

FAMILY SUPPORT FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

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For more information about the SAGA program to help veterans with PTSD see
<http://www.sift.net/research/health-and-telemedicine/saga>



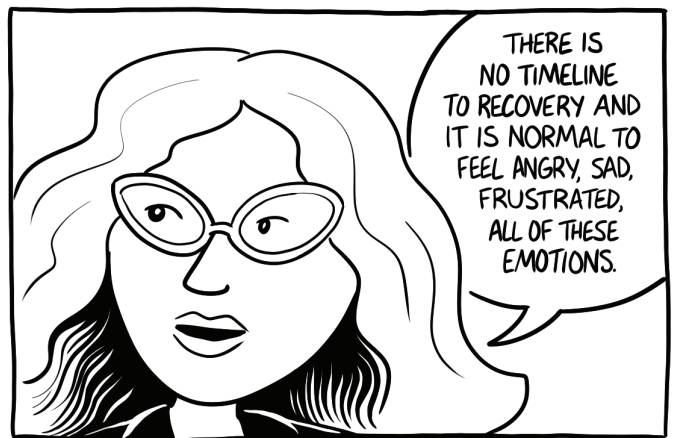
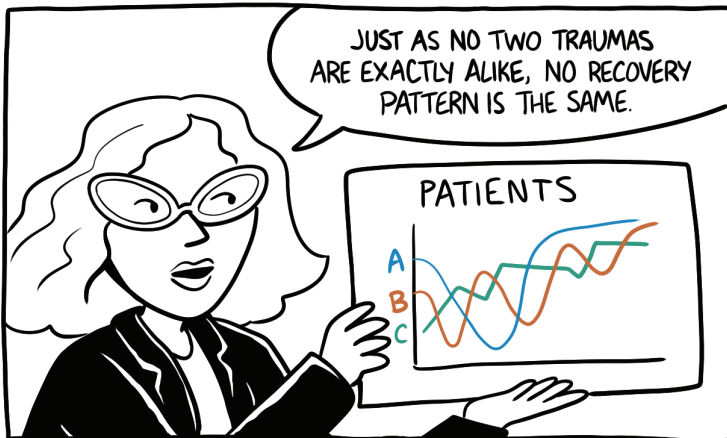
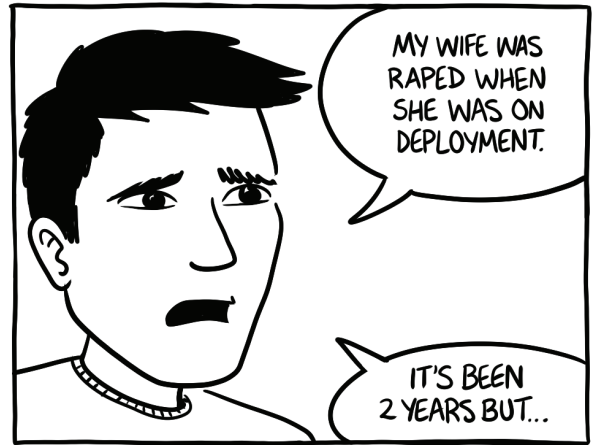
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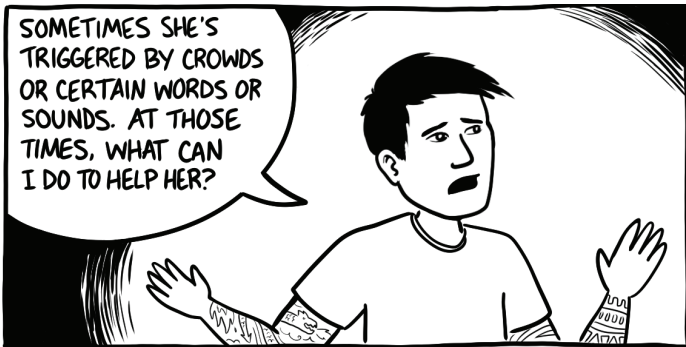
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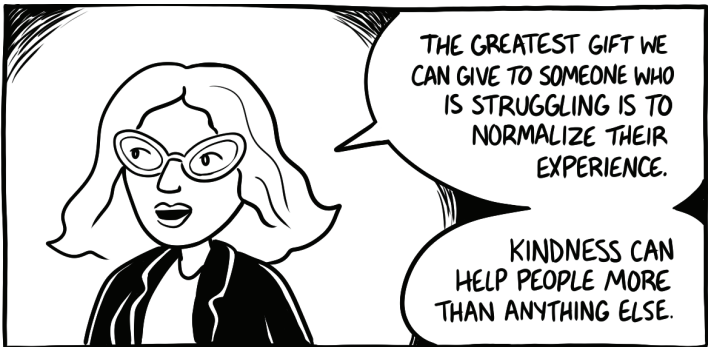
SAGA FAMILY SUPPORT for MST







SOMETIMES SHE'S TRIGGERED BY CROWDS OR CERTAIN WORDS OR SOUNDS. AT THOSE TIMES, WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP HER?



THE GREATEST GIFT WE CAN GIVE TO SOMEONE WHO IS STRUGGLING IS TO NORMALIZE THEIR EXPERIENCE.

KINDNESS CAN HELP PEOPLE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.



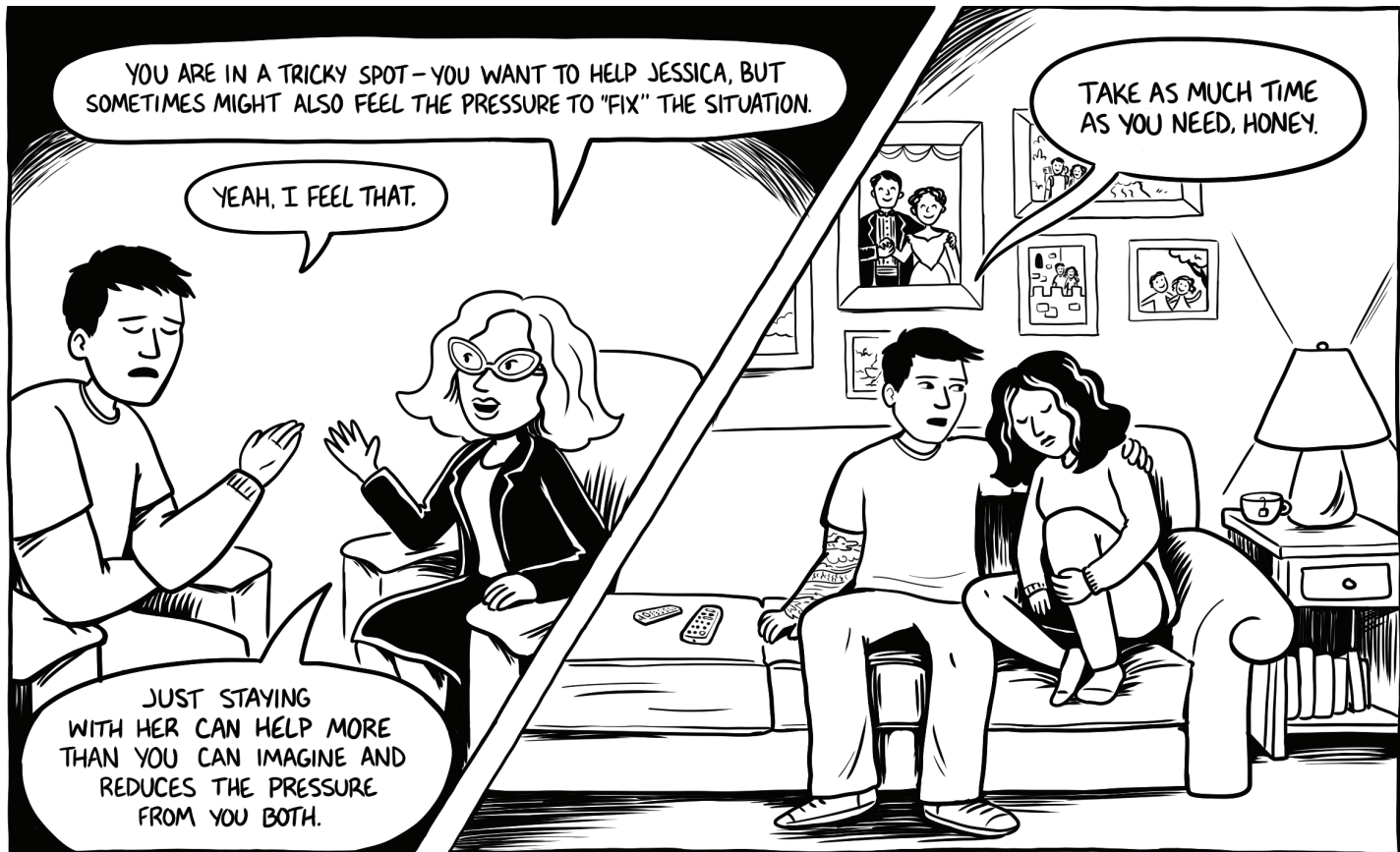
PRODUCE

SWEETHEART, I KNOW THAT THIS IS HARD FOR YOU

WHAT YOU'RE FEELING IS COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDABLE.

I'M HERE WITH YOU IN ANY WAY YOU NEED.

IT CAN BE HELPFUL TO CREATE A CARING ATMOSPHERE FOR THE ASSAULT SURVIVOR BY OFFERING SUPPORT AND USING A SOFT TONE OF VOICE AND (WITH PERMISSION) A GENTLE TOUCH.

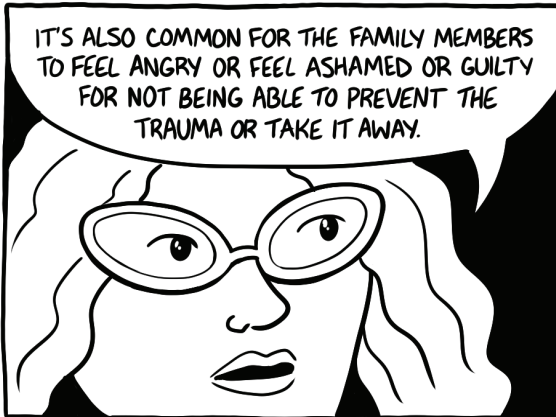


YOU ARE IN A TRICKY SPOT—YOU WANT TO HELP JESSICA, BUT SOMETIMES MIGHT ALSO FEEL THE PRESSURE TO "FIX" THE SITUATION.

YEAH, I FEEL THAT.

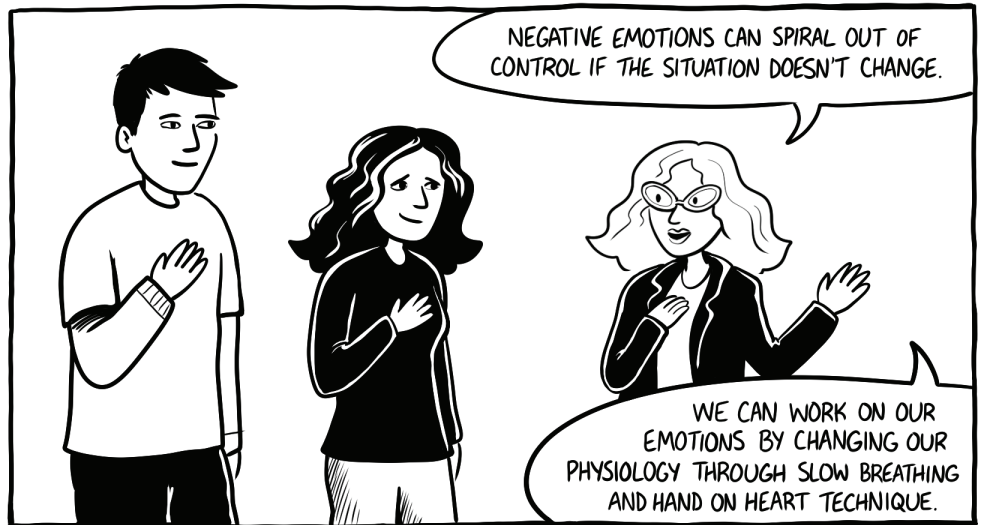
TAKE AS MUCH TIME AS YOU NEED, HONEY.

JUST STAYING WITH HER CAN HELP MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE AND REDUCES THE PRESSURE FROM YOU BOTH.



THESE JUDGMENTS AND FEELINGS ARE COMPLETELY NORMAL AND MEAN THAT YOU CARE *THIS* MUCH ABOUT THIS INDIVIDUAL TO WANT TO HELP THEM.

DURING THESE DISTRESSING MOMENTS YOU CAN PRACTICE TAKING LOVING KINDNESS BREATHS, EITHER BY YOURSELF OR WITH JESSICA.



PLACING A HAND ON ONE'S HEART AND TAKING SLOW COMPASSIONATE BREATHS CAN HELP REDUCE STRESS. TO PRACTICE A LOVING KINDNESS BREATH, FOCUS ON BREATHING IN AND OUT. ON EACH INHALATION, FOCUS ON TAKING IN THE STRENGTH, LOVE, AND SUPPORT THAT YOU NEED FOR YOURSELF, AND ON EACH EXHALATION, SEND STRENGTH, LOVE, AND SUPPORT TO YOUR PARTNER.

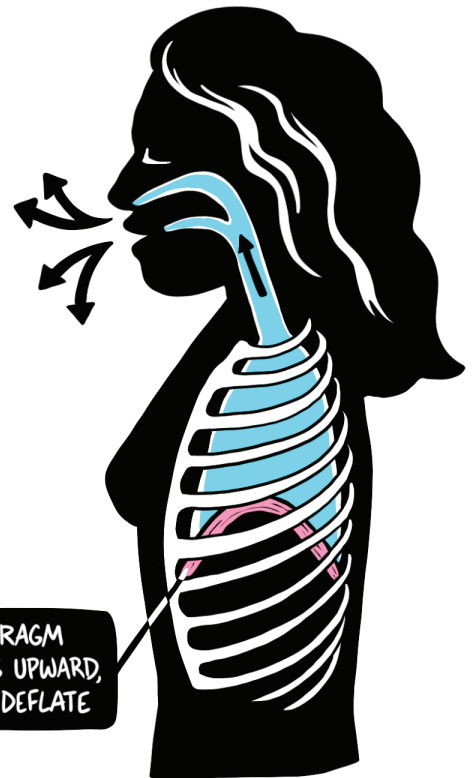
SLOW, DEEP BREATHS ACTIVATE THE PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM, SLOWING YOUR HEART RATE AND SHUTTING DOWN YOUR BODY'S FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE.

TO GET THE MOST OUT OF BREATHING EXERCISES, LET YOUR ABDOMEN AND RIBCAGE EXPAND OUTWARD EACH TIME YOU INHALE, SO YOUR LUNGS CAN FILL UP COMPLETELY. SHALLOW BREATHING AND STRESS GO HAND IN HAND.

TRY INHALING AND EXHALING TO A COUNT OF THREE OR FOUR, MAKING THE BREATHS EQUAL IN LENGTH.

INHALE

EXHALE



BELLY PUSHES OUT

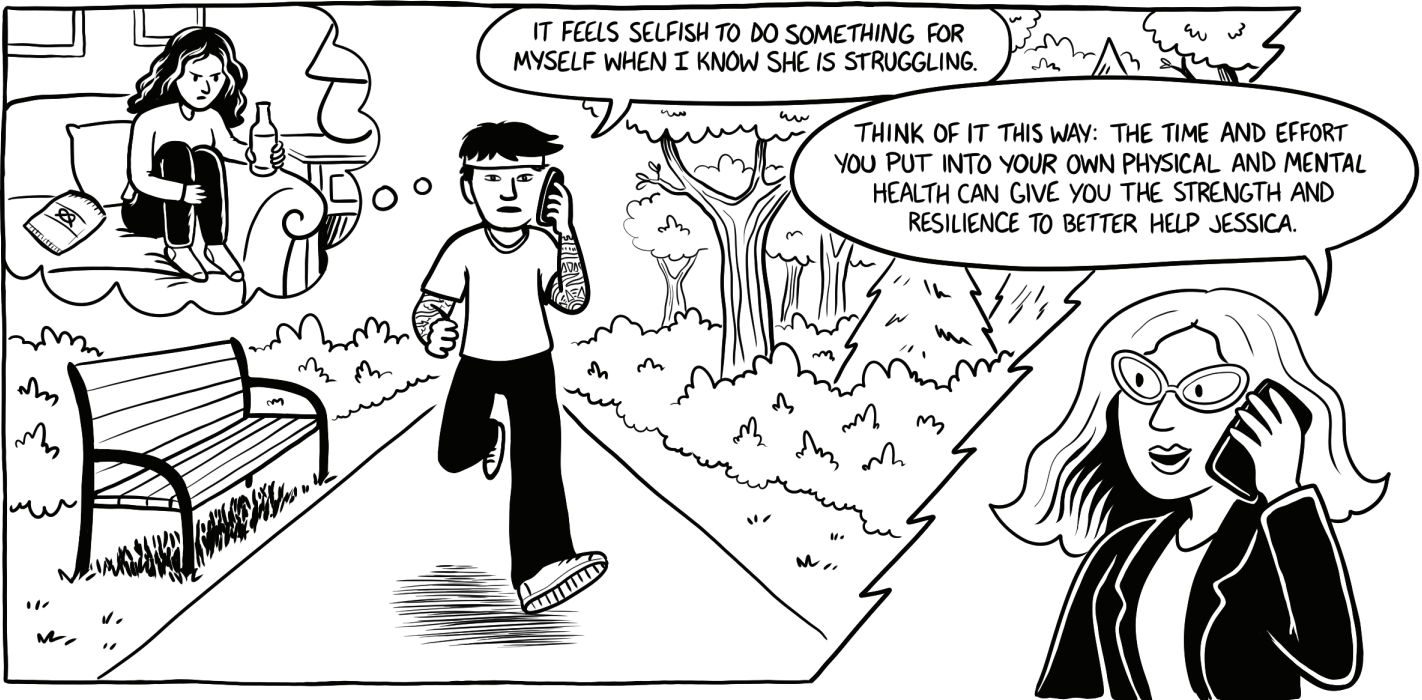
DIAPHRAGM CONTRACTS + PULLS DOWN, INCREASING SPACE IN CHEST CAVITY

DIAPHRAGM RELAXES UPWARD, LUNGS DEFLATE



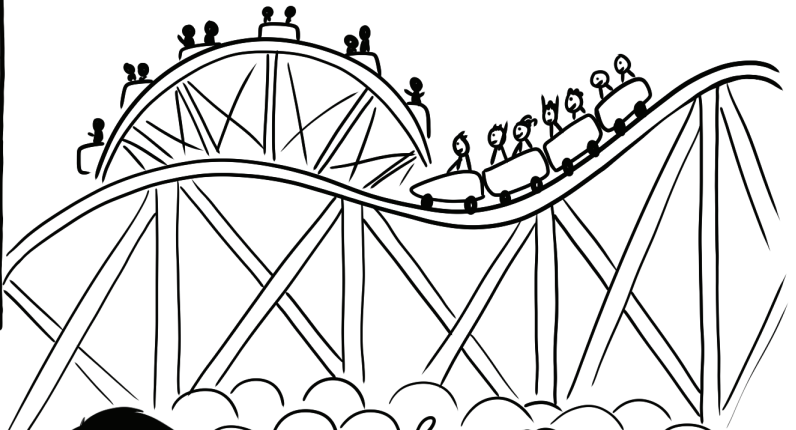
BECAUSE TAKING CARE OF SOMEONE REQUIRES A LOT OF PATIENCE AND EFFORT, IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR YOU TO ALSO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

SELF-CARE CAN INCLUDE PROPER SLEEP, EXERCISE, ENGAGING IN HOBBIES, LIKE VIDEO GAMES, MOVIES, OR PAINTING, AND OTHER REJUVENATING ACTIVITIES.



IT FEELS SELFISH TO DO SOMETHING FOR MYSELF WHEN I KNOW SHE IS STRUGGLING.

THINK OF IT THIS WAY: THE TIME AND EFFORT YOU PUT INTO YOUR OWN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CAN GIVE YOU THE STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE TO BETTER HELP JESSICA.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT RECOVERY, PLEASE CALL THE NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE: 800.656.HOPE OR VISIT [HTTPS://RAINN.ORG](https://RAINN.ORG)