

What made you decide to pursue publication?

The choice to pursue publication was complicated. On one hand, I felt extremely proud of this case study and knew it was important for me to try and share it on a larger scale. On the other hand, I felt very hesitant to reveal such personal information, regardless of whether it was being published anonymously or not. After receiving feedback from my classmates, close friends, and my family, I decided that this was an amazing opportunity for me to further develop my writing skills and talk about a taboo topic that I am so passionate about.

Can you describe how you came to develop this writing project?

I signed up for the course knowing that I had a unique perspective on happiness that I wanted to share. Developing this case study over the course of three months was a journey in vulnerability and truly tested my ability to open up to strangers in my class who knew virtually nothing else about me. When my writing class had an initial discussion on my essay and I was required to read the deeply personal information in my essay out loud for others to hear, I felt encouraged to continue exploring this subject as the focus of my case study. My professor, Dr. Sheryl Welte Emch, provided amazing guidance and, without her support, I could not have developed this case study so thoroughly.

Describe the writing and research process that went into this article—what stands out for you about that process?

When Sheryl presented the semester-long case study project, I began writing a draft of my profile, taking moments from various points in my life that demonstrated my state of mind and how my journey with mental illness was progressing. After completing these subsections and gathering feedback during class discussion, I began editing the profile to emphasize common themes throughout the story.

Writing the analysis was an extremely insightful process. Through various databases, I was able to find research studies, case studies, and self-help books to find information relating to obsessive compulsive disorder, which had consumed my life for years as a child before I even knew what it was. Many of these sources touched on a snowball effect that OCD tends to have – causing anxiety and depression to worsen in a cyclic manner. I discovered a lot about the roots of these mental illnesses and, after gathering information applicable to my story, I wrote a rough draft of my analysis

What were the most challenging and/or your favorite aspects of the publishing process?

The most difficult aspect of the publishing process was trying to cut down the essay as it quite long. Even though I had felt hesitant to change it, eliminating some small parts was necessary, especially knowing that I have a tendency to be long-winded and redundant at times. Overall, these edits made my voice as the author stronger and maintained the logic flow of ideas in the analysis section in particular. I enjoyed watching the final edits come together and seeing what the piece looked like altogether in the final Deliberations draft, with the images and page formatting making it look more cohesive and dynamic.

What do you hope the article does/how do you hope the article impacts readers?

I hope that having an open dialogue about mental illness can allow readers who struggle with mental health to feel as though they are not alone in their suffering. It can be hard to recognize and acknowledge when you need help, but I think that hearing others' stories can help develop our own ability to be vulnerable. Mental illness has always been such a private issue that has consumed much of my life as a young adult. I was able to find a sense of understanding and closure through this case study by being open about mental health and the stigma mental illness carries, which I hope readers can do too.