

EXPOSURE THERAPY AT THE MOVIES

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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>



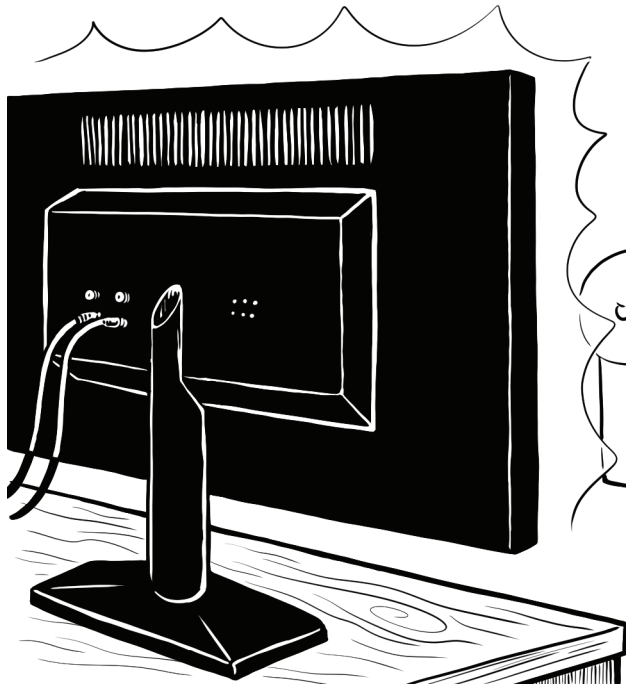
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HOW EXPOSURE THERAPY WORKS

SAGA



I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS USED TO SCARE ME SO MUCH.

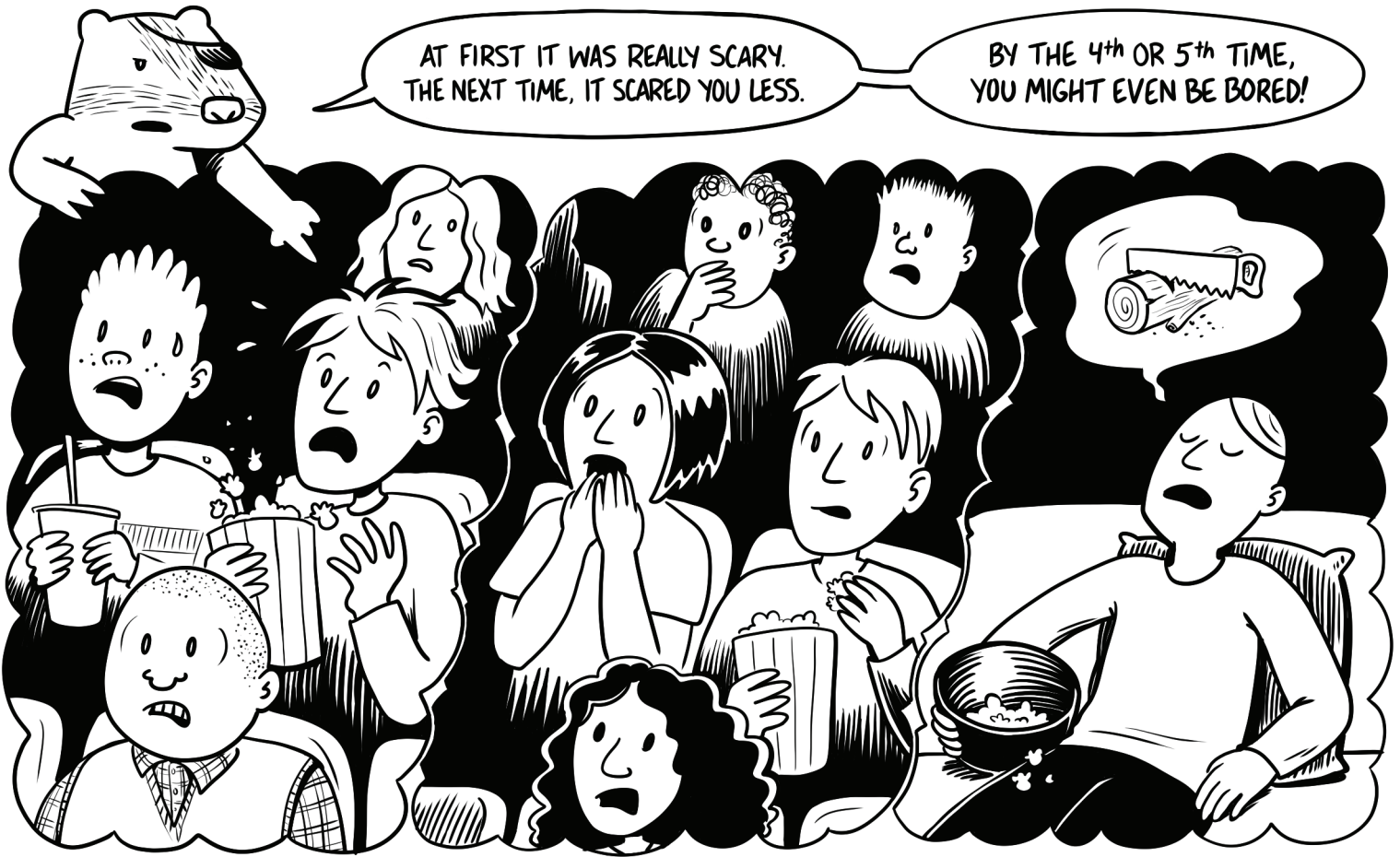
IT'S NOT SCARY NOW, BUT...



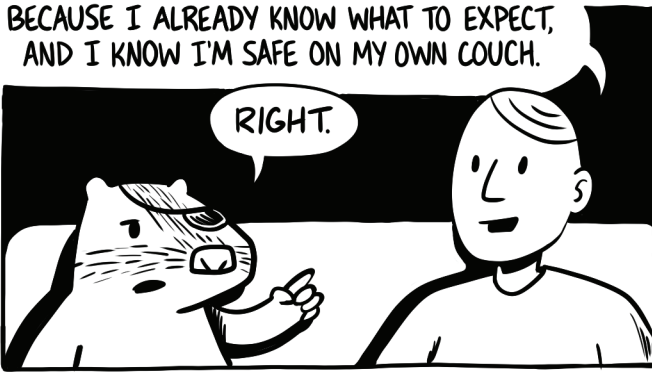
...REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME YOU SAW IT?

AT FIRST IT WAS REALLY SCARY. THE NEXT TIME, IT SCARED YOU LESS.

BY THE 4th OR 5th TIME, YOU MIGHT EVEN BE BORED!

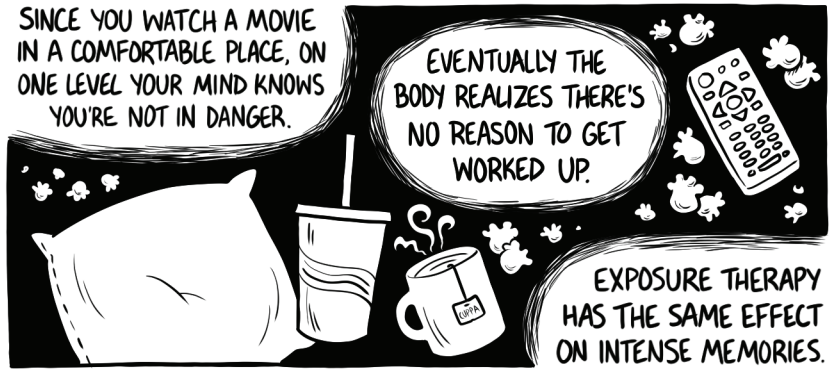


BECAUSE I ALREADY KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT,
AND I KNOW I'M SAFE ON MY OWN COUCH.



RIGHT.

SINCE YOU WATCH A MOVIE
IN A COMFORTABLE PLACE, ON
ONE LEVEL YOUR MIND KNOWS
YOU'RE NOT IN DANGER.



EVENTUALLY THE
BODY REALIZES THERE'S
NO REASON TO GET
WORKED UP.

EXPOSURE THERAPY
HAS THE SAME EFFECT
ON INTENSE MEMORIES.

THAT'S AN IMPORTANT PART
OF THERAPY. YOU HAVE TO GO OVER
A TRAUMA MEMORY IN A SAFE
ENVIRONMENT SO YOUR BODY
LEARNS THERE'S NO REASON
TO GO ON RED ALERT.

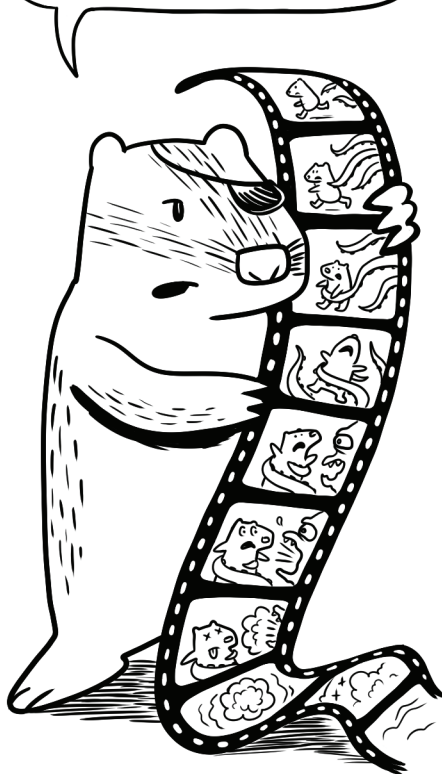


WAIT, I'M
REGISTERING
CUSHIONS.

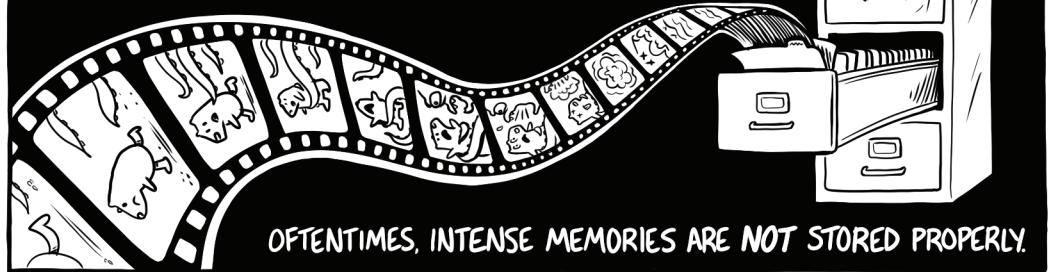


WE'RE NOT
GONNA NEED THAT
ADRENALINE
AFTER ALL.

ALSO, A MOVIE PRESENTS
EVENTS IN A CLEAR SEQUENCE.



THIS MAKES IT EASY FOR YOUR BRAIN TO FILE IT AWAY, SO YOU
CAN THINK ABOUT IT AND SORT OUT YOUR FEELINGS.



OFTENTIMES, INTENSE MEMORIES ARE NOT STORED PROPERLY.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE TIME TO
PROCESS AN EVENT, YOUR MEMORY
MAY BECOME JUMBLED.

IMAGINE IF THIS IS
HOW THE DIRECTOR
MADE THE MOVIE...



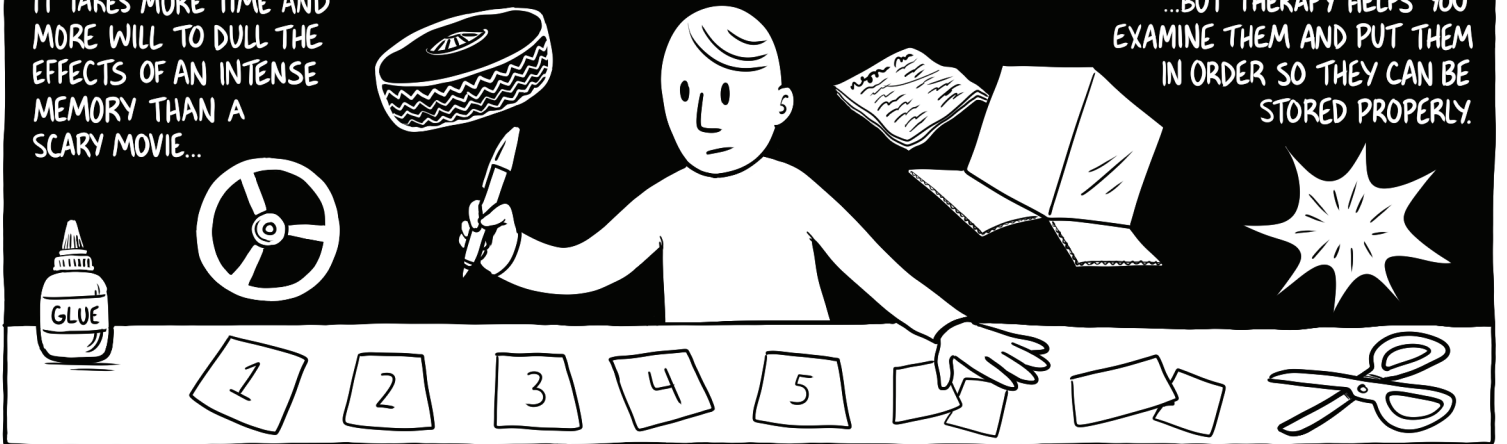
IT'D BE
MUCH HARDER
TO UNDERSTAND
AND STORE IN
YOUR BRAIN.

IF YOU GO FROM ONE INTENSE SITUATION TO ANOTHER, YOUR MEMORIES MAY BE STORED OUT OF ORDER, WITH NO CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW EVENTS UNFOLDED. BY THE TIME YOU DO START TO PROCESS IT, THOSE EXPERIENCES ARE WEDGED INTO YOUR BRAIN DUE TO PTSD, TIED TO STRONG EMOTIONS, BUT NO CONTEXT.



IT TAKES MORE TIME AND MORE WILL TO DULL THE EFFECTS OF AN INTENSE MEMORY THAN A SCARY MOVIE...

...BUT THERAPY HELPS YOU EXAMINE THEM AND PUT THEM IN ORDER SO THEY CAN BE STORED PROPERLY.



THERAPY CAN NEVER CHANGE WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, BUT IT CAN STOP THESE MEMORIES FROM POPPING UP WHEN YOU AREN'T EXPECTING THEM.



SO YOU CAN ENJOY MAKING NEW MEMORIES.