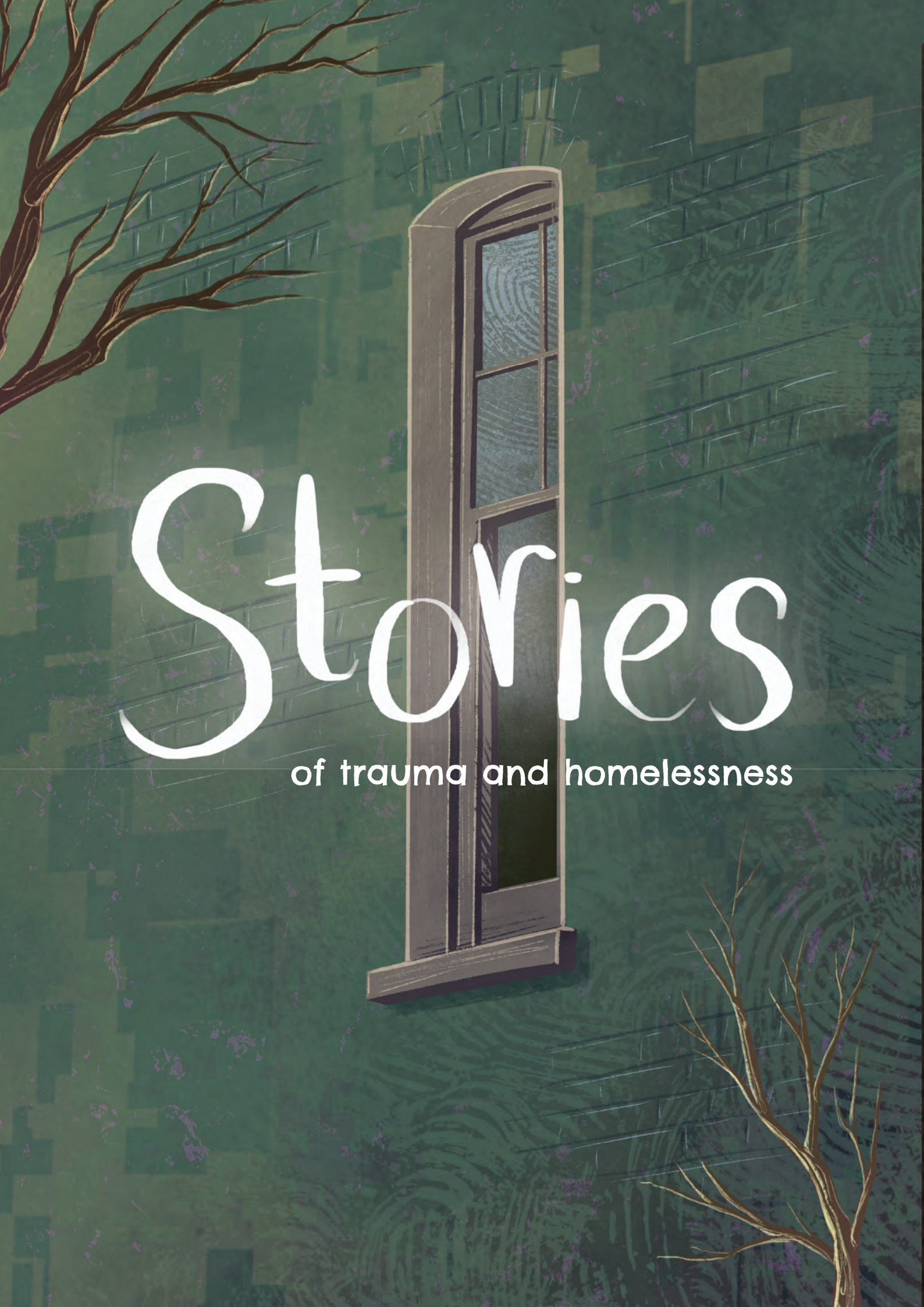

Stories
of trauma and homelessness

These comics, based on experiences shared through a research study led by Emma Adams (Newcastle University) in collaboration with people with lived experience, were created by the wonderful Alan Ramsay and Olga Mashanshaya from Roots and Wings, through a series of workshops. The comics tell the stories of Sam, whose trauma is ongoing and recurrent, and Alex, whose trauma is shaped by the sudden shock of homelessness. These stories pull together the experiences of people who took part in the research study, and unfortunately are typical of many journeys while homeless.

This comic has been developed as part of an NIHR Doctoral Fellowship. Emma Adams (NIHR Doctoral Fellowship, NU-010978) was funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) for this research project. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR, NHS or the UK Department of Health and Social Care.

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A message to readers:

Homelessness is not a lifestyle choice. It often reflects multiple things going wrong and not having the support in place to respond and manage. Becoming homeless and the circumstances faced while homeless can be deeply traumatic, leaving people feeling isolated or at fault. Starting conversations about these experiences can be difficult—for both those affected and the providers supporting them.

The comics are designed to increase understanding and support conversations about how situations and responses could be improved. They can be used between trusted providers and people experiencing homelessness, or as part of training. Each comic includes prompts to help guide discussions. While the comics cannot reflect every individual experience, they offer a starting point for raising awareness of trauma and its impact while someone is homeless.

Thank you to the resilient and strong people experiencing homelessness who took part in the study and shared their stories. Thank you to the people who experienced homelessness, providers, and researchers who contributed to developing the comics. Without your involvement, these comics would not have been possible.

Trigger warning:

These comics may be distressing. One comic may be more appropriate than the other depending on the audience. Practitioners and providers should use their best judgement when deciding whether to use comics with the people they support.

Addressing homelessness and trauma needs may involve working with trusted services or providers. Whether you are experiencing homelessness yourself, supporting someone, or working in this area, there are people you can speak to. These services are available across England.

In an emergency, please phone Emergency Services on 999.

Homelessness specific resources:

CRISIS

Crisis **is a national charity for people experiencing homelessness. They have Crisis Skylight locations across Great Britain where they offer support. You can visit their website for more information about ending homelessness, resources, or getting help:**

https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-help/

SHELTER

Shelter **provides a free emergency helpline, if you are homeless, have nowhere to stay or are worried about harm in your home.**

You can contact them on:
0808 800 4444.

Wider resources:

CITIZENS ADVICE

Citizens Advice **is a national service, that provides a wide range of free, confidential, impartial, and independent support.**
To find your local location, visit their website:

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/

MIND

Mind **offers advice, legal information, and support across a range of mental health conditions.**

The infoline can be reached on
0300 123 3393.

You can also text Mind at 86463.

SAMARITANS

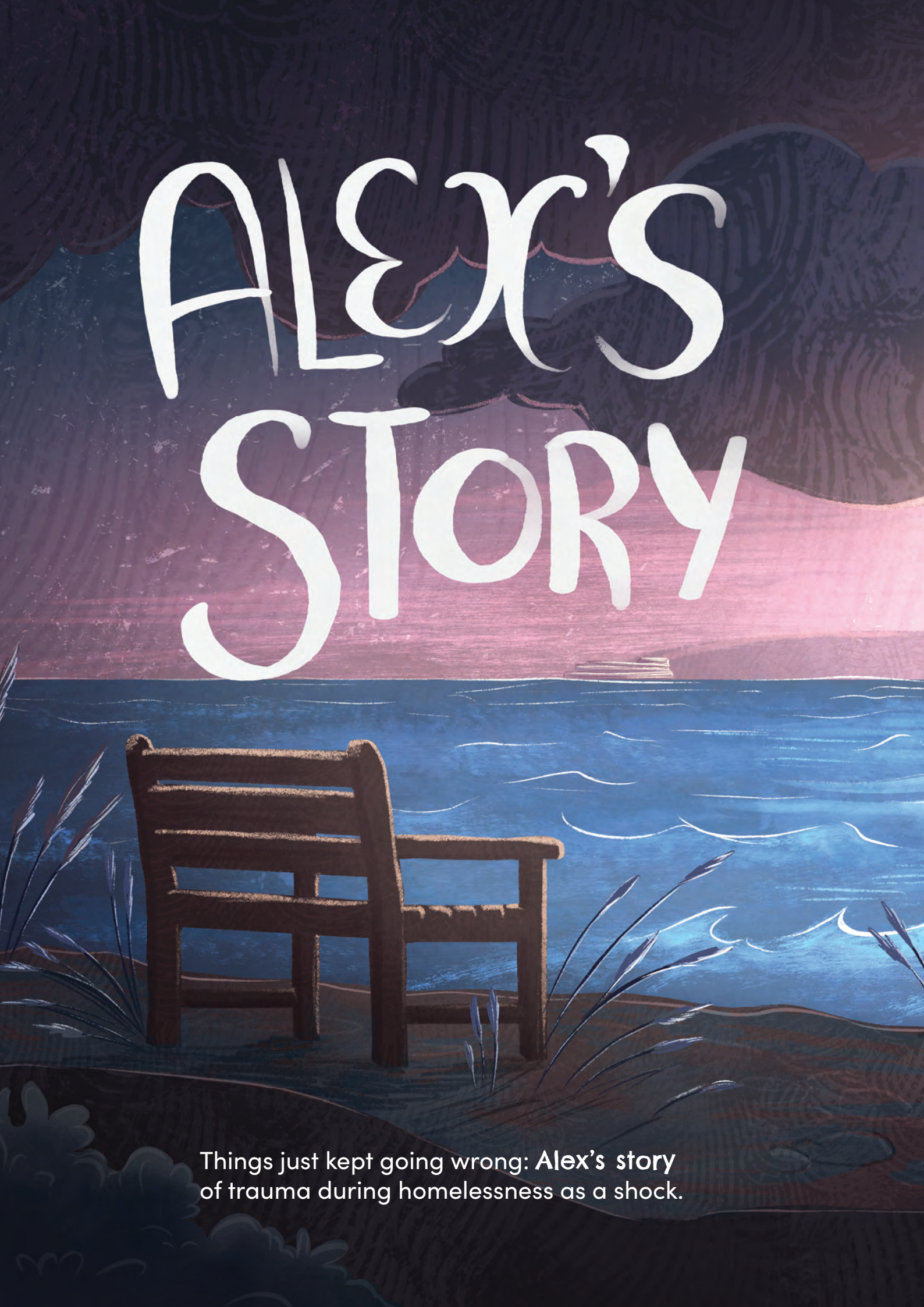
Samaritans **provides confidential non-judgemental emotional support, 24 hours a day. You can also contact your local Samaritans branch if you'd like to talk to someone in your region.**

The Samaritans can be called on:
116 123.

SANE

SANE **runs a national, out-of-hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers.**

The helpline can be reached on:
0300 304 7000.


ALEX'S STORY
Things just kept going wrong: Alex's story of trauma during homelessness as a shock.


I HAD MY OWN HOUSE, AND THE NORMAL 2.4 CHILDREN TYPE FAMILY,
MY RELATIONSHIP FELL APART, AND I REMEMBER JUST BREAKING DOWN.
I WAS JUST CRYING.

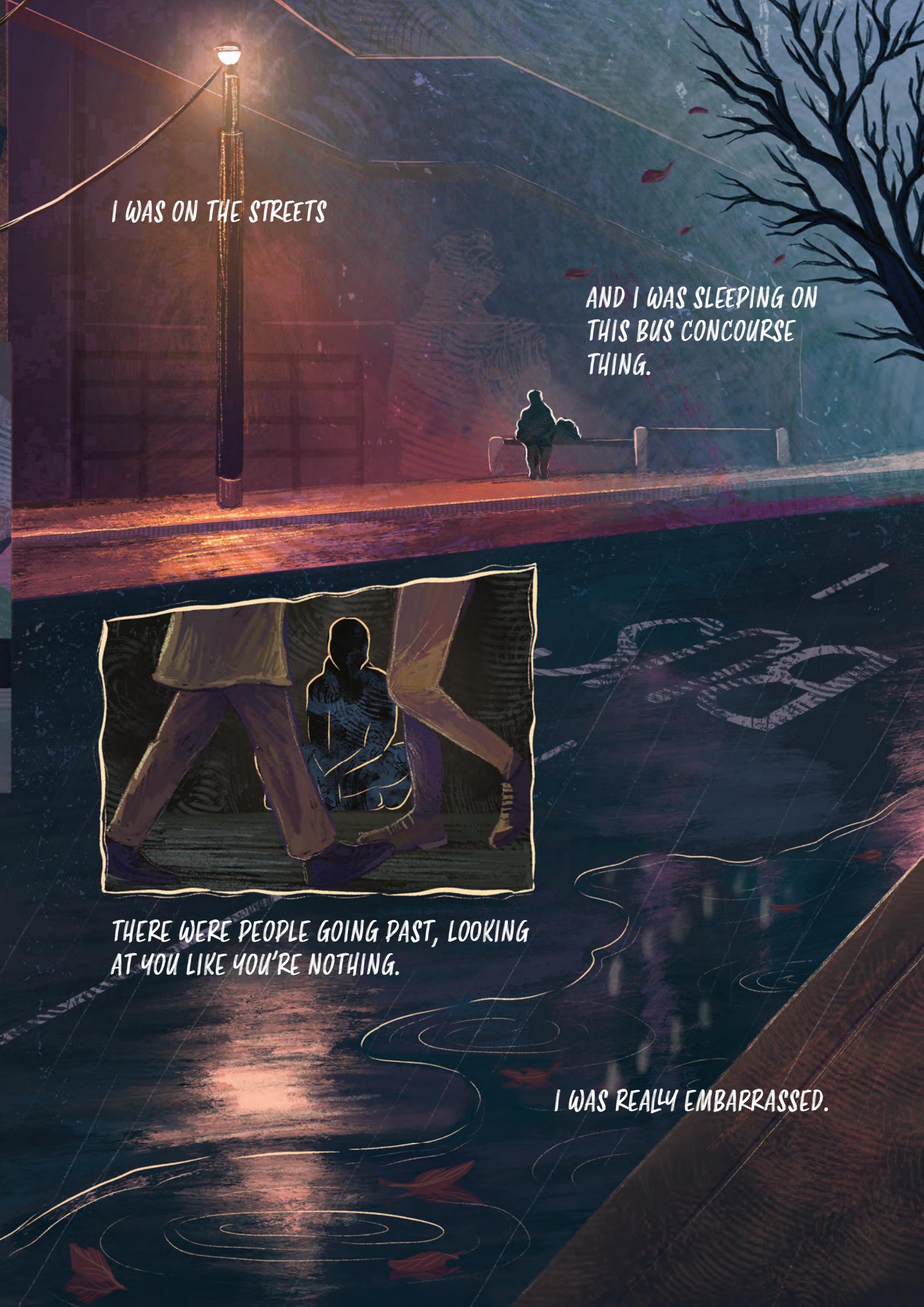

IT'S LIKE YOUR WORLD GETS TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU WITHIN SECONDS.
AND YOU GO FROM HAVING EVERYTHING,
TO SLEEPING IN A CAR... IT'S A BIT OF A SHOCK.





IT WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS WHERE JUST ANYTHING
THAT COULD GO WRONG SEEMED TO GO WRONG.




I WAS ON THE STREETS
AND I WAS SLEEPING ON THIS BUS CONCOURSE THING.
THERE WERE PEOPLE GOING PAST, LOOKING AT YOU LIKE YOU'RE NOTHING.
I WAS REALLY EMBARRASSED.

PEOPLE I KNEW, LIKE MY FRIENDS, THAT I'VE KNOWN SINCE I WAS IN MY TEENS, THEY WERE COMING PAST AND SAYING...



IS THAT YOU?

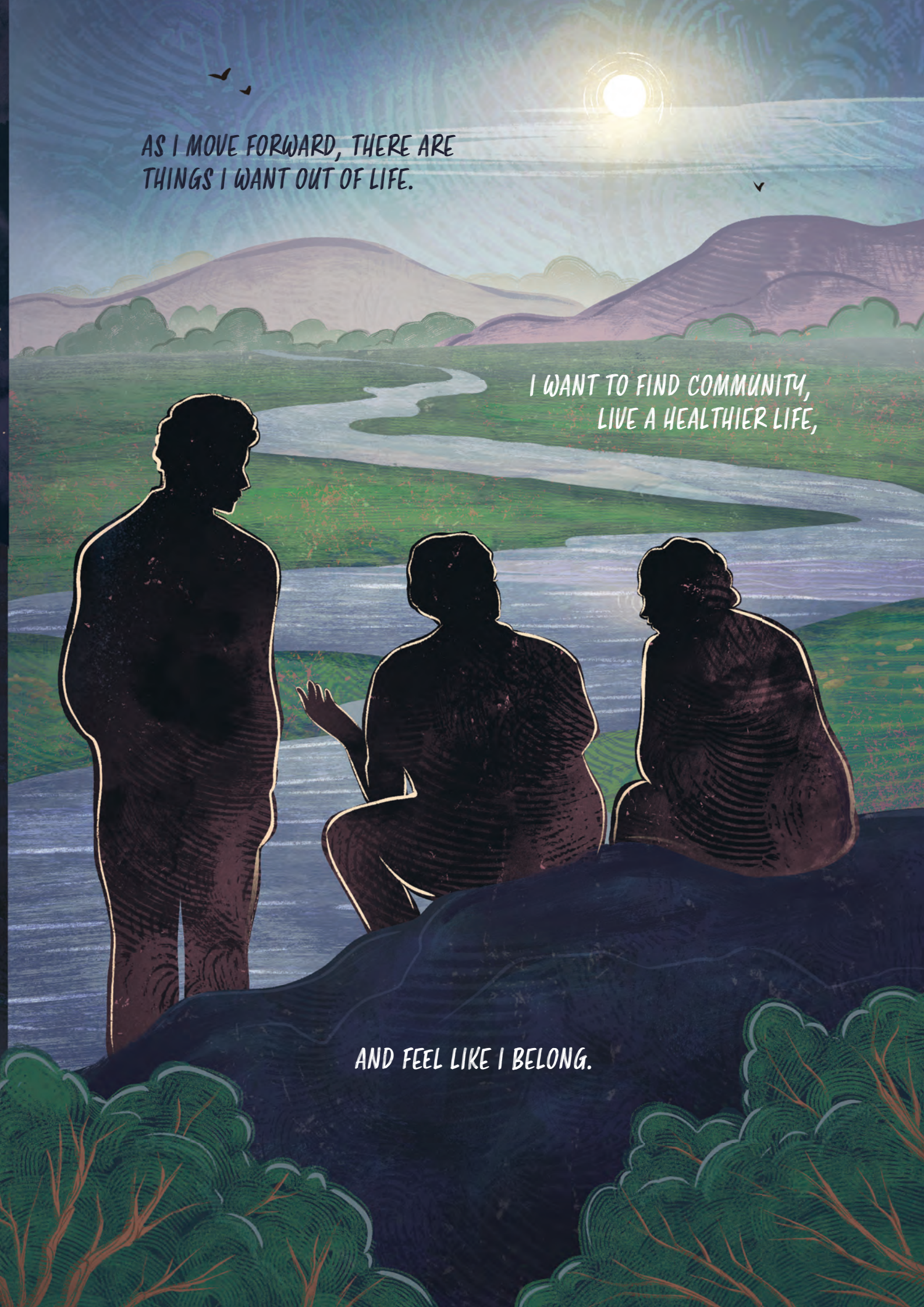
LOOK AT THE STATE OF YOU!

I WAS ACTUALLY JUST LYING THERE, CRYING.

IT WAS COLD, IT WAS AWFUL, IT REALLY WAS. I'D SAY ROCK BOTTOM.


I FELT LONELY,
I FELT ISOLATED FROM EVERYONE.
I WAS DRINKING MORE...
AND SMOKING MORE...
TO SLEEP, OR JUST TO BLOCK THINGS OUT.


BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S NEXT, KIND OF THING.
I SUPPOSE THE WORST PART OF IT ALL, IS THE LIMBO SIDE OF IT,
THE UNCERTAINTY OF WHERE YOU'RE GOING TO BE,
OR WHAT'S GOING ON,
I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE I'M GOING TO GET KICKED OUT OF THIS PLACE,
EVEN THOUGH I'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG.


AS I MOVE FORWARD, THERE ARE THINGS I WANT OUT OF LIFE.
I WANT TO FIND COMMUNITY, LIVE A HEALTHIER LIFE,
AND FEEL LIKE I BELONG.

Conversation prompts:

Please use Alex's story and the below prompts to facilitate conversations about trauma during homelessness. These prompts can be used in one-to-one sessions with people experiencing homelessness, as part of reflective practice in services, or in staff training. Discuss and reflect on Alex's experience and where experiences could have been changed so the cycle of trauma and homelessness ended sooner.

Please note, in conversations with people experiencing homelessness or those with lived experience, disclosing their own traumatic experiences should always be a personal choice.

Alex

- **Thinking about how Alex became homeless in the first place, what do you think could have happened at the beginning?**
- **Are you aware of anything in place that could support someone like Alex who suddenly becomes homeless?**
- **How do you think Alex was feeling?**
- **If you were Alex, how would you feel?**
- **If Alex reached out to you, how might you try to help?**
- **Do you think there is anything that could have happened sooner in Alex's story to stop things from getting worse?**
- **What do you think this would look like and who would need to be involved?**
- **What do you want to see happen next for Alex?**









Designed by rootsandwings.design

