



# SLEEPLESS?

DREAMING  
OF A TIME WITHOUT  
BAD DREAMS

ENGLISH



## **WELCOME!**

It's not easy to go back to a normal life after difficult experiences such as violence in a foreign place or even in your own family, in war or on the move. Many things are different now, and sometimes you are not even sure about yourself anymore.

## EMOTIONAL INJURIES – TRAUMA

We all know injuries of the body: bruises after being hit, burns when our skin has come in touch with something too hot, cuts when something sharp or spicy has hit our skin...

In the same way the body can suffer from injuries, the soul can also be injured. Physical injuries are visible. Emotional injuries are invisible and therefore much harder to understand: for the injured themselves and for others, too. This story is about such an emotional injury. It also offers ideas about what you can try to feel better again.

Have you ever had trouble sleeping or bad dreams? As you will later see, you are not alone! We hope, you're going to like the story!

### GENERAL CONCEPT:

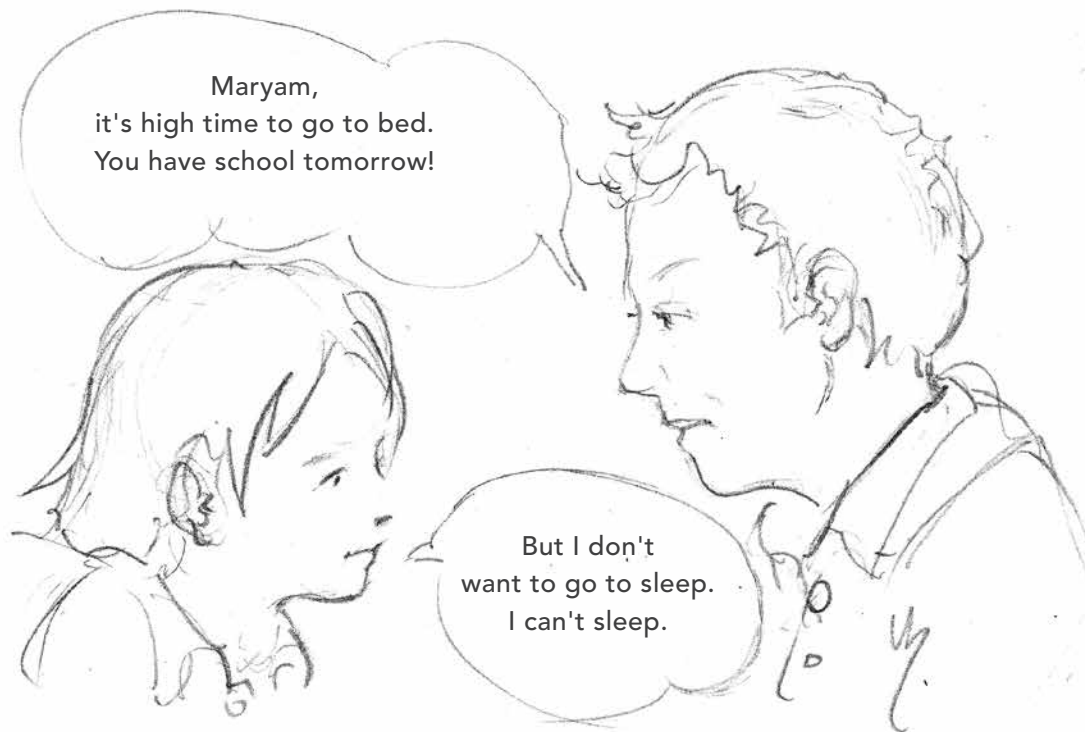
In several stories about sleeplessness, concentration problems, anxiety, anger and aggression, grief, dark memories, etc. we talk about the problems faced after emotional injuries and make suggestions about what we could do to help ourselves.



This is Maryam. She's fifteen years old.  
She hasn't been sleeping well for a year.

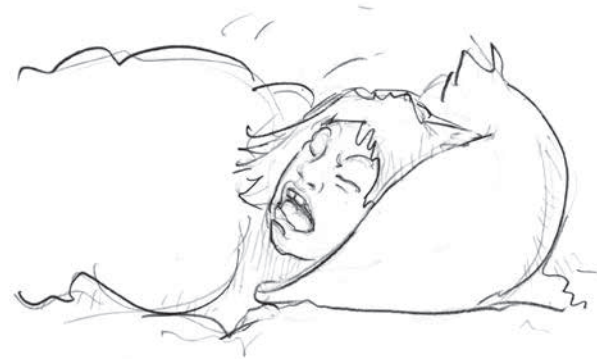
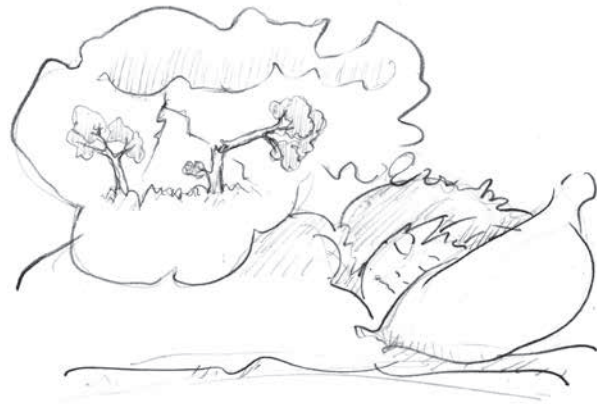


A usual evening in Maryam's life.



















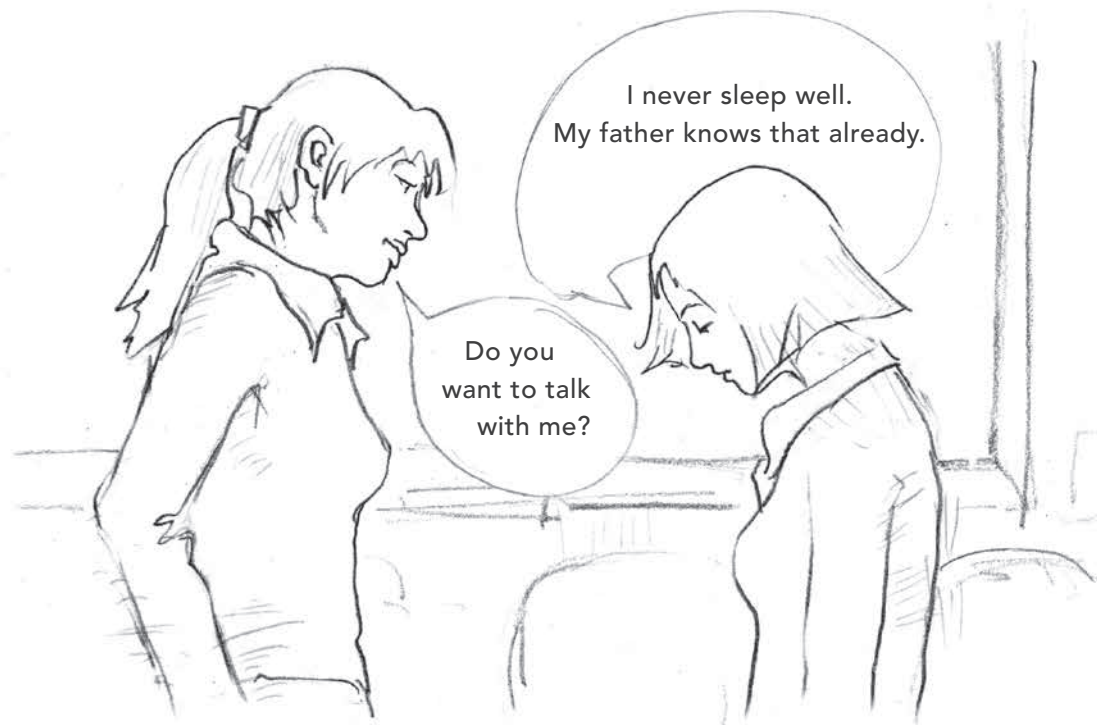














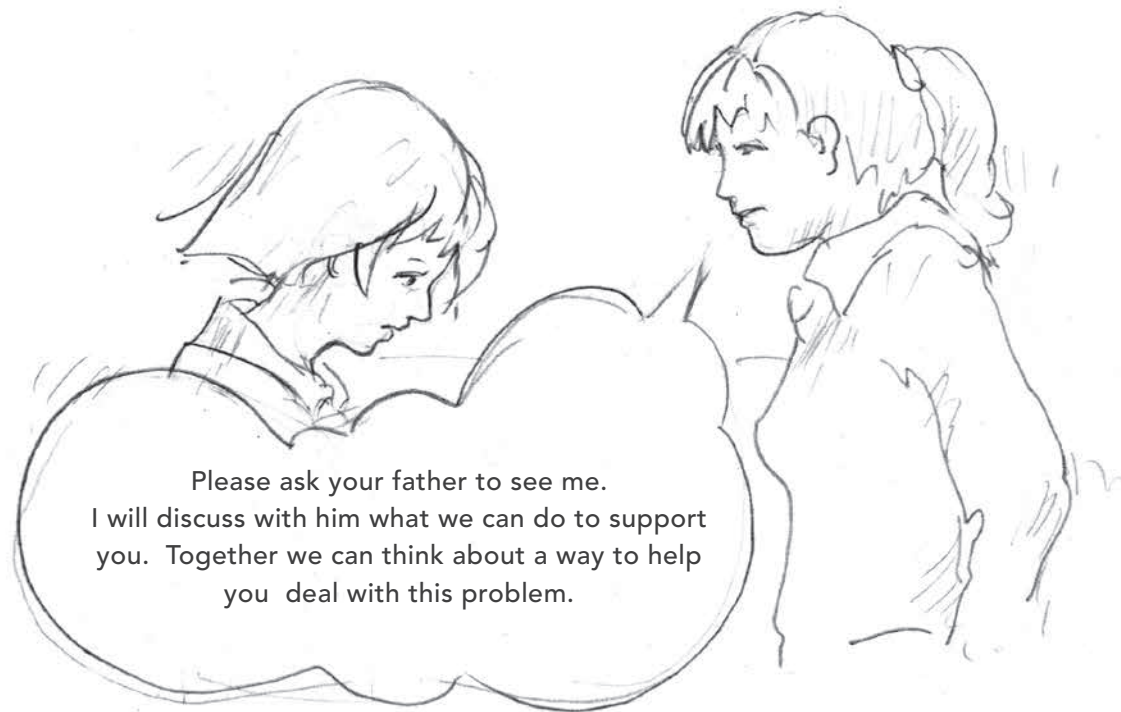
When people go through a very bad experience they face a lot of stress afterwards. As a result, they often find it hard to sleep and don't feel well in general. Doctors and psychotherapists call it posttraumatic stress disorder.



Have you ever heard of this term?  
In your dreams you are still struggling with  
the past. In such a state, you may experience  
a lot of tension.

Your brain has learned to always  
be alert. That's why it becomes  
difficult to relax and to fall asleep.  
Could you be suffering  
from that?



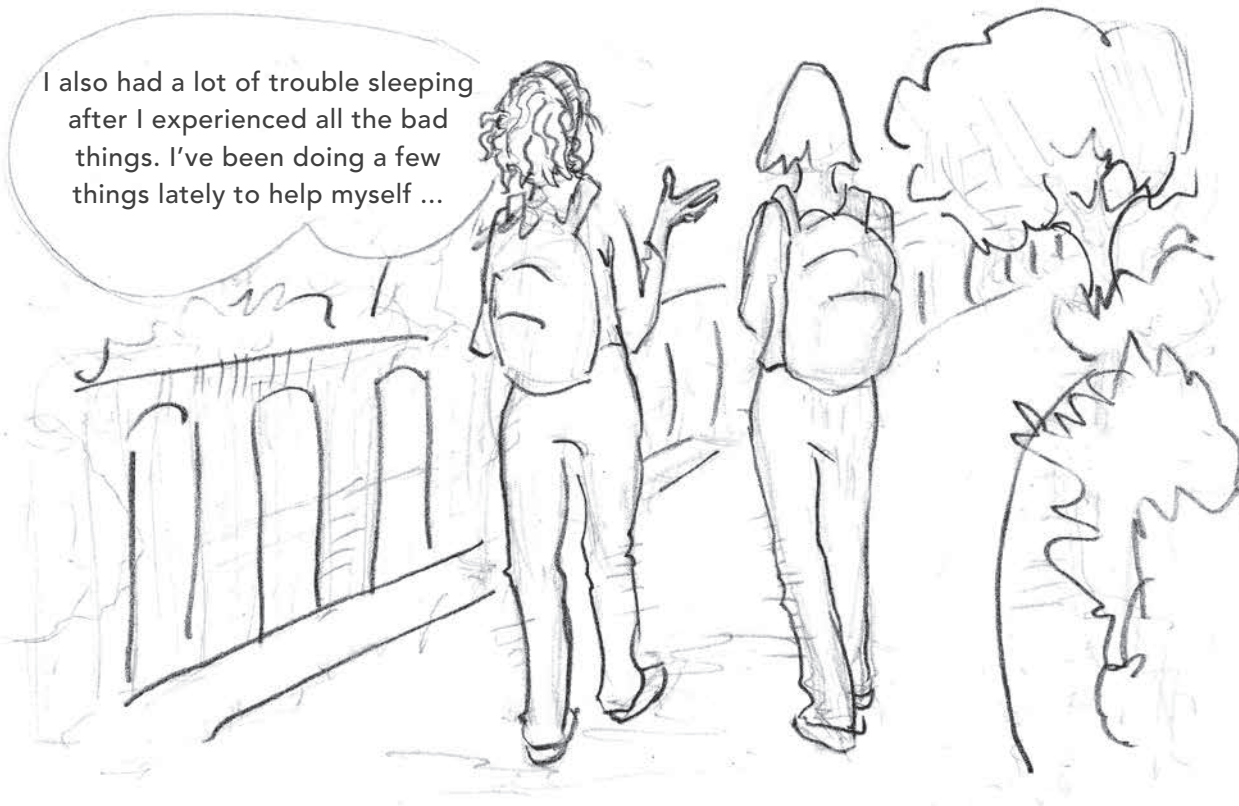


My teacher explained that my  
sleeping problems have to do with  
what happened ...



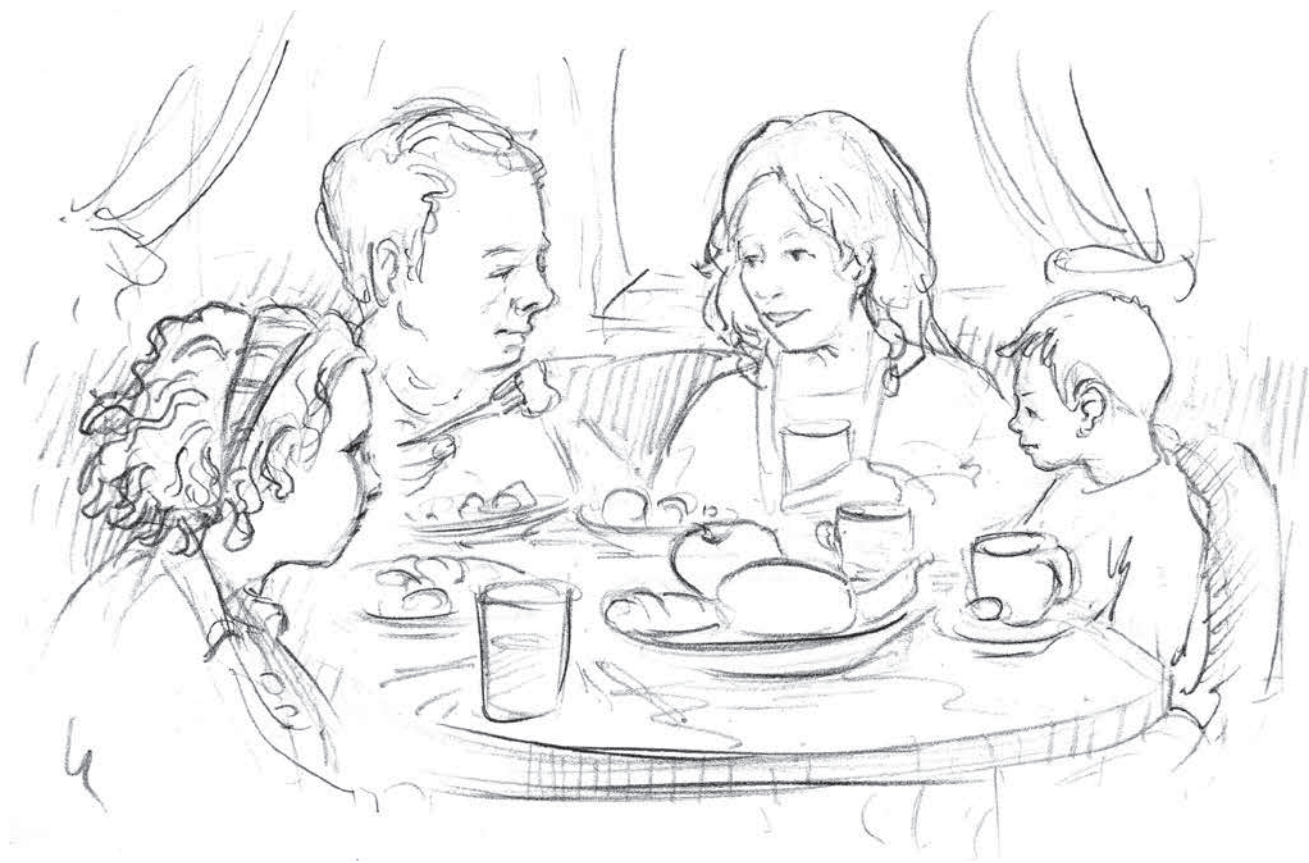


I also had a lot of trouble sleeping after I experienced all the bad things. I've been doing a few things lately to help myself ...



Every day my family sits together, and we talk about our worries.  
We also say our prayers together. Sometimes we cry, sometimes  
we also laugh together. And then, we always have dinner together.





Before going to bed, my mother prepares a glass of warm milk with honey for me. And she sings a few old songs to us. That helps me fall asleep, because I feel safe then.







Find your own way!



Two days later...

Maryam's father meets the teacher.





One week later...









During the next few weeks.

Maryam has found ways to help herself, with the support of her friend Sarah, her teacher, her father and the doctor.

A few months later...





Maryam meets her neighbour and shows her school report.





I'm more than happy to tell you about my dreams for my future.  
I dream of...



## How do doctors, therapists and counsellors help?

Sometimes, you are feeling unwell, without knowing exactly why. In these times, it is good if someone is there to listen, understand and help. These can be family members and friends. When there are major problems, it is good to also see doctors, healers, or psychologists, psychotherapists or psychological counsellors.

Especially after very bad experiences, it can help to talk to therapists, psychologists or psychological counsellors to seek their support. Here, you can talk about things that preoccupy and worry you. But you do not have to if you do not want to, at the moment. Everything you talk about in the sessions will be kept confidential. You can rely on that. You are well listened to and when you want to express something you do not find the right words for, there are other options, such as painting, drawing... Usually, there are regular appointments for therapy or counselling. If there is not enough time, you can continue in the next session.

On our website, you can find out whether there is such a possibility,  
close to where you are:

[WWW.ACT-N-O-W.COM/TRAUMA-SUPPORT](http://WWW.ACT-N-O-W.COM/TRAUMA-SUPPORT)



## **About this booklet**

This first edition was published on the occasion of the 5th International Mayors' Conference NOW, 29 – 30 January 2018, in Vienna, Austria. It was conceived and realised by the NOW Working Group Trauma Surviving, an interdisciplinary and international group of experts in the field of trauma survival:

BARBARA PREITLER, BAKHTYAR HADI HASSAN, GABRIELE SIEBERT, ARASH RAZMARIA,  
MICHAEL BRUNE, KATHARINA GLAWISCHNIG, SANA HAMZEH, MARIANNE  
ALKHELEWI-BRAININ, SUSANNE STEIN & VIOLA RAHEB

The purpose of this publication is to provide teenagers with an understanding of the impact of traumatic experiences on their sleep patterns. To reach as many traumatised young people as possible we are looking for partners interested in distributing this booklet now available in six languages: German, English, Arabic and Farsi/Dari, Kurdish Sorani and Kurdish Kurmancî.

For further information please get in touch with [office@act-n-o-w.com](mailto:office@act-n-o-w.com).



## IMPRINT

ARTWORK: AKRAM AL HALABI

GRAPHIC DESIGN: LAURENTIA LEBERBAUER, ROBERT SCHAFLEITNER

PROJECT COORDINATION: MATHIS DIPPON

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HOHE WARTE 28/3, 1190 VIENNA, AUSTRIA

OFFICE@ACT-N-O-W.COM

WWW.ACT-N-O-W.COM

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