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# SERGIO'S *story*

A JOURNEY THROUGH  
(AND BEYOND)  
THE LEGAL SYSTEM



This book is about a young person named Sergio. He has experienced some things that you might have been through or might currently be going through.



Situations in Sergio's life have made it hard to balance school and work and people around him notice how tired he is. Sergio learns that something is happening to him that is against the law, and later becomes a witness in a potential criminal court case.

Some of Sergio's experiences might not look and sound like yours, but they might help you to understand what's going on with you, your family, your friends, and your situation.



### **This book includes information about:**

- **What could happen in your case**
- **People you might see or talk to**
- **Different ways to work through your feelings**



You can keep this book. Read it, write in it, ask questions, whatever. Hopefully it helps. And if you read any words or names of people that you don't understand, you can find their meanings in the 'What's Going On?' booklet.

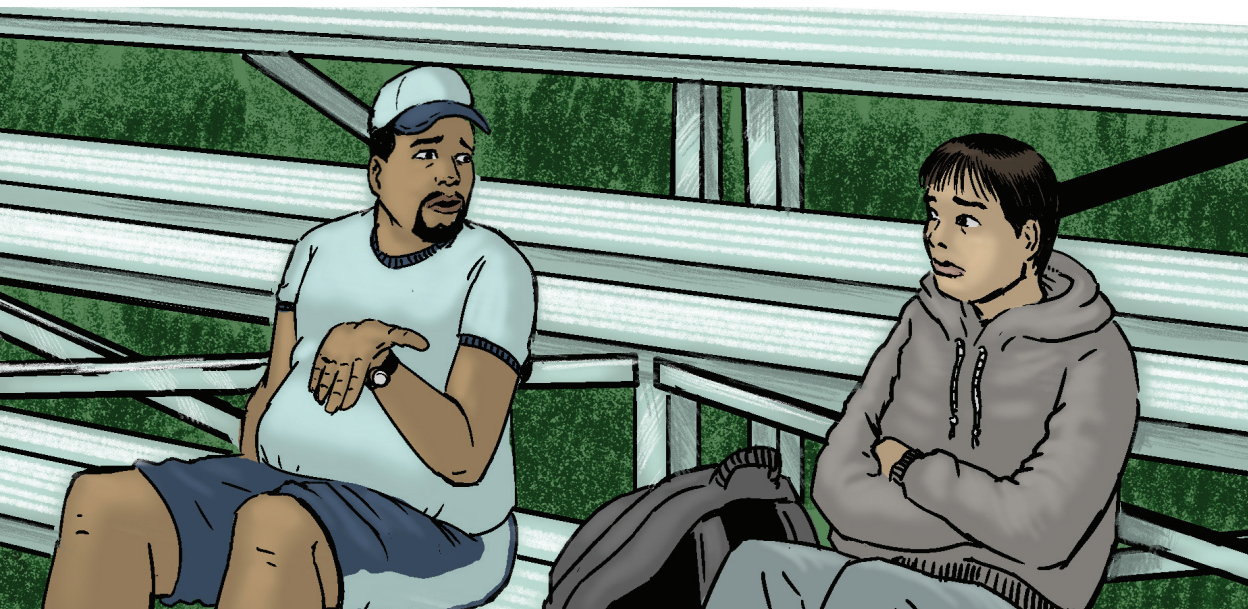




Sergio's story is based on real people's lives. You'll hear from some of them at the end of the book. Reading Sergio's story may bring up some feelings or memories, which is completely understandable.



It may be helpful to go through this book with someone working with you, such as an advocate or caseworker, or another adult you trust.



Please remember that there are a lot of people who can provide help and support. You are not alone.

# SERGIO'S *story*

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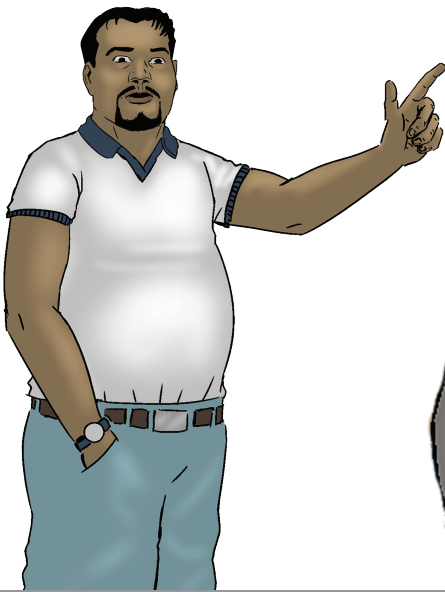
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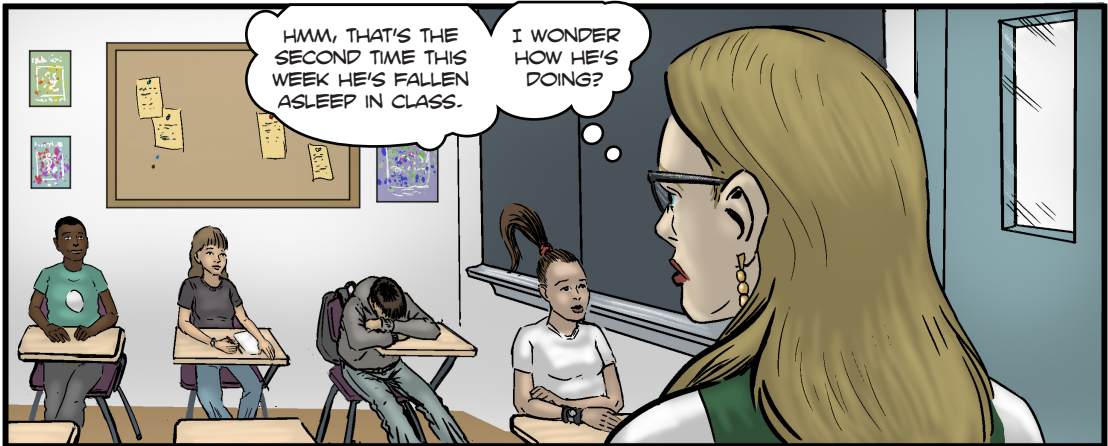
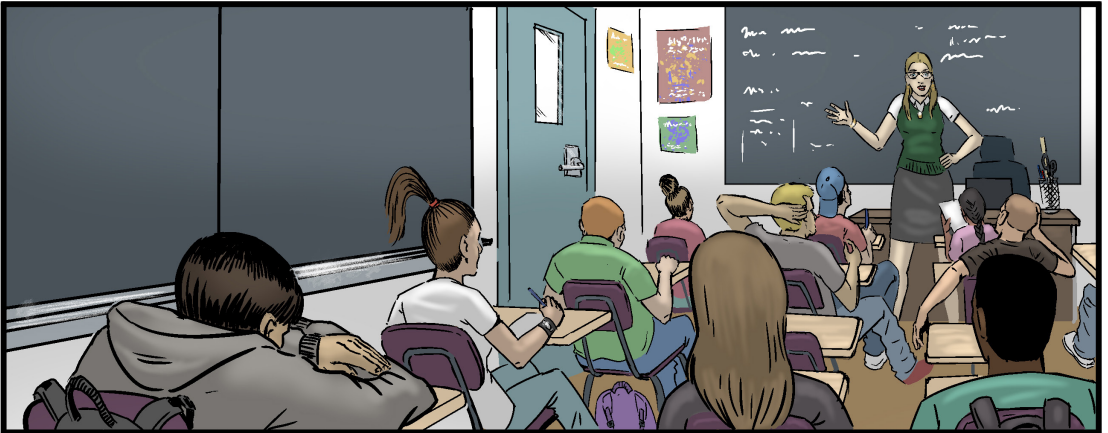
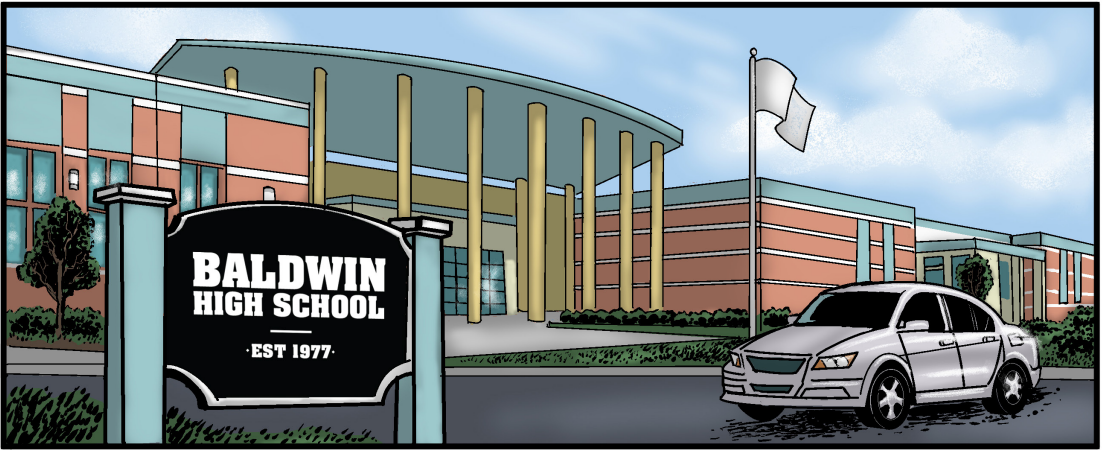
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# PART 1

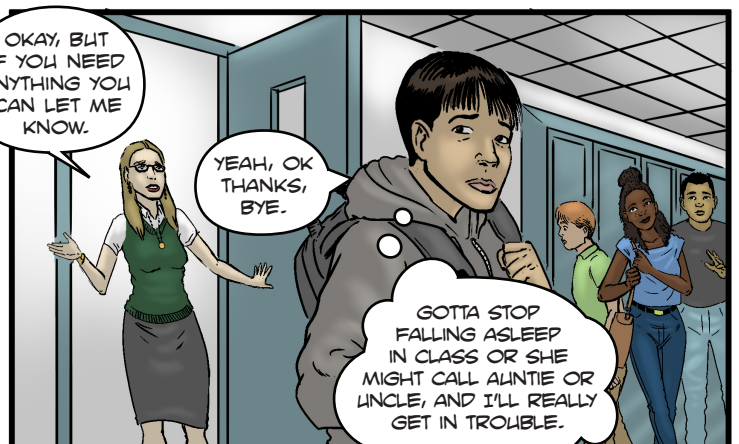
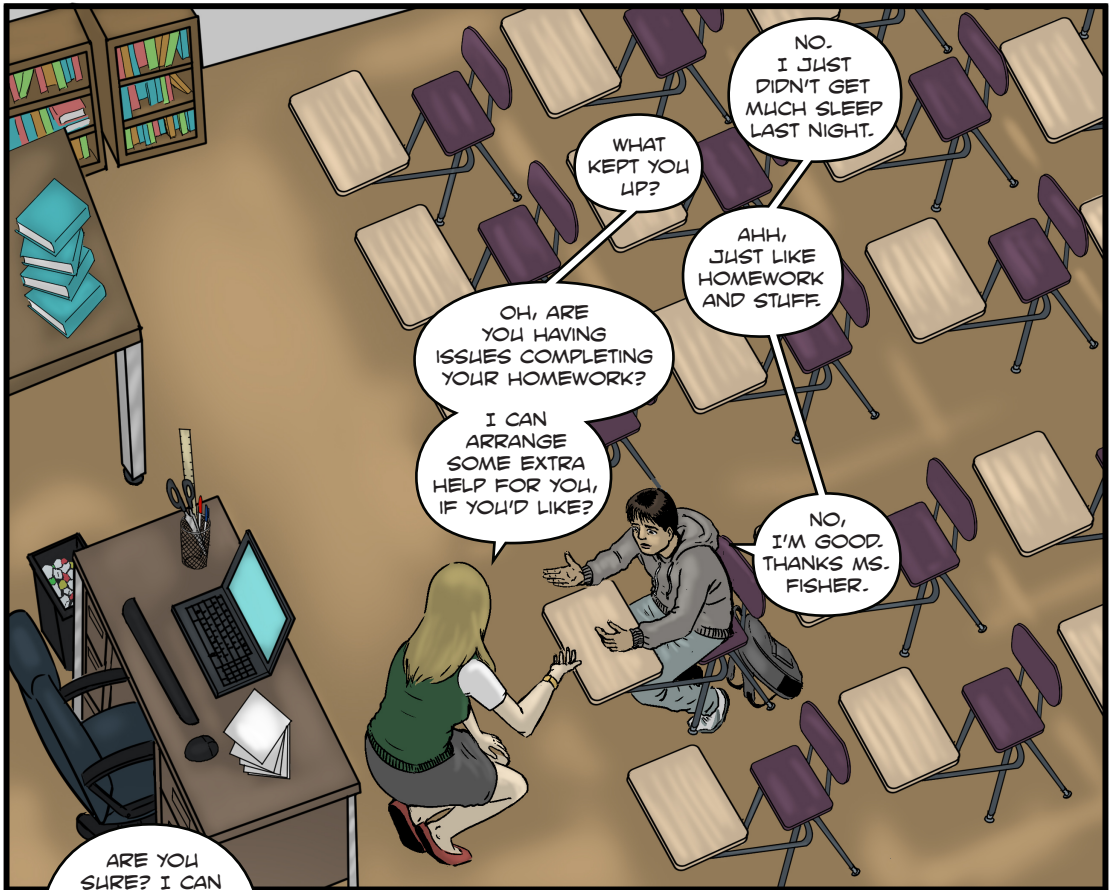
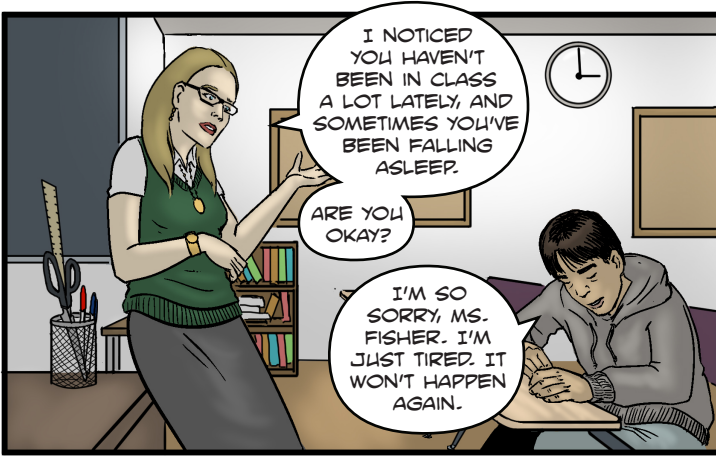
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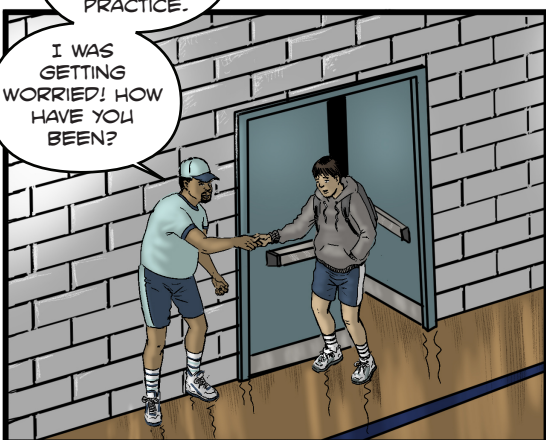
SERGIO  
TALKS  
WITH HIS  
COACH



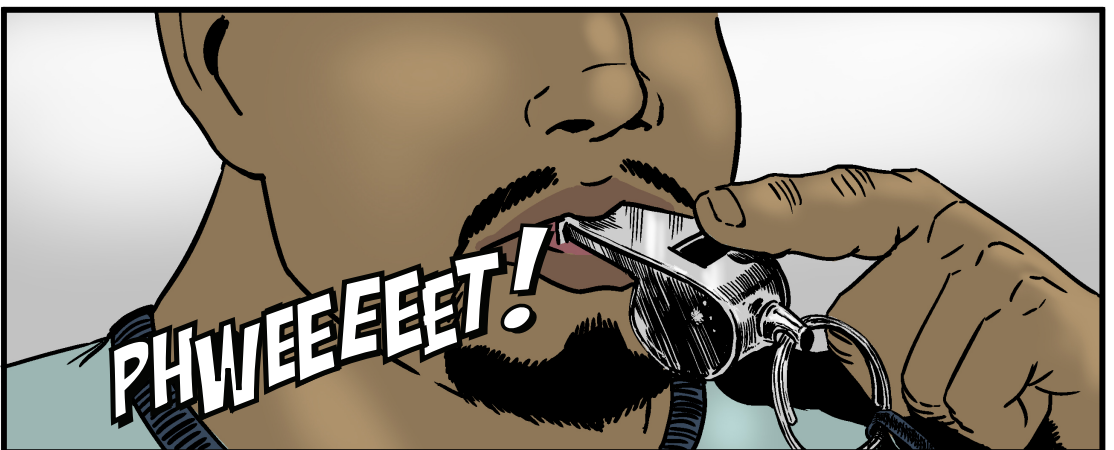
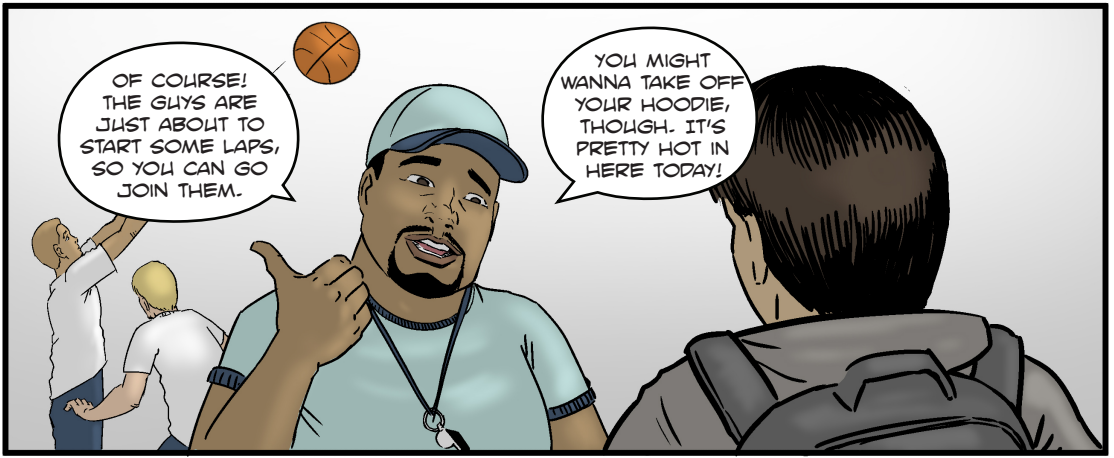


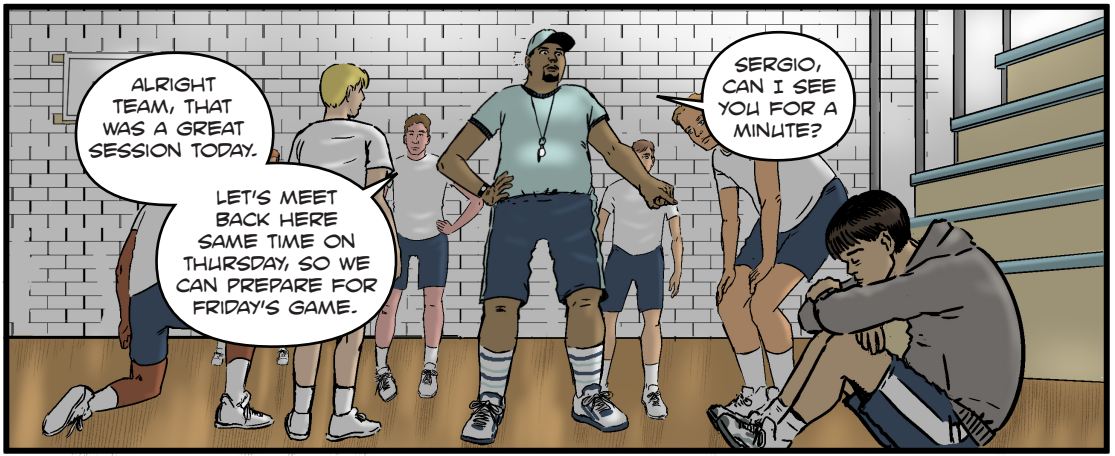








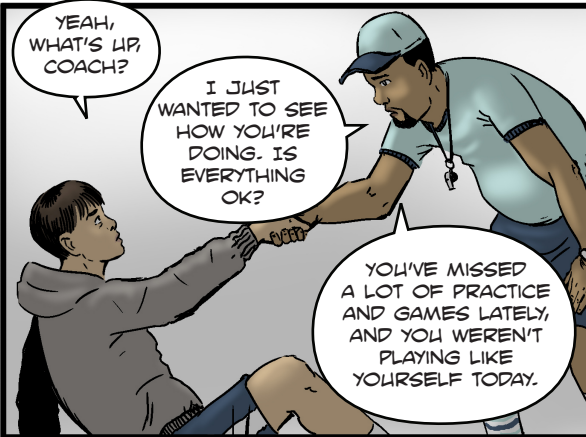




ALRIGHT TEAM, THAT WAS A GREAT SESSION TODAY.

LET'S MEET BACK HERE SAME TIME ON THURSDAY, SO WE CAN PREPARE FOR FRIDAY'S GAME.

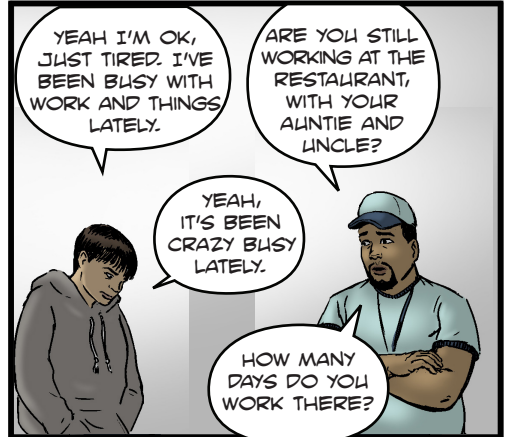
SERGIO, CAN I SEE YOU FOR A MINUTE?



YEAH, WHAT'S UP, COACH?

I JUST WANTED TO SEE HOW YOU'RE DOING. IS EVERYTHING OK?

YOU'VE MISSED A LOT OF PRACTICE AND GAMES LATELY, AND YOU WEREN'T PLAYING LIKE YOURSELF TODAY.



YEAH I'M OK, JUST TIRED. I'VE BEEN BUSY WITH WORK AND THINGS LATELY.

ARE YOU STILL WORKING AT THE RESTAURANT, WITH YOUR AUNTIE AND UNCLE?

YEAH, IT'S BEEN CRAZY BUSY LATELY.

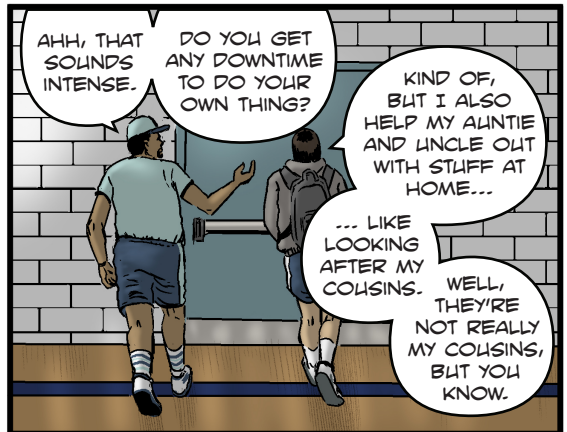
HOW MANY DAYS DO YOU WORK THERE?



PRETTY MUCH EVERY DAY.

OH. AND HOW LONG DO YOU HAVE TO WORK EACH DAY?

IT DEPENDS. SOMETIMES IT'S THE WHOLE DAY. OTHER DAYS IT'S JUST LIKE THE MORNING OR EVENING.



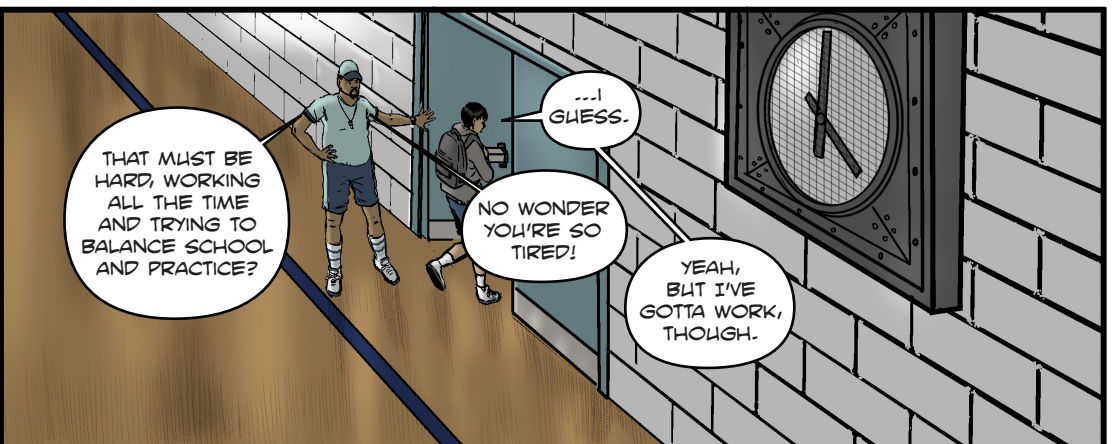
AHH, THAT SOUNDS INTENSE.

DO YOU GET ANY DOWNTIME TO DO YOUR OWN THING?

KIND OF, BUT I ALSO HELP MY AUNTIE AND UNCLE OUT WITH STUFF AT HOME...

... LIKE LOOKING AFTER MY COUSINS.

WELL, THEY'RE NOT REALLY MY COUSINS, BUT YOU KNOW.



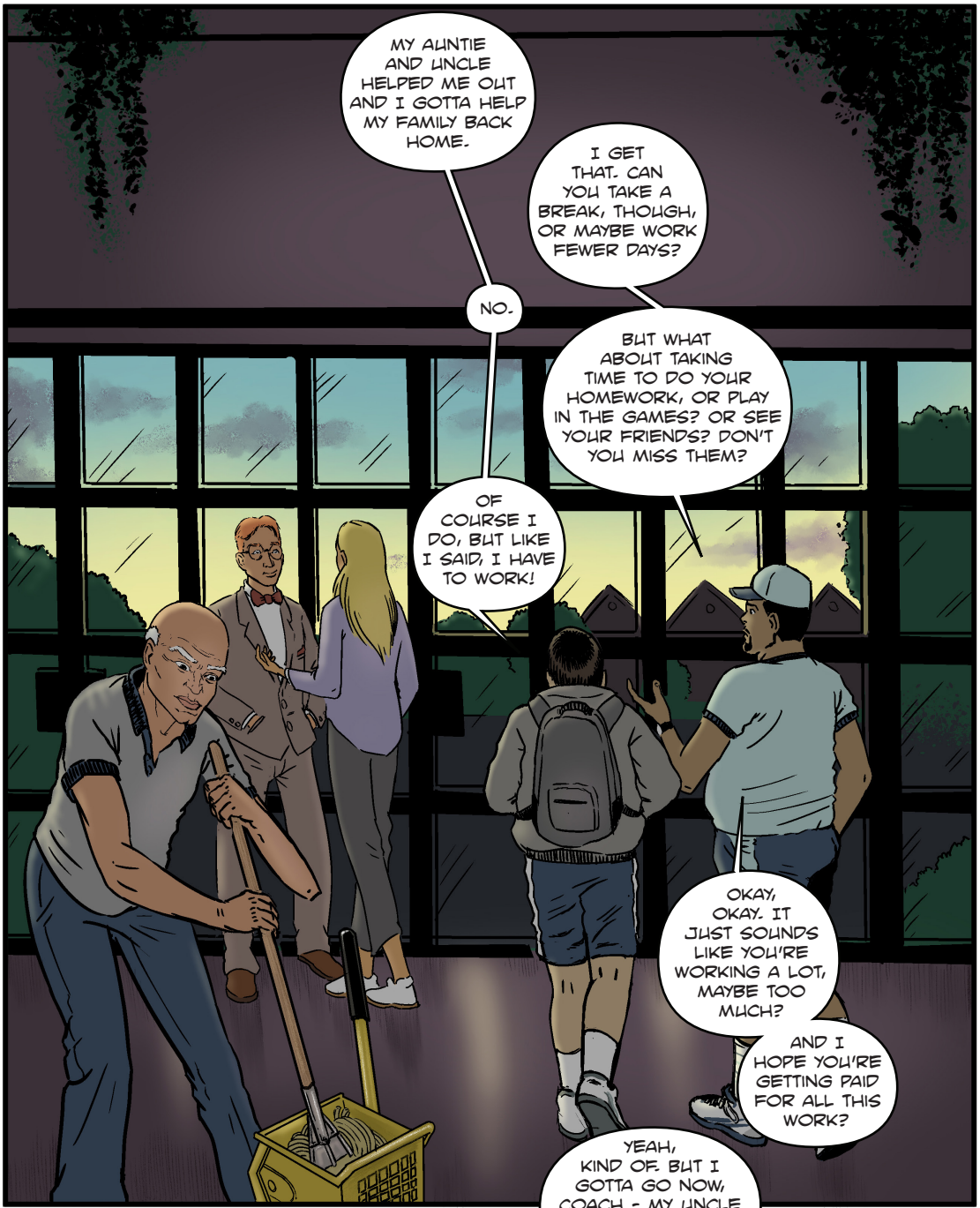
THAT MUST BE HARD, WORKING ALL THE TIME AND TRYING TO BALANCE SCHOOL AND PRACTICE?

...I GUESS.

NO WONDER YOU'RE SO TIRED!

YEAH, BUT I'VE GOTTA WORK, THOUGH.





MY AUNTIE AND UNCLE HELPED ME OUT AND I GOTTA HELP MY FAMILY BACK HOME.

I GET THAT. CAN YOU TAKE A BREAK, THOUGH, OR MAYBE WORK FEWER DAYS?

NO.

BUT WHAT ABOUT TAKING TIME TO DO YOUR HOMEWORK, OR PLAY IN THE GAMES? OR SEE YOUR FRIENDS? DON'T YOU MISS THEM?

OF COURSE I DO, BUT LIKE I SAID, I HAVE TO WORK!

OKAY, OKAY. IT JUST SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE WORKING A LOT, MAYBE TOO MUCH?

AND I HOPE YOU'RE GETTING PAID FOR ALL THIS WORK?

YEAH, KIND OF. BUT I GOTTA GO NOW, COACH - MY UNCLE WILL BE MAD IF I'M LATE FOR WORK.

I'LL SEE YOU AT PRACTICE ON THURSDAY, BYE!



FRIDAY.

AHH, EVERYONE'S GONNA ASK ME WHERE I'VE BEEN, AND COACH IS GONNA BE ON ME AGAIN FOR MISSING PRACTICE YESTERDAY.

I'M SO TIRED FROM WORKING ALL THE TIME AND THEN PRETENDING EVERYTHING'S OK WHEN I'M AT SCHOOL.

BALDWIN HIGH SCHOOL  
1977

MAYBE I SHOULD TELL SOMEONE WHAT'S GOING ON? BUT THAT MIGHT MAKE THINGS WORSE, AND I DON'T WANNA GET IN MORE TROUBLE WITH AUNTIE & UNCLE.

I WISH I COULD TALK TO MY FAMILY. IF I HAD KNOWN THINGS WOULD BE LIKE THIS, I-

SERGIO, HEY! WAIT UP!

OH, HEY COACH...

I'M GLAD I CAUGHT YOU. DO YOU HAVE A FEW MINUTES TO TALK BEFORE CLASS STARTS?

UHH, OK.

WE MISSED YOU AGAIN AT PRACTICE YESTERDAY, AND I DIDN'T SEE YOU AT SCHOOL THE PAST COUPLE OF DAYS...

...IS EVERYTHING OK?

YEAH, I WAS JUST WORKING. SORRY I MISSED PRACTICE AGAIN.

THAT'S OK, I FIGURED YOU MIGHT'VE BEEN WORKING. MS. FISHER WAS ASKING ABOUT YOU AS WELL. WE'RE JUST WORRIED.

WE TRIED CALLING YOUR AUNTIE, AND YOUR UNCLE TOO, BUT WE COULDN'T REACH THEM.

OH, THEY WERE PROBABLY BUSY WITH WORK, TOO.

RIGHT. WELL, ABOUT YOUR WORK, WE DIDN'T GET TO FINISH OUR LAST CONVERSATION.

DO YOU MIND IF I ASK YOU A FEW MORE QUESTIONS?

...OK, I GUESS.





YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU 'KIND OF' GET PAID FOR ALL THE WORK YOU DO...

WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?

WELL I DO GET PAID, BUT THE MONEY GOES BACK TO MY AUNTIE AND UNCLE 'CAUSE I OWE THEM...

...MY PAY GETS TAKEN OFF FROM THE TOTAL AMOUNT THAT I OWE THEM. I THINK.



SO YOU OWE YOUR AUNTIE AND UNCLE? FOR WHAT?

WELL THEY HELPED ME TO COME OVER HERE, AND THEY LET ME STAY WITH THEM AND THEIR FAMILY...

... AND EAT THEIR FOOD. SO I OWE THEM FOR ALL OF THAT.

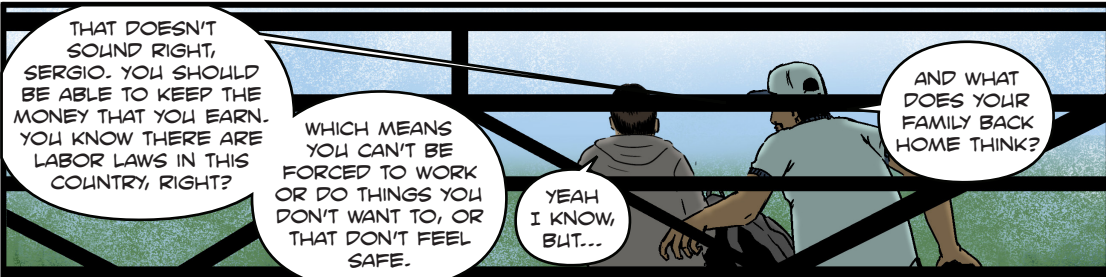


OK, BUT DOES THAT MEAN YOU CAN'T STOP WORKING, OR YOU WON'T GET ANY MONEY UNTIL YOU'VE FINISHED PAYING THEM WHAT YOU OWE?

AND HOW LONG WILL THAT BE?

YEAH, KIND OF

I DON'T KNOW.



THAT DOESN'T SOUND RIGHT, SERGIO. YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO KEEP THE MONEY THAT YOU EARN. YOU KNOW THERE ARE LABOR LAWS IN THIS COUNTRY, RIGHT?

WHICH MEANS YOU CAN'T BE FORCED TO WORK OR DO THINGS YOU DON'T WANT TO, OR THAT DON'T FEEL SAFE.

YEAH I KNOW, BUT...

AND WHAT DOES YOUR FAMILY BACK HOME THINK?



I DON'T KNOW, I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO THEM IN A WHILE.

DOES YOUR AUNTIE OR UNCLE EVER SAY THAT THEY'LL DO THINGS TO YOUR FAMILY BACK HOME, IF YOU DON'T WORK?

OR DO THEY HURT YOU?



SERGIO, IS THAT WHY YOU'RE WEARING THAT HOODIE, EVEN THOUGH IT'S, LIKE, 95 DEGREES?

WHY ARE YOU ASKING ME ALL THESE QUESTIONS, MAN?

I DON'T WANNA TALK ABOUT IT!



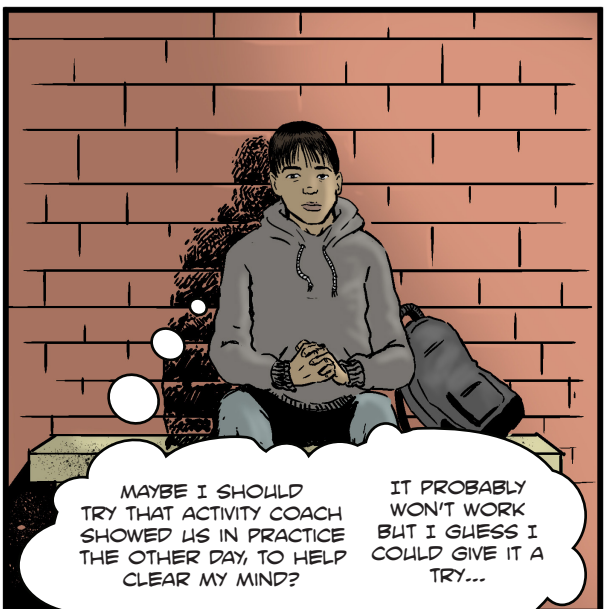
COACH IS ASKING ME TOO MANY QUESTIONS. IF I TELL HIM WHAT'S GOING ON, I MIGHT GET IN TROUBLE, OR WHAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO MY FAMILY?

OR WHAT IF MY COUSINS GET TAKEN AWAY? I HEARD THOSE THINGS HAPPEN...

... AND THEN IT WOULD BE ALL MY FAULT. BUT AUNTIE AND UNCLE ARE PRETTY GOOD TO THEM, IT'S JUST ME THAT THEY TREAT DIFFERENTLY, AND I'M TIRED OF IT. SO MAYBE I SHOULD TELL COACH? BUT WHAT CAN HE EVEN DO?



I'M SO CONFUSED! AND I FEEL ALL WORKED UP.



MAYBE I SHOULD TRY THAT ACTIVITY COACH SHOWED US IN PRACTICE THE OTHER DAY, TO HELP CLEAR MY MIND?

IT PROBABLY WON'T WORK BUT I GUESS I COULD GIVE IT A TRY...



# Relax

# MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

There are moments in Sergio's story - and maybe in your life, too - when strong emotions get in the way of thinking clearly. Being calm can help a lot when you're trying to figure out what to do.

If you are feeling anxious or upset, try this visualization exercise to help you calm down and focus your thoughts. It can be done anywhere.

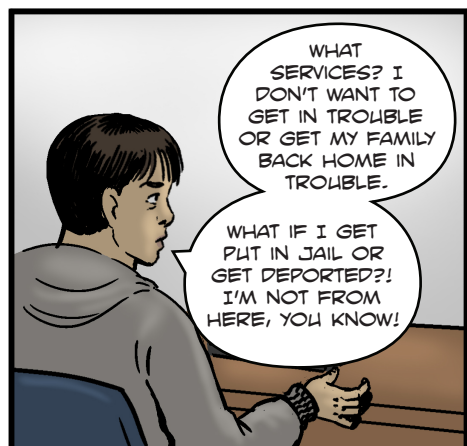
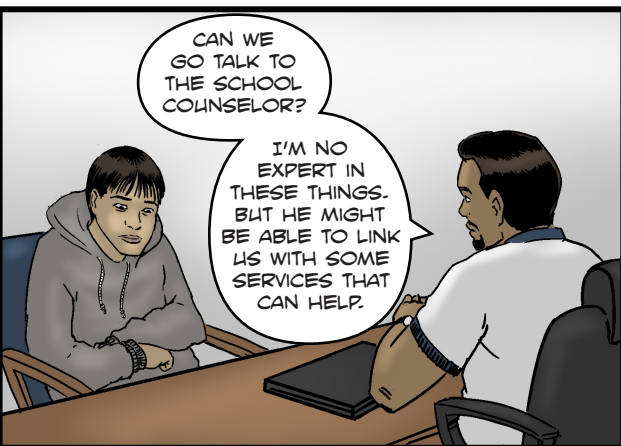
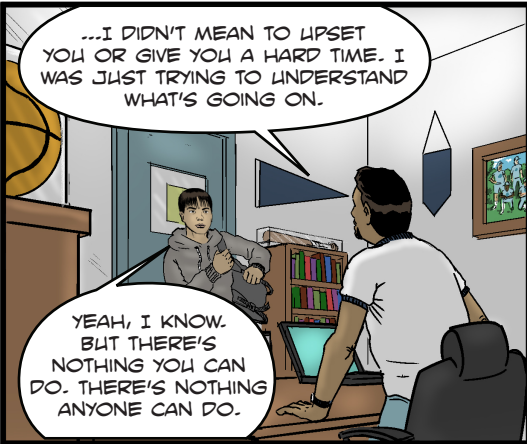
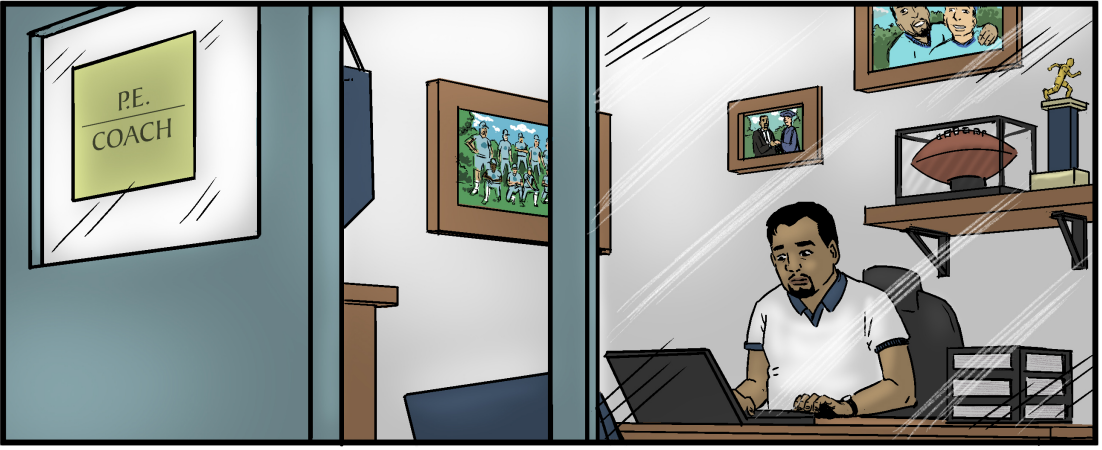


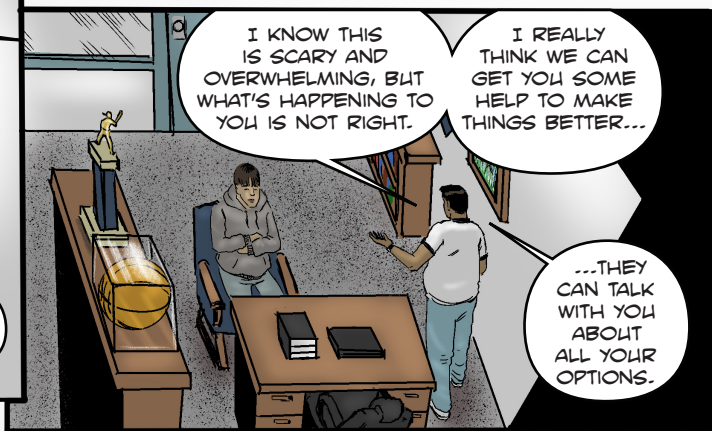
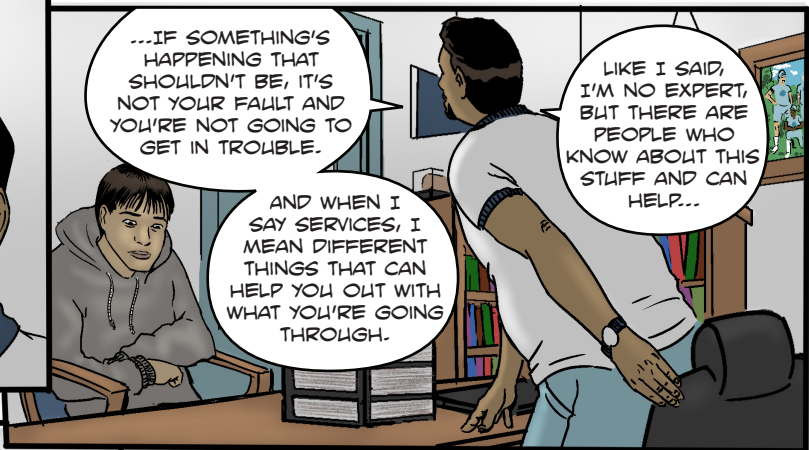
**Start by closing your eyes and getting in a comfortable position. Imagine a big beautiful blue sky. It can be any type of blue sky that you like that makes you feel peaceful.**

**Now imagine big clouds covering the blue sky. The sky is you, and the clouds are your thoughts and worries.**

**Then imagine a gentle breeze blowing through your mind. The breeze makes the clouds slowly start to break up and drift away.**

**The clouds disappear and all you can see is your peaceful blue sky.**





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# PART 2

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SERGIO  
MEETS  
WITH HIS  
VICTIM  
ADVOCATE





MANY MONTHS LATER...



SO, HOW HAVE YOU BEEN, SERGIO? YOU LOOK WELL.

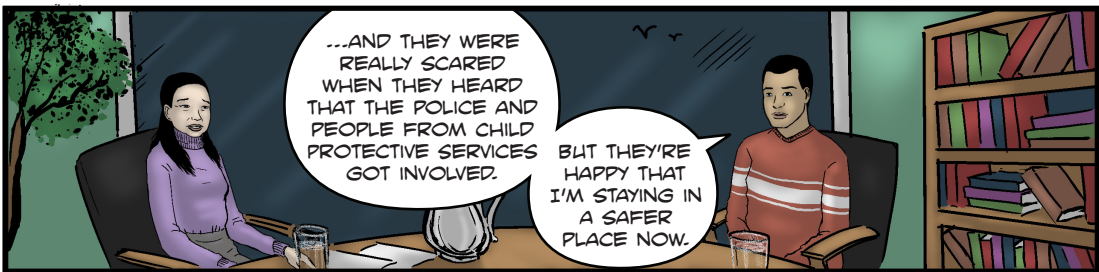
I'M OK. I FINALLY GOT TO TALK TO MY FAMILY BACK HOME, WHICH WAS NICE.



OH, THAT'S GREAT! I KNOW YOUR CASEWORKER WAS TRYING TO HELP YOU GET IN CONTACT WITH THEM FOR A WHILE.

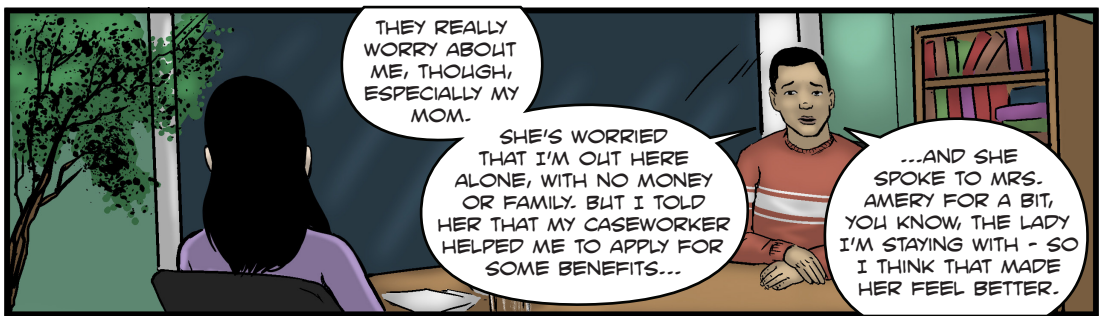
HOW ARE THEY?

THEY'RE OK. THEY'RE REALLY SAD AND ANGRY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO ME...



...AND THEY WERE REALLY SCARED WHEN THEY HEARD THAT THE POLICE AND PEOPLE FROM CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES GOT INVOLVED.

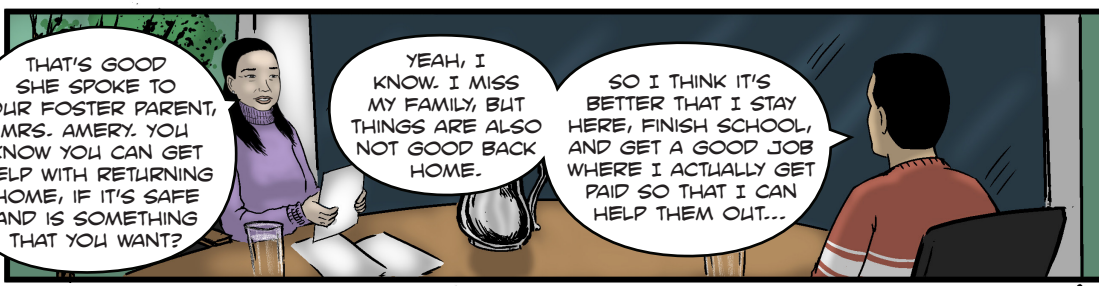
BUT THEY'RE HAPPY THAT I'M STAYING IN A SAFER PLACE NOW.



THEY REALLY WORRY ABOUT ME, THOUGH, ESPECIALLY MY MOM.

SHE'S WORRIED THAT I'M OUT HERE ALONE, WITH NO MONEY OR FAMILY. BUT I TOLD HER THAT MY CASEWORKER HELPED ME TO APPLY FOR SOME BENEFITS...

...AND SHE SPOKE TO MRS. AMERY FOR A BIT, YOU KNOW, THE LADY I'M STAYING WITH - SO I THINK THAT MADE HER FEEL BETTER.



THAT'S GOOD SHE SPOKE TO YOUR FOSTER PARENT, MRS. AMERY. YOU KNOW YOU CAN GET HELP WITH RETURNING HOME, IF IT'S SAFE AND IS SOMETHING THAT YOU WANT?

YEAH, I KNOW. I MISS MY FAMILY, BUT THINGS ARE ALSO NOT GOOD BACK HOME.

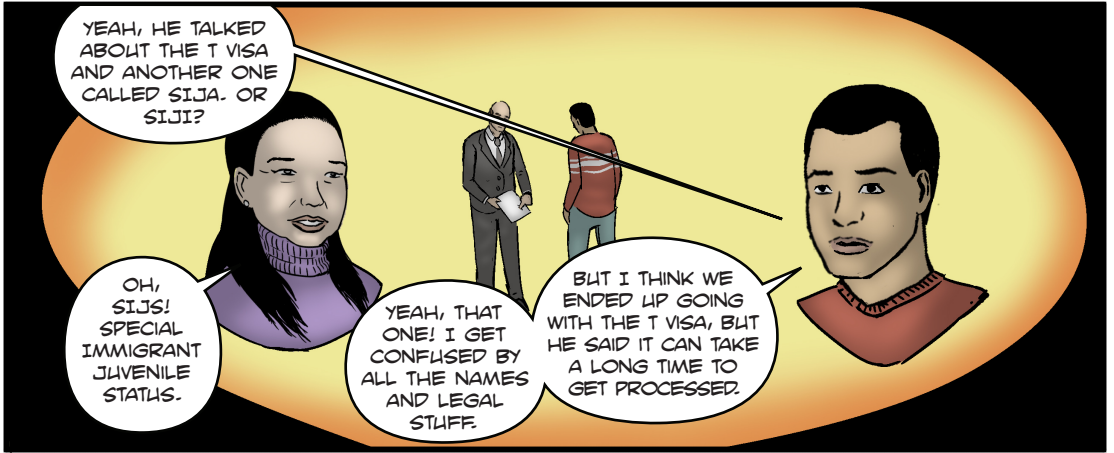
SO I THINK IT'S BETTER THAT I STAY HERE, FINISH SCHOOL, AND GET A GOOD JOB WHERE I ACTUALLY GET PAID SO THAT I CAN HELP THEM OUT...



...LIKE I ALWAYS PLANNED, BEFORE EVERYTHING ELSE HAPPENED.

SURE, THAT MAKES SENSE.

AND YOUR LAWYER, THE ONE WHO WORKS ON IMMIGRATION CASES, HAS HE TALKED TO YOU ABOUT VISA OPTIONS AND SUBMITTED AN APPLICATION YET?

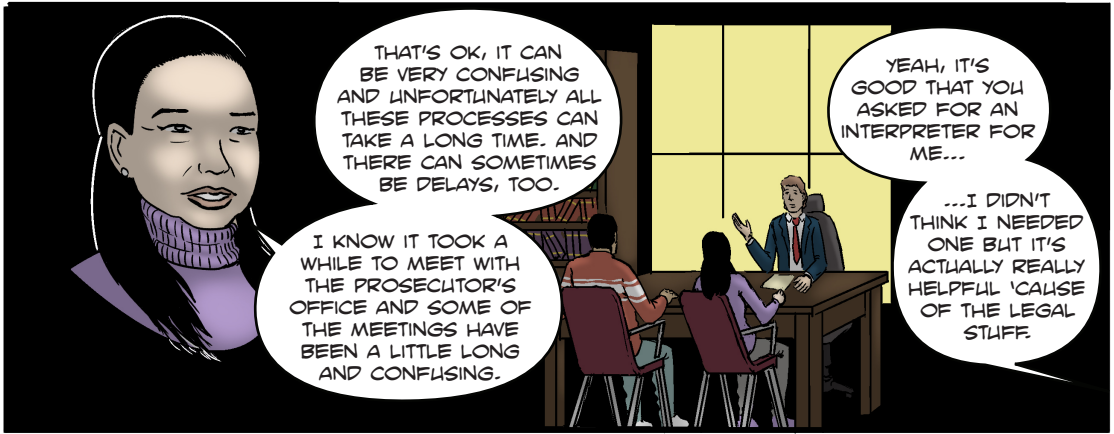


YEAH, HE TALKED ABOUT THE T VISA AND ANOTHER ONE CALLED SIJA. OR SIJI?

OH, SIJS! SPECIAL IMMIGRANT JUVENILE STATUS.

YEAH, THAT ONE! I GET CONFUSED BY ALL THE NAMES AND LEGAL STUFF

BUT I THINK WE ENDED UP GOING WITH THE T VISA, BUT HE SAID IT CAN TAKE A LONG TIME TO GET PROCESSED.



THAT'S OK, IT CAN BE VERY CONFUSING AND UNFORTUNATELY ALL THESE PROCESSES CAN TAKE A LONG TIME. AND THERE CAN SOMETIMES BE DELAYS, TOO.

I KNOW IT TOOK A WHILE TO MEET WITH THE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE AND SOME OF THE MEETINGS HAVE BEEN A LITTLE LONG AND CONFUSING.

YEAH, IT'S GOOD THAT YOU ASKED FOR AN INTERPRETER FOR ME...

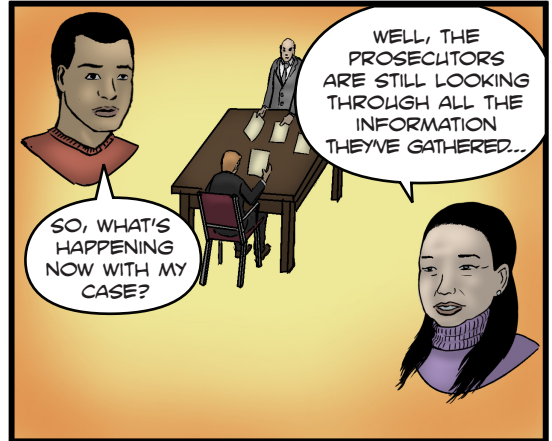
...I DIDN'T THINK I NEEDED ONE BUT IT'S ACTUALLY REALLY HELPFUL 'CAUSE OF THE LEGAL STUFF.



IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON.

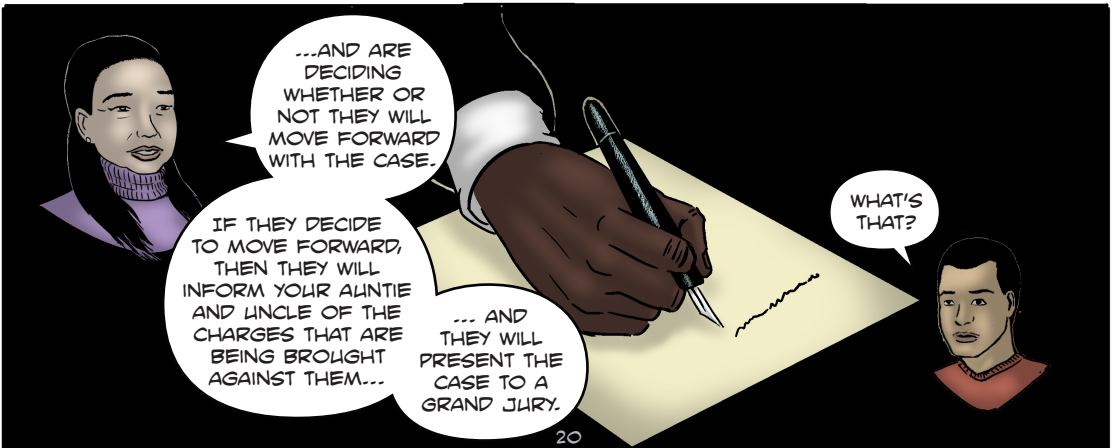
SO PLEASE DO ASK FOR AN INTERPRETER AGAIN IF YOU NEED ONE, AND FEEL FREE TO ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING.

AS YOUR ADVOCATE, THAT'S WHAT I'M HERE FOR!



WELL, THE PROSECUTORS ARE STILL LOOKING THROUGH ALL THE INFORMATION THEY'VE GATHERED...

SO, WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW WITH MY CASE?



...AND ARE DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT THEY WILL MOVE FORWARD WITH THE CASE.

IF THEY DECIDE TO MOVE FORWARD, THEN THEY WILL INFORM YOUR AUNTIE AND UNCLE OF THE CHARGES THAT ARE BEING BROUGHT AGAINST THEM...

... AND THEY WILL PRESENT THE CASE TO A GRAND JURY.

WHAT'S THAT?

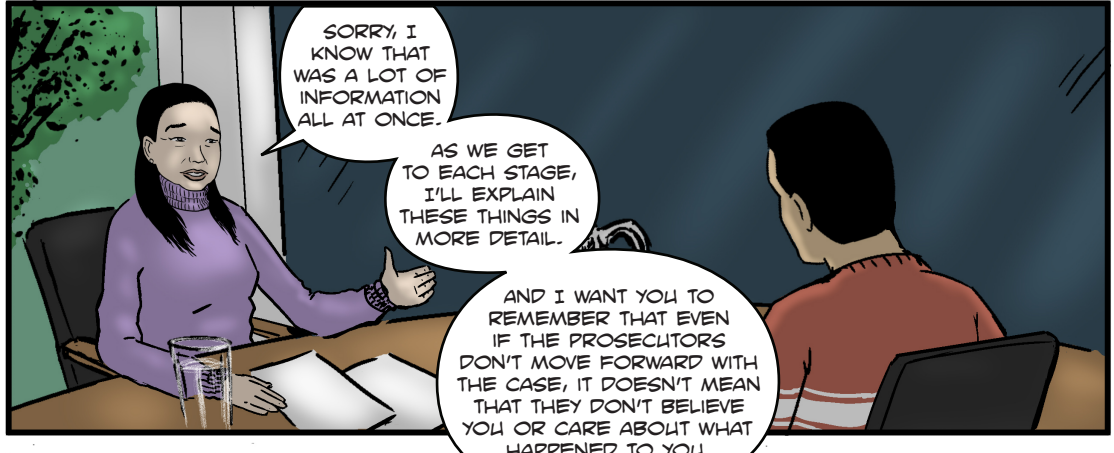




A GRAND JURY IS A GROUP OF PEOPLE FROM THE COMMUNITY WHO DON'T KNOW YOU OR YOUR AUNTIE OR UNCLE.

THEY LISTEN TO ALL THE EVIDENCE AND DECIDE WHETHER YOUR AUNTIE AND UNCLE SHOULD BE CHARGED WITH A CRIME.

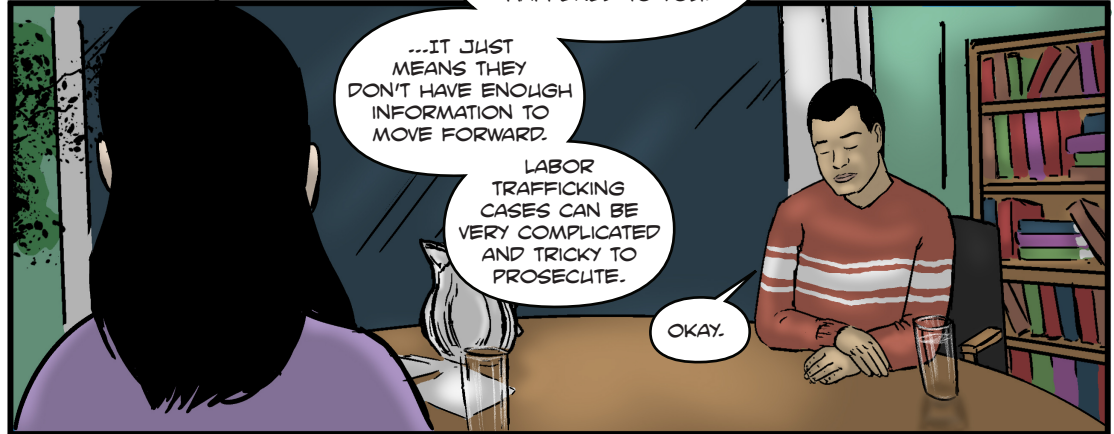
THE PROSECUTOR MIGHT ASK YOU TO TESTIFY IN THE GRAND JURY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.



SORRY, I KNOW THAT WAS A LOT OF INFORMATION ALL AT ONCE.

AS WE GET TO EACH STAGE, I'LL EXPLAIN THESE THINGS IN MORE DETAIL.

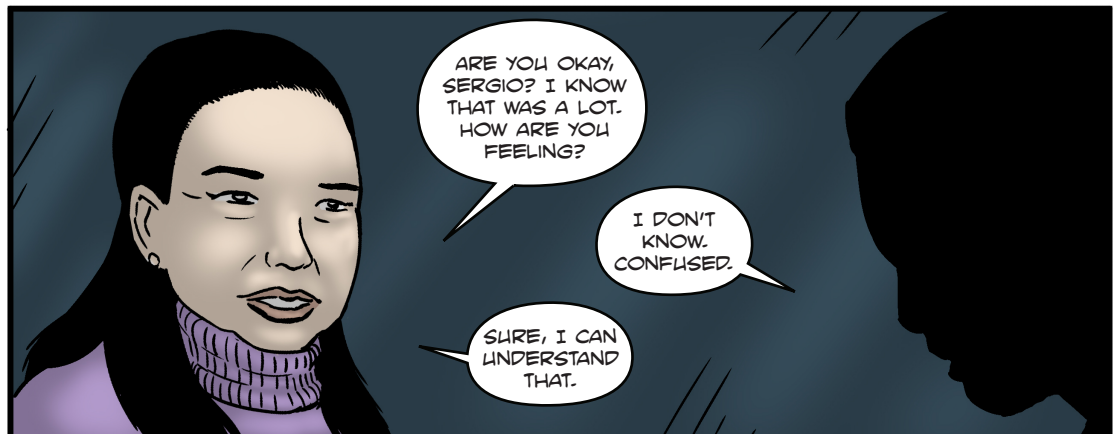
AND I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER THAT EVEN IF THE PROSECUTORS DON'T MOVE FORWARD WITH THE CASE, IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THEY DON'T BELIEVE YOU OR CARE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU.



...IT JUST MEANS THEY DON'T HAVE ENOUGH INFORMATION TO MOVE FORWARD.

LABOR TRAFFICKING CASES CAN BE VERY COMPLICATED AND TRICKY TO PROSECUTE.

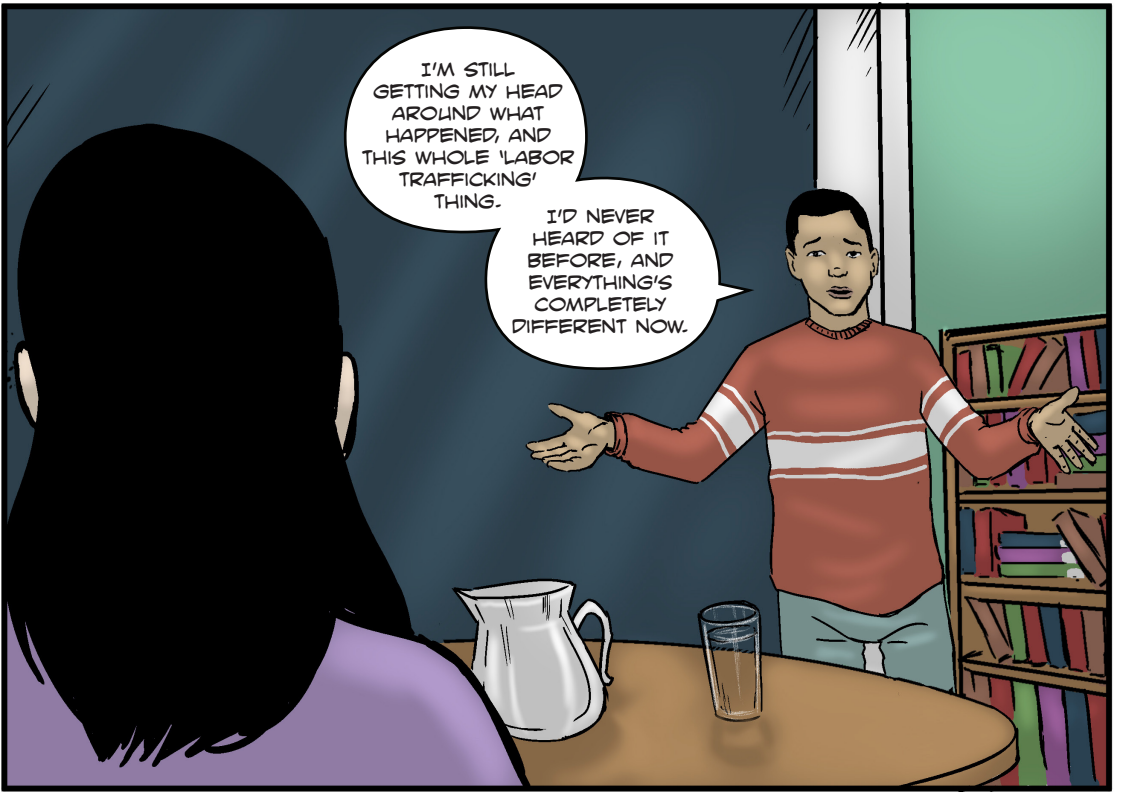
OKAY.



ARE YOU OKAY, SERGIO? I KNOW THAT WAS A LOT. HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

I DON'T KNOW. CONFUSED.

SURE, I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT.



I'M STILL GETTING MY HEAD AROUND WHAT HAPPENED, AND THIS WHOLE 'LABOR TRAFFICKING' THING.

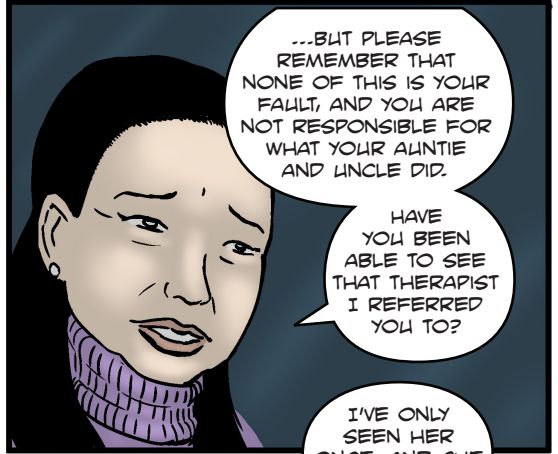
I'D NEVER HEARD OF IT BEFORE, AND EVERYTHING'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT NOW.



AND I FEEL BAD FOR MY AUNTIE AND UNCLE. THEY DID KIND OF HELP ME AT FIRST, BUT THEN THINGS JUST WEREN'T GOOD AND GOT OUT OF CONTROL...

IT'S COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDABLE TO HAVE ALL THESE STRONG AND MIXED UP FEELINGS - YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT...

I'M GLAD AT LEAST MY COUSINS ARE DOING OKAY.



...BUT PLEASE REMEMBER THAT NONE OF THIS IS YOUR FAULT, AND YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT YOUR AUNTIE AND UNCLE DID.

HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO SEE THAT THERAPIST I REFERRED YOU TO?

I'VE ONLY SEEN HER ONCE, AND SHE WAS NICE...

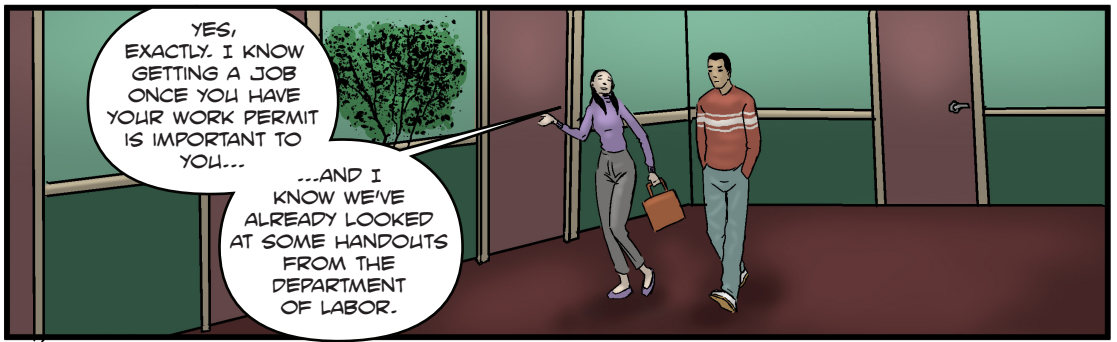
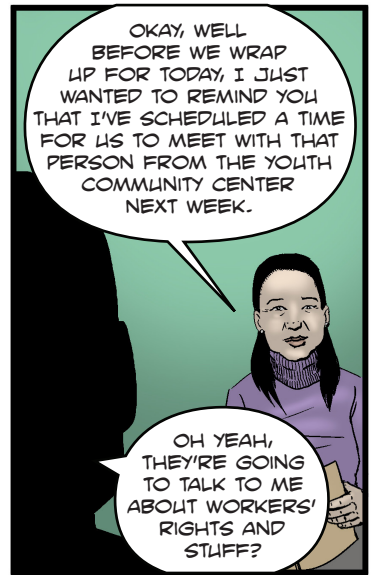
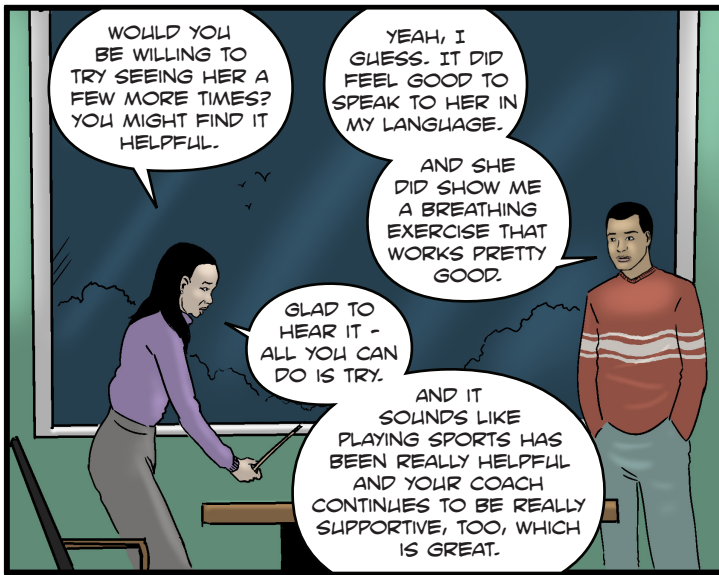


... BUT IT FEELS WEIRD AND HARD TALKING TO SOMEONE ABOUT MY FEELINGS, ESPECIALLY SOMEONE I DON'T EVEN KNOW.

IT'S NOT REALLY MY THING.

I HEAR YOU. IT TAKES TIME TO TRUST SOMEONE NEW AND FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING ABOUT THINGS LIKE THIS.





# Taking a BREATH

It may seem obvious, but taking deep breaths can help you prepare for something stressful and feel calmer when you're overwhelmed.

Deep breathing helps lower your heart rate, which then lets your body know that you're okay. And you can do this exercise anytime, anywhere.



Slowly take a big breath in, counting 1-2-3 as you fill your belly with air. Then hold your breath while you count 1-2.

Then count 1-2-3-4-5 as you breathe out slowly and let out all the air, feeling your belly empty out.

Repeat three times.



If it helps, you can close your eyes while you breathe, or put your hand on your stomach to feel your breath go in and out. You can also say a relaxing word or phrase as you breathe out.

# WHAT'S GOING ON?

Many young people work part-time jobs. This is legal in the United States. But you have rights and there are many laws to help protect you and keep you safe while you work. For example, there are laws that specify the number of hours you can work, the amount of money you should be paid, and your right to stop working whenever you want. All people that work in the United States, no matter how old they are or if they come from another country, are protected by these laws. And there are special labor laws for young people under the age of 18.

If a person forces you to work, withholds your pay, or threatens to harm you or your family if you don't work, this is illegal and could be 'labor trafficking.' Many children and young people in the United States experience labor trafficking in different workplaces, such as working as a cleaner or housekeeper, taking care of young children, selling goods, or working on a farm or construction site.

In Sergio's story, he was working in a restaurant, and he felt like he couldn't stop working because he owed money to his auntie and uncle. All his earnings were taken by his auntie and uncle in order to pay off his debt, and Sergio didn't know how long he had to keep working. This situation is sometimes referred to as 'debt bondage' or 'peonage,' and indicates possible labor trafficking.

Though it wasn't an easy decision, Sergio reached out to a trusted adult, his coach, who then helped him to connect to different services. These services gave Sergio the opportunity to find a safer place to live, apply for financial assistance from the government (which is a type of 'benefit'), apply for a special visa, get connected to his family, and see a therapist. Sergio was also a victim witness in a potential criminal case against his auntie and uncle, and he was connected with a victim advocate at the prosecutor's office who supported him as he navigated the criminal legal system.

If something like what happened to Sergio is happening to you, please remember that you are not alone, you did not do anything wrong, and there is help available. Some of what Sergio received help with may not apply to your situation as every community has different services, and every young person's needs are different. Also, labor trafficking cases are handled differently across the country, and not all of them end up going to criminal court. But what's most important is to get connected to legal assistance and case management and advocacy services - they can help you figure out what's best for you and your situation.

For more information on trafficking, check out the 'What's Going On?' booklet. For more information on the child welfare system check out [these materials](#). And, for more information on the criminal legal system check out [these materials](#).



# NOTES OF SUPPORT

You just read about Sergio's experience with labor trafficking and going through the beginning stages of a criminal court case. There are difficult feelings that come with sharing your experiences, going to court, and trying to move forward with your life.

**We thank you for your time and energy in reading this book, and we hope it has been of some help to you. As a last note, we spoke with some people who have been through similar lived experiences, and this is what they wanted to share with you:**



Advocate for yourself because your voice is powerful. If you ever feel uncomfortable, express that discomfort. Don't just keep it in because you feel like these officials are telling you what you have to do.

I was uncomfortable a lot of times, but I never said anything because I thought, "This person works with the government and the government is right," instead of saying, "*Can I take a break?*" or "*This is making me sad,*" or "*I'm scared.*" Advocate for yourself and ask any question you have.



- **Melanie T.**, *Lived Experience Expert*



This may be the worst nightmare you are living. Nobody is going to experience the same fear and pain that you're feeling but trust me, this nightmare is going to end. And you don't need to change. You are worthy just for being here. You are more than worthy, thank you for being who you are. And if the world seems that they don't understand you, I see you, I hear you, and I am here to support you. And I know that it's extremely hard to express that pain and that adults have used that pain to cause you more pain. I know how hard it is to open up. Take your time, and breathe. This feels like a nightmare but you are not alone. This will come to an end because you deserve to be loved, respected, to be cared for, and to be happy. Always remember you are powerful - you have the power.



- **Cristian E.**, *Survivor and Advocate*

# My Taking Care of Me CHECKLIST

Like Sergio did throughout his story, it can be good to “check in” with yourself and mentally scan how you’re feeling. When you’re upset or overwhelmed, doing one or more of these activities might help you feel better.

- Read, watch or listen to something you enjoy
- Think of a happy memory or a peaceful place
- Chat with friends in person or online
- Count backwards from 20
- Do some exercise or play a sport
- Make something arts & crafty or cook something
- Get a drink (water, tea or hot chocolate)
- Say kind, supportive things to yourself
- Spend time outdoors or in nature
- Let yourself cry, scream or talk about your frustration
- Keep a small item in your pocket (like a stone) and run your fingers over it
- Write down your thoughts or feelings

**Are there other activities that make you feel good?  
Is there someone you can ask about other kinds of  
healthy coping skills?**

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The Center for Court Innovation’s Child Witness Materials Project is a collaborative effort between the Center for Court Innovation, the Center for Urban Pedagogy, and Alternate History Comics. It is supported by cooperative agreement # 2018-V3-GX-K069, awarded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Center for Court Innovation works to create a more effective and humane justice system by performing original research and helping launch reforms around the world.

[www.courtinnovation.org](http://www.courtinnovation.org)

The Center for Urban Pedagogy is a nonprofit organization that uses the power of design and art to increase meaningful civic engagement, in partnership with historically marginalized communities.

[www.welcometoCUP.org](http://www.welcometoCUP.org)

Alternate History Comics is a multiple award-winning publishing company that creates original graphic novels and cultural comic collections.

<http://ahcomics.com>

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The Office for Victims of Crime is committed to enhancing the Nation’s capacity to assist crime victims and to providing leadership in changing attitudes, policies, and practices to promote justice and healing for all victims of crime.

[www.ovc.ojp.gov](http://www.ovc.ojp.gov)

The Office of Justice Programs is a federal agency that provides federal leadership, grants, training, technical assistance, and other resources to improve the Nation’s capacity to prevent and reduce crime, assist victims, and enhance the rule of law by strengthening the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Its six program offices—the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office for Victims of Crime, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking—support state and local crime-fighting efforts, fund thousands of victim service programs, help communities manage sex offenders, address the needs of youth in the system and children in danger, and provide vital research and data.





