how persistent my OCD shadow monster is.

SHADOW MONSTER

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