

Shelly the Seagull

Educating Children About Depression



Shelly Weiss
Ed.S, LMHC, CRC

Illustrated by Christopher Harmon

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Shelly the Seagull: Educating Children About Depression

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The stories and opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author. We do not attempt to give medical advice but address the emotional health of the subject based on best psychological practices. Please consult a medical professional with your questions and concerns.

INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers,

My name is Shelly and I was born different from most babies; I was born with cerebral palsy. My speech is slurred and I have a crooked walk because of the cerebral palsy. I wrote this book to help others understand that the world is full of people who have various medical conditions, gifts, talents, personalities, and appearances. Shelly is a character who, despite various challenges, maintains a positive attitude and stays determined through it all! I hope you enjoy Shelly's story.

Your Friend,
Shelly

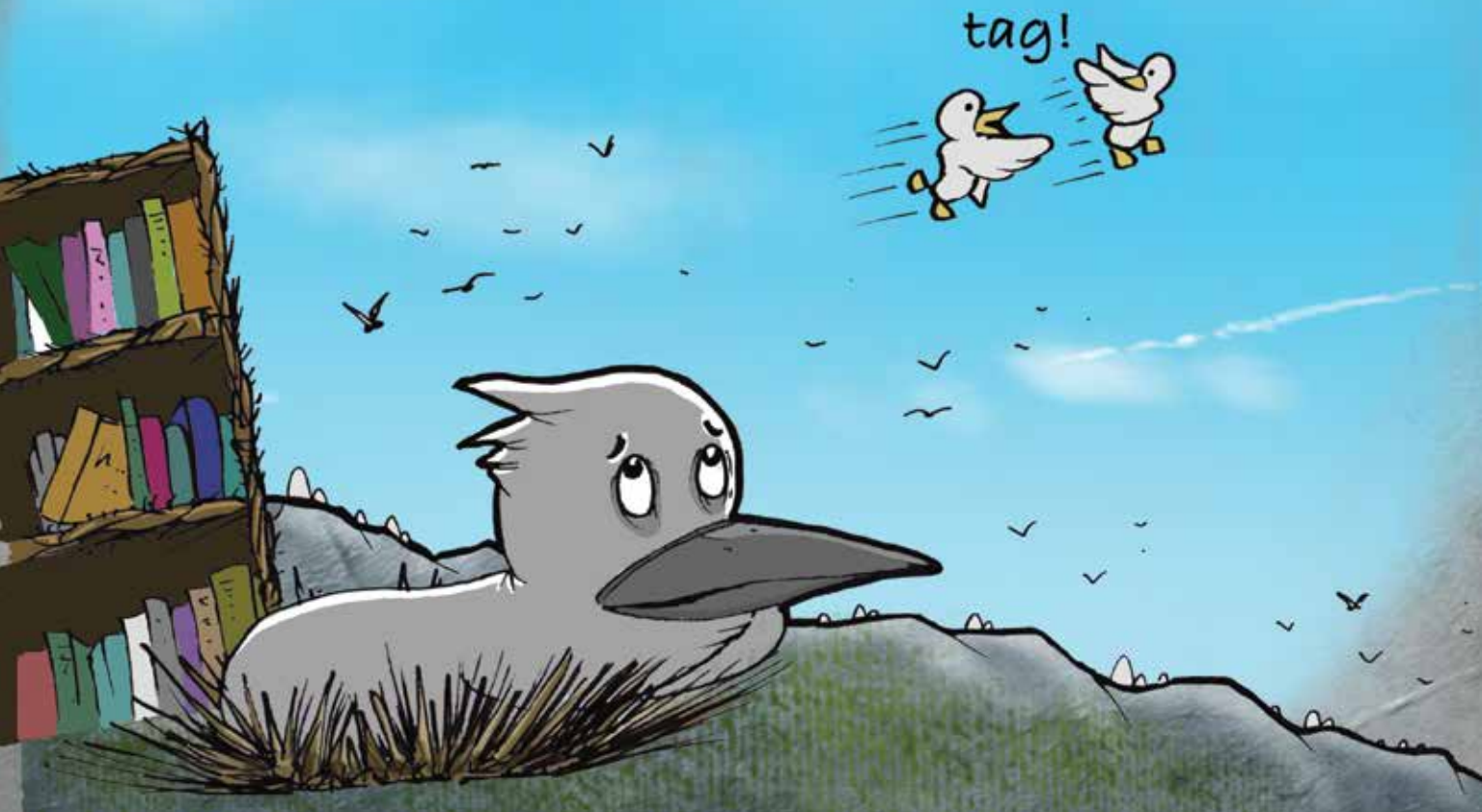
Shelly the seagull was continually sad.
The littlest things would make her mad.



She yelled every morning on the way to school,
“The others think I’m a worthless fool!”



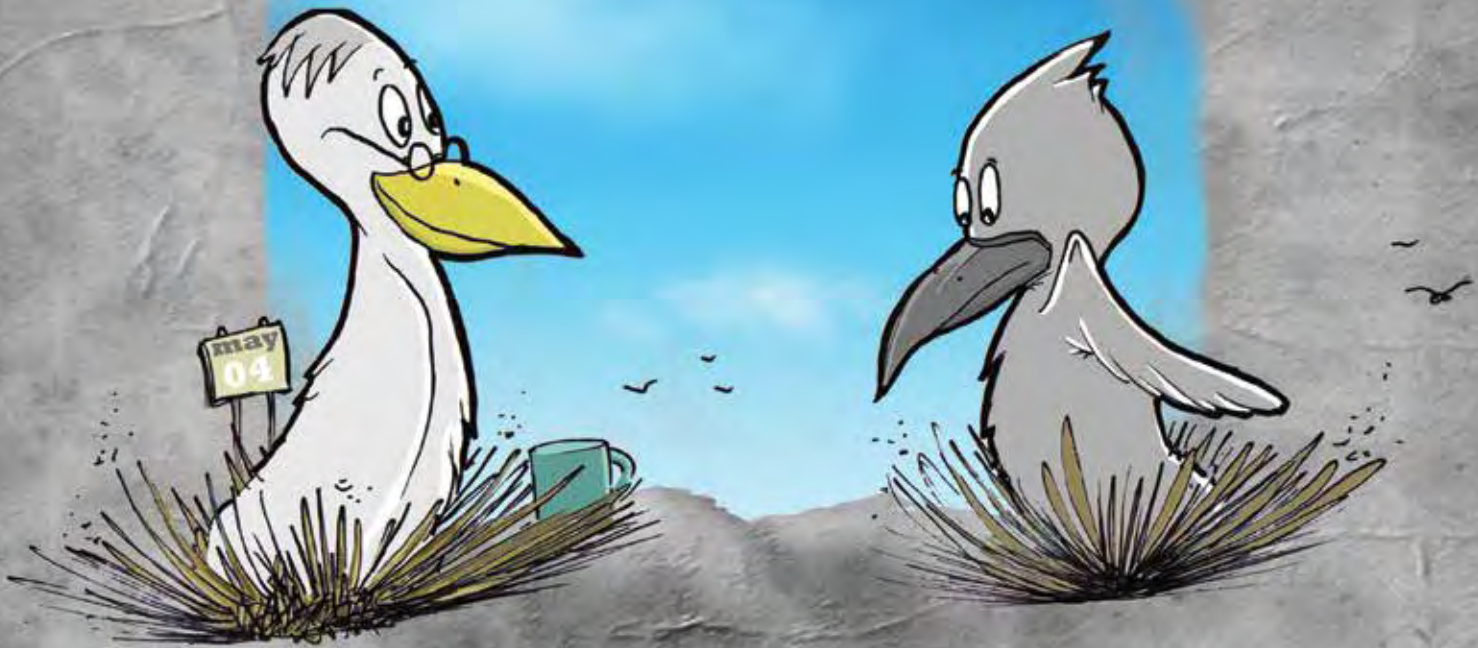
She did not play, just kept to herself.
Her homework sat up on the shelf.



In class, she could not concentrate.
She was rarely hungry and barely ate.

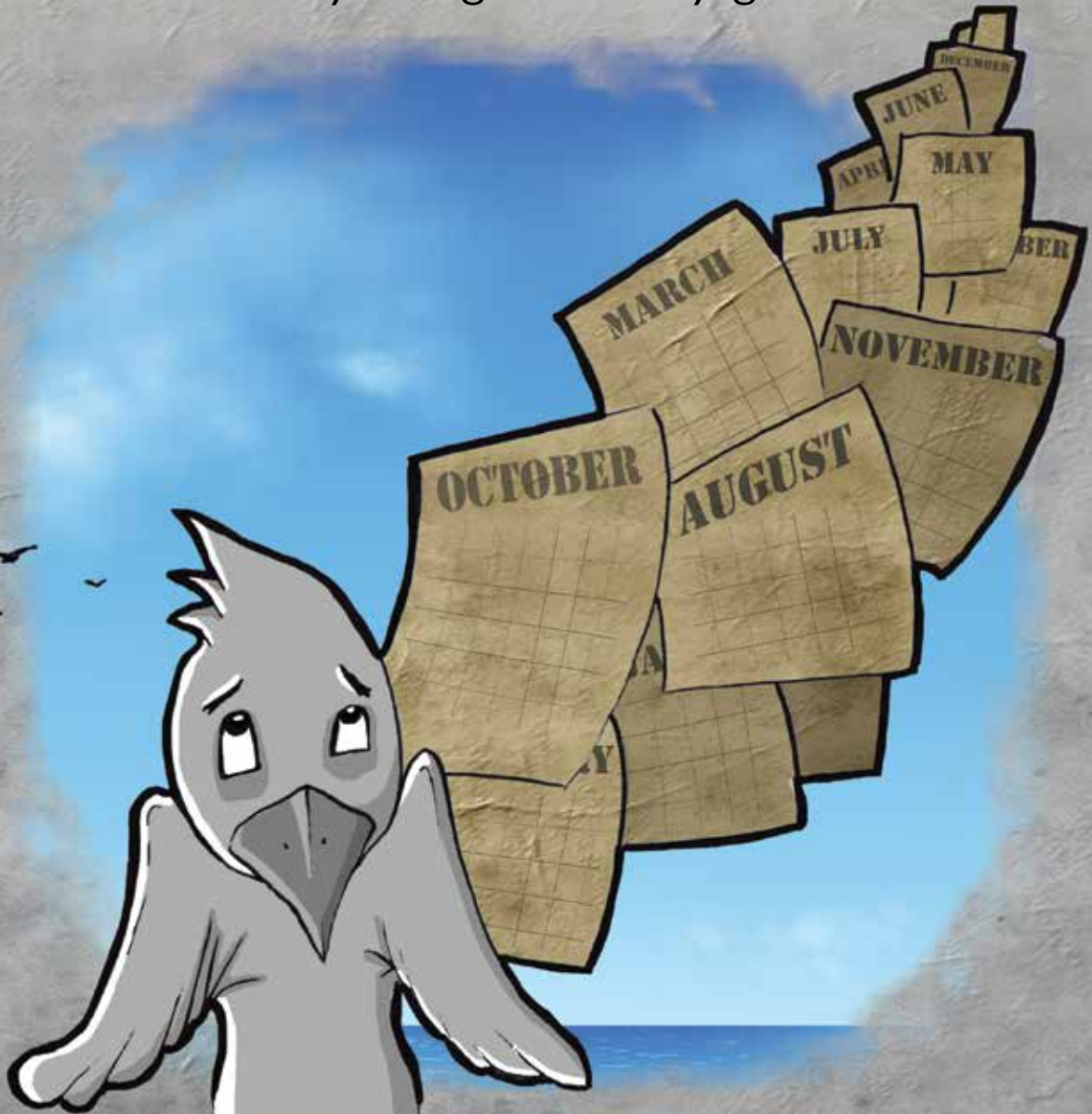


Shelly met with a counselor who asked her questions, he let her talk, then made suggestions.

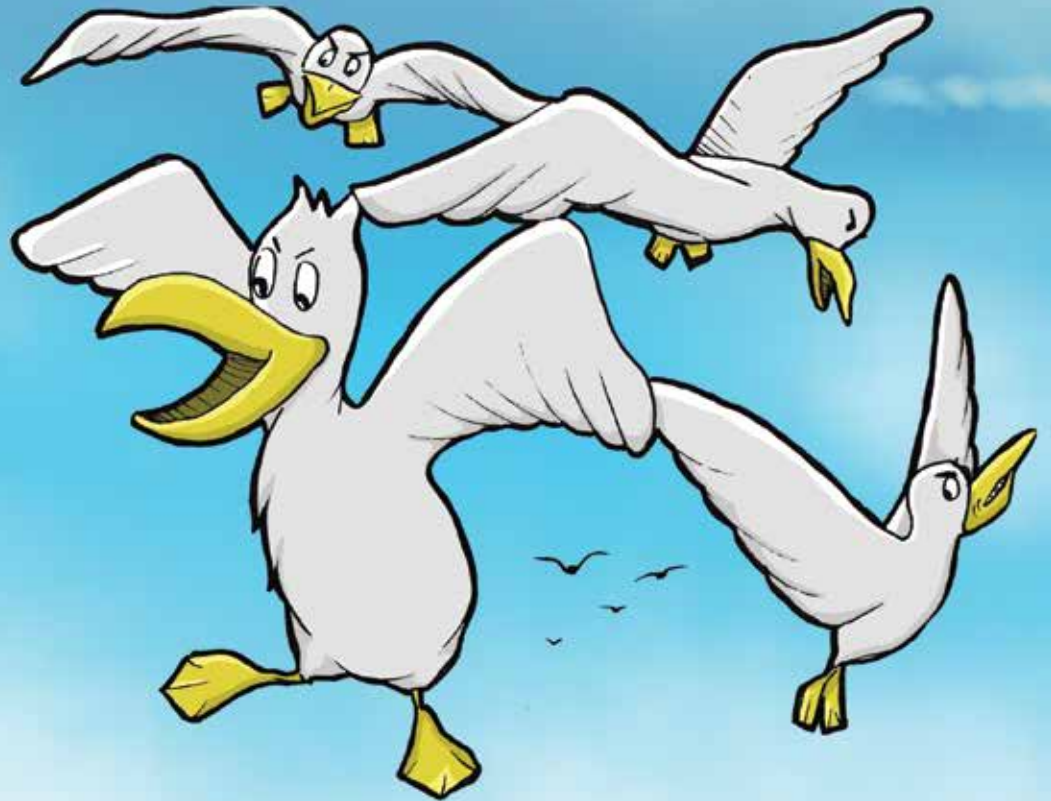


The counselor said, “Tell me when you became depressed.”

“About a year ago...” Shelly guessed.



“The other seagulls started picking on me
‘cause I was afraid to fly over the sea.”

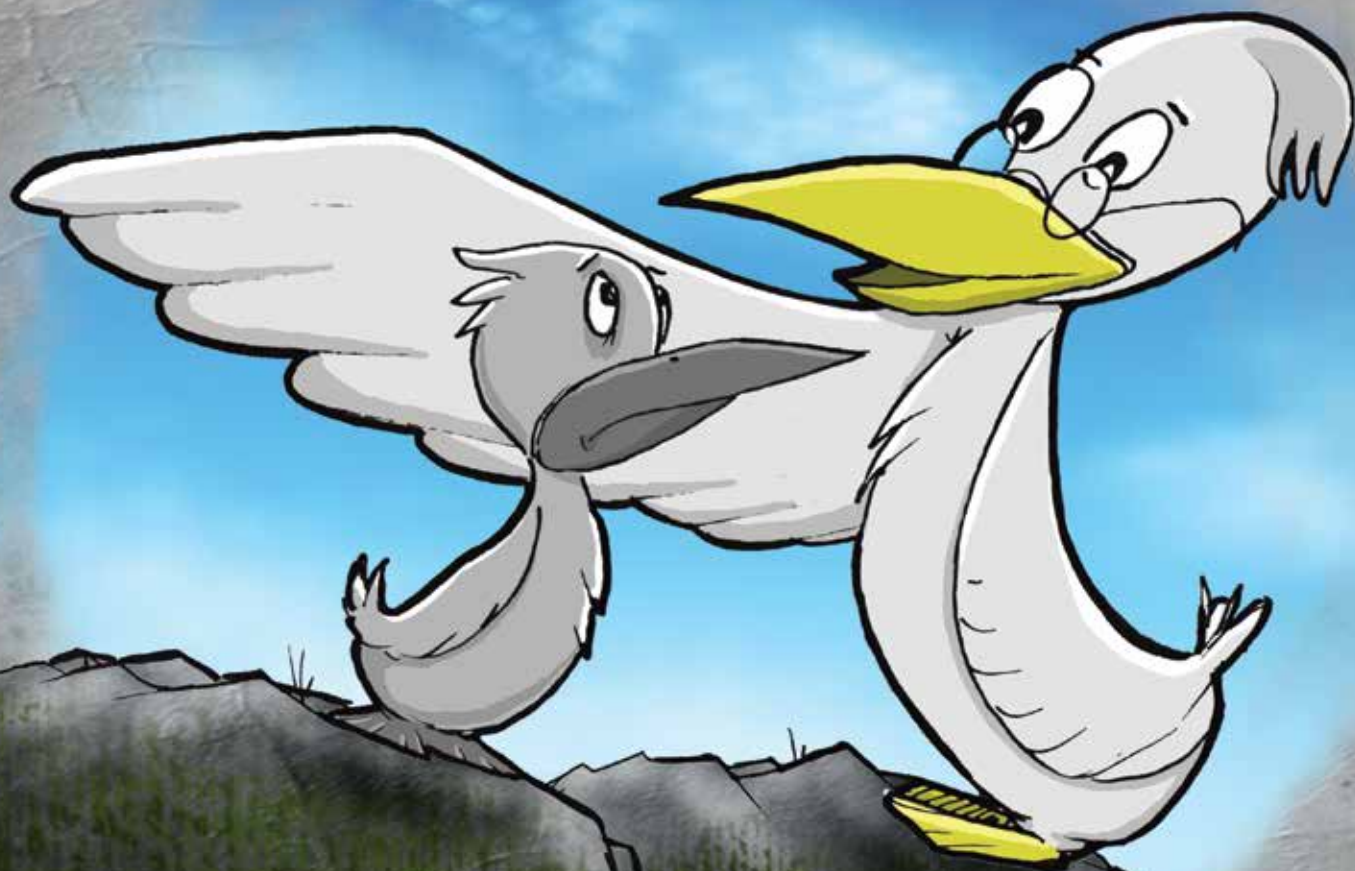


“I’m such a failure! Life’s too hard!
I’m always upset, always on guard.”



“I’m always tired... oh, what will I do?”

The counselor said, “Let me explain this to you...”



“You have depression, I have no doubt.
You’ll start to feel better if you talk things out.
List what makes you happy. What makes you smile?
Let’s discuss the good qualities about you for awhile.”

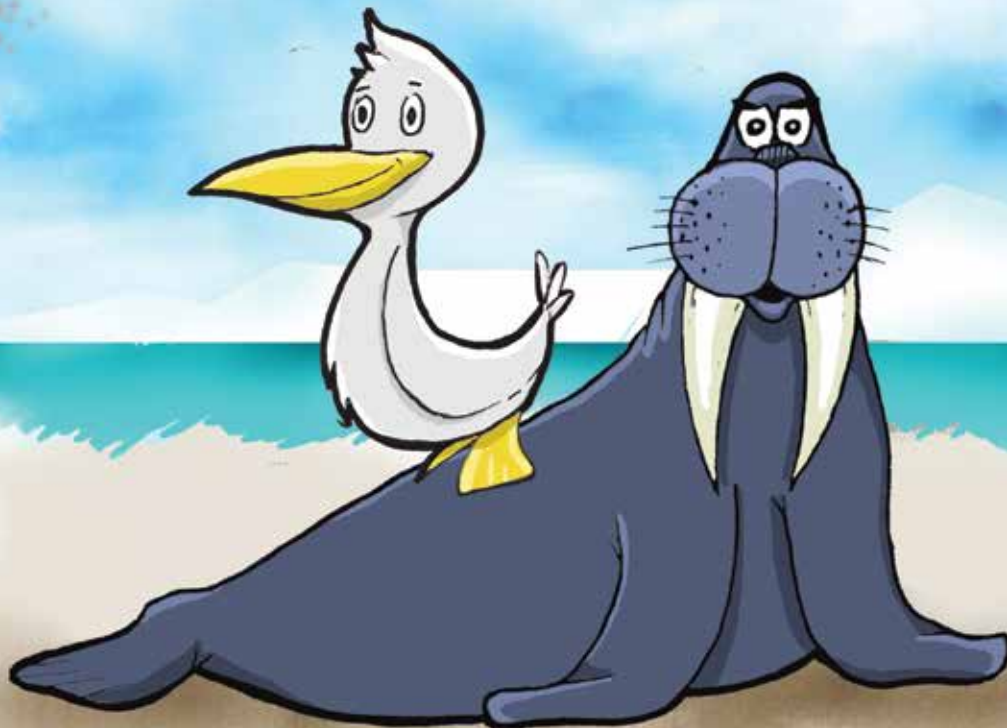


The counselor showed her how to change the way she was thinking.

How to have hope when her whole world was sinking.



She wasn't a failure! Shelly knew what was true, be the best she could be, Shelly started to do. The depression soon lifted, but it could always return. Expressing her feelings will help fight it, she learned.



Discussion questions for the child who is depressed:

1. How do you cope when you are feeling depressed?
2. How do you act differently when you are depressed?
3. What's the hardest thing about making new friends?
4. What would you tell people about yourself that you think they do not know?
5. What is your favorite thing about the character in this book?

Discussion questions for the child who is not depressed:

1. How would you feel if you found out one of your friends was depressed?
2. Have you ever known or do you know someone who has suffered from depression? If so, what was/is that experience like?
3. What can you learn from people who have gone through depression?
4. What questions do you have about people who have gone through depression?
5. What is your favorite thing about the character in this book?

NOTE: All questions should be reviewed before use. All questions may not be appropriate for every child and one should use their discretion as to which questions are appropriate to use.

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About the Series

Dillon and His Exceptional Friends is a book series featuring animals with various conditions aimed at educating children ages 4-8. The stories explain medical conditions in kid-friendly language in hopes of demystifying perceived differences to readers so they can comfortably and freely interact with others who are unlike themselves without fearing the unknown. Educating children early in life will help them appreciate diversity and acceptance.

About the Author

Shelly Weiss is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Certified Rehabilitation Counselor who has various disabilities including cerebral palsy, A.D.D. and major clinical depression. As a result, she has dedicated her life to disability awareness.

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