



Shaping Transitions!

Answers for young
accompanied and
unaccompanied refugees

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Answers for young accompanied
and unaccompanied refugees

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»JuFlu: Transitions in the Lives of Young Refugees«.

(HAWK – Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaft und
Kunst, <http://blogs.hawk-hhg.de/juflu/>)

We would like to thank you again from the bottom of our
hearts for your support as well as your openness and cou-
rage!

You are great! Go your way and don't be discouraged!

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Dear Reader,

Young refugees are confronted with many chal-
lenges after their arrival in Germany. We spoke to
young people and asked them which situations were
particularly difficult for them and how they dealt
with them. In this booklet, we would like to tell you
the stories of Aleyna and Amir. These stories are
based on the stories and experiences of the young
people we spoke to.

When you read the stories, you will always find
a situation from Aleyna and Amir's life in Germany
on one side. On the other side you will find possi-
ble solutions to these difficult situations. There we
have collected how other young refugees have dealt
with such situations and written down suggestions
on what you can do if you are in a similar situation
to Aleyna or Amir.

Aleyna's story begins here. She fled to Germany
with her family. If you want to read the story of Amir,
who fled to Germany alone, turn the booklet around.

If you are in a difficult situation yourself and need
support, you can turn to a counselling centre, for
example.

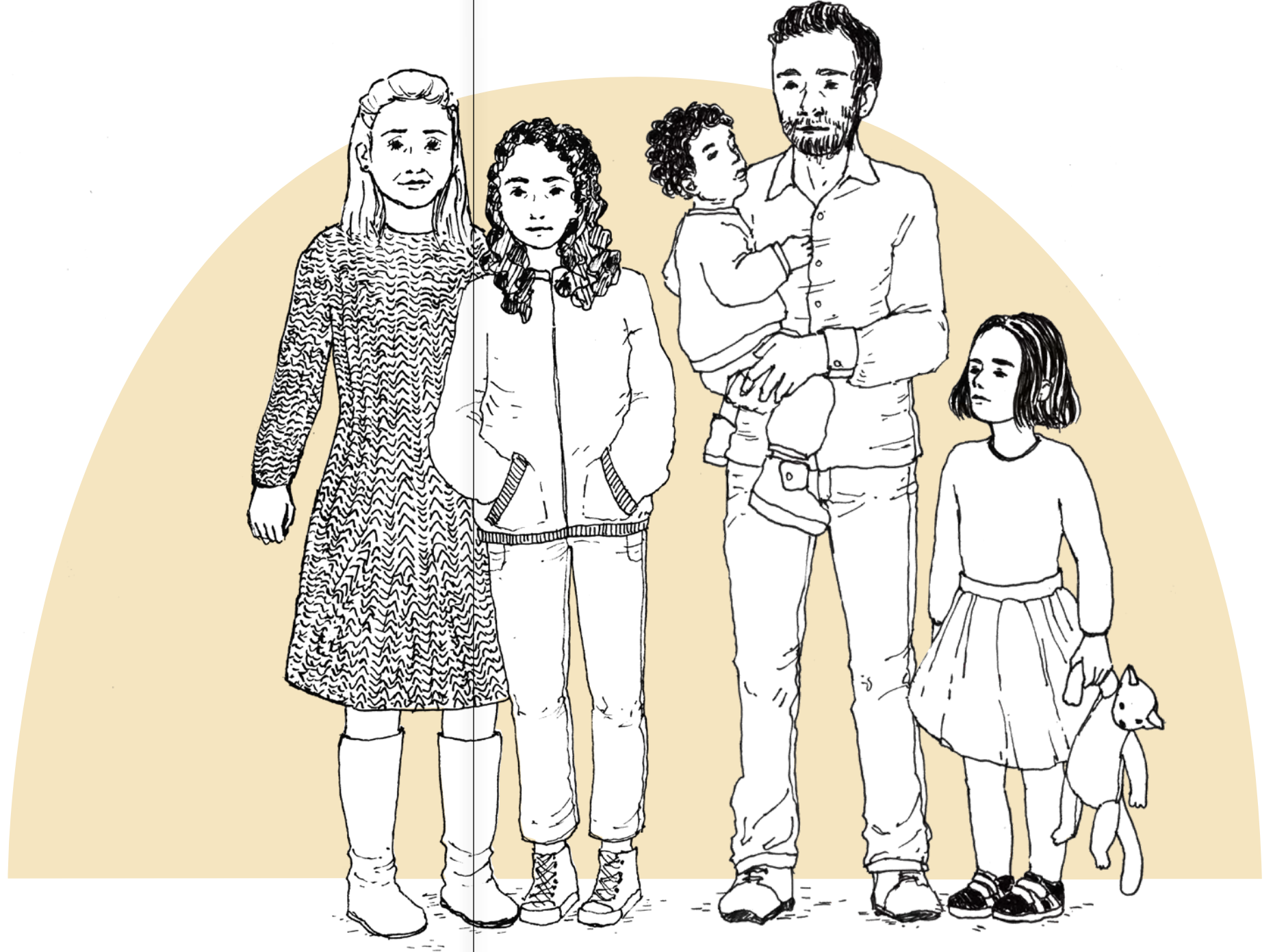
In Germany, there are various non-governmental
human rights organisations that advocate for the
rights and protection of children and young people
who have fled. You can get advice, information and
help there, as well as support to help you find your
way around. They can also help you find a counsel-
ling centre near you.

In Lower Saxony:
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30173 Hannover 0157 38201758

www.kennedeinerechte.org
www.nds-fluerat.org

Aleyna

This is Aleyna. She is 16 years old. She and her parents had to flee their home country, because there is a war going on. Aleyna had to leave behind all her friends and everything she loved. The family's journey was long and difficult. Aleyna is very glad that she and her parents have finally arrived in Germany, but here, too, she will face many challenges. ●●●



Aleyna and her parents are being shown to a shelter for refugees, where they can stay. The whole family has to stay in one small room. It is very loud in the shelter and there is nowhere Aleyna can be just for herself for a little while. She hears people talking in a lot of different languages she doesn't understand. It's hard for her parents to talk to the people working in the shelter. No one in Aleyna's family speaks German and the people working in the shelter don't speak Arabic. None of them speaks English very well, either. Aleyna has no idea what is going to happen to her and her family from now on and nobody will tell them what is going on or what they are supposed to do. She is feeling very insecure and like it is all too much for her to handle. She is very happy to have finally arrived somewhere after the long journey, but is this her new home? She misses her friends and the members of her family who had to stay behind back home. •••



»When you arrive in Germany, you don't know how anything works; you have to orient yourself at first. You cannot do it all on your own, you need someone to show you around. Once you've been here for three or four years, you'll know how to do everything by yourself. But at first, you'll need some help.« – Samir

This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Aleyna's

- Try to talk to other young people in the shelter. Some of them may have been there for a longer time already and can you show you around and explain to you what is going to happen next.
- Ask the social workers and other people working in the shelter to explain things to you. It is completely okay to ask for help! You can ask for an interpreter if there are language barriers keeping them from helping you.
- Get to know the others. Who are they? Where are they from? What are they like?
- Call your friends at home. Sometimes it helps to just hear a familiar voice.
- Find someone you can talk to about the things that are troubling you. Talk to your parents, the social workers in the shelter or other youths.
- Never forget: you made it this far! You can be very proud of yourself!

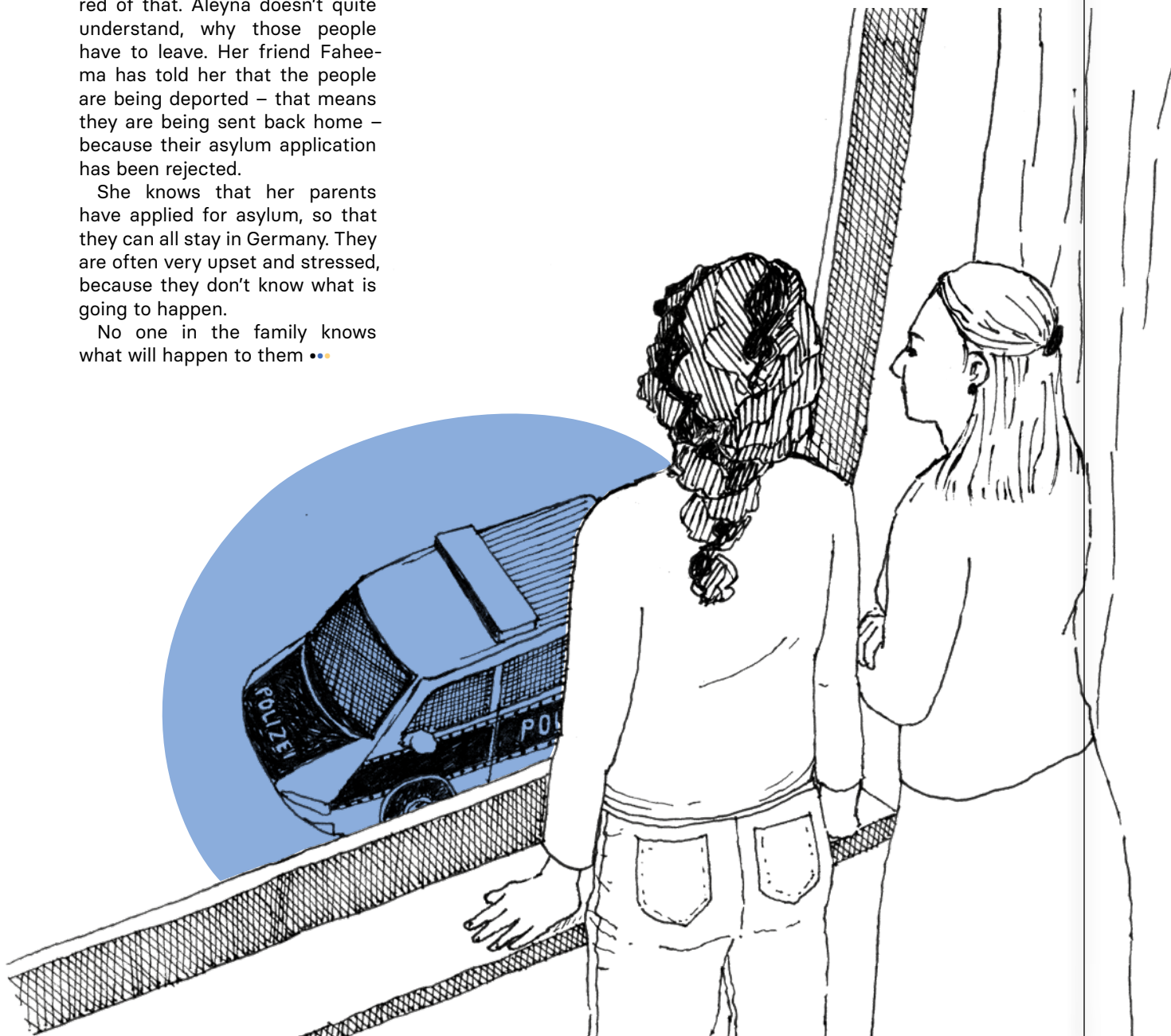
Aleyna

Aleyna has been in Germany for a few months now. She has found friends she spends her time with. Sometimes the police will come to the shelter and take someone with them, everybody is very scared of that. Aleyna doesn't quite understand, why those people have to leave. Her friend Faheema has told her that the people are being deported – that means they are being sent back home – because their asylum application has been rejected.

She knows that her parents have applied for asylum, so that they can all stay in Germany. They are often very upset and stressed, because they don't know what is going to happen.

No one in the family knows what will happen to them •••

»If there wasn't a war at home, we wouldn't have come to Germany. We're here so we can live in peace« –Alia



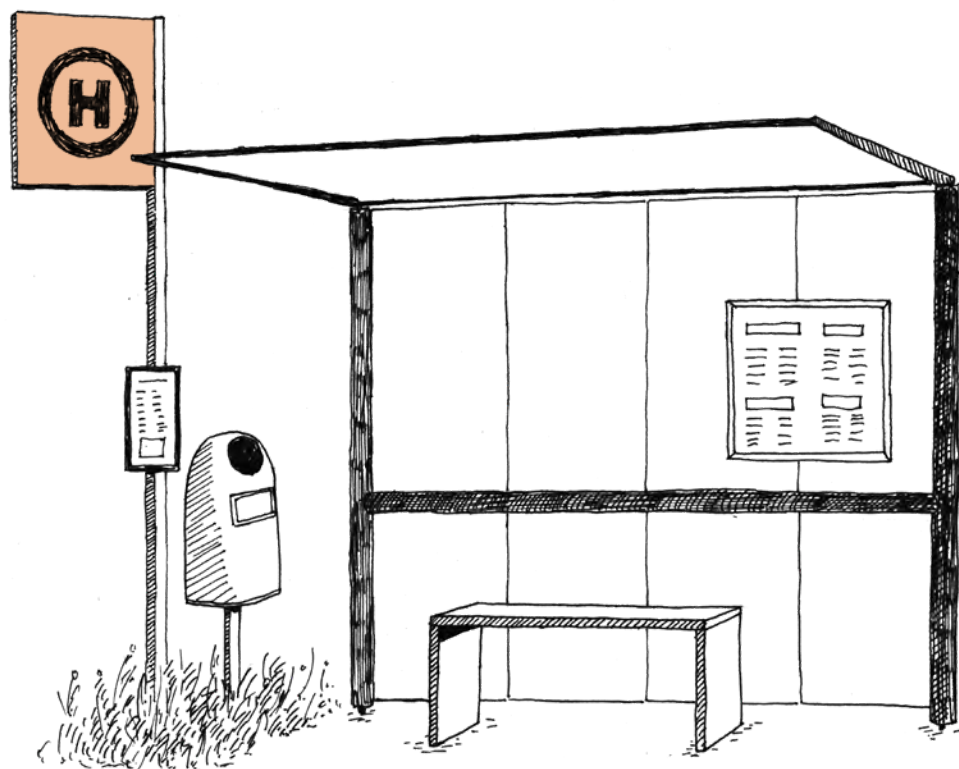
Asylum

This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Aleyna's:

- You and your family should try to get as many information about your rights as you can. For that, you can ask social workers, the Refugee Council, help desks or other places where information regarding asylum is available.
 - German residence law is very complicated to understand. It is very important that you know and understand how decisions regarding your asylum are being made. Otherwise you may not be able to fight for your rights if you have to.
 - Find a lawyer who will support you and help you through the process.
 - In this leaflet you will find all the necessary information. It was written specifically for young refugees and their families: "Neu anfangen: Tipps für geflüchtete Jugendliche"
- It is easy to download: <https://b-umf.de/material/neu-anfangen/>
- Know your rights!

During the asylum procedures, it will be determined whether you and your family will be allowed to stay in Germany. It will be decided what kind of status you will be granted, based on the reasons for your flight.

- If your family is being persecuted by the government in your home country, you will all get **asylum**.
- If you are being persecuted at home because of your ethnicity, religion, nationality or your political opinion or if you are afraid of that happening, you will get **refugee protection**.
- If it is dangerous to live in your home country, because there is a war going, for example, or the state practises torture or the death capital punishment, you may get **subsidiary protection**.
- If you, your life or your freedom are otherwise threatened, be it by sickness or someone threatening you, then a **deportation ban** may be put in place for you.



Aleyna and her family have moved into a house in a very small village. She is still not enrolled at school. She can't see her friends from the shelter as often as she'd like anymore, because it is so far away. Aleyna had been looking forward to moving, because everyday life at the shelter was the same every day, just eat and sleep. But now she's bored in the new house, even though it is great to have more peace and quiet and a place to just be by yourself if you want to be. ●●●

»When my family and I lived at the shelter, we weren't doing so well. Every day was the same: breakfast, lunch, dinner, sleep. We couldn't use our time for anything at all, because no one told us what we might do to help our situation.« –Hakim



»I play a lot of sports, cook and meet my friends. A lot of them I met at my football club.« –Hoshyar

This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Aleyna's:

- Having hobbies can help you meet new people, let go some of your stress and structure your day. Try finding out what kind of things are possible near you, maybe there are clubs you could join to play sports, music or other activities. If you're too insecure to ask around, try doing it with a friend or ask a social worker to help you with it.
- Maybe there are regular meetings for residents in your area, or festivals or other events you can go to together with your parents so you can all meet new people.
- Try looking around your area: have you met your neighbours, yet?
- Meet with a friend and do something fun like cooking together or exploring your area.

Aleyna

Finally it's Aleyna's first day at the new school! She's playing football in a club by now and she's met a lot of new friends there. Still, she's very happy to go to school now, meet new people and continue her education.

Back home, she was in the 9th grade and wanted to graduate so she could later go to university and study.

Now, Aleyna has been enrolled in 8th grade at her local school. She hasn't quite understood the German system, yet.

On her first day, she feels very lost. She can't understand much of what the teachers and the other pupils are saying. The other kids look at her strange. Aleyna fears that they think of her being not as smart as them, just because she's keeping quiet.

Aleyna's uncomfortable. She would like to talk to her new classmates, but she's afraid, too, and she doesn't understand the language very well, yet, either.

During lunchbreak, a girl asks her if she'd like her to show her around a bit. Her name is Hannah.

Aleyna is very happy to have met Hannah. They become good friends over the next few weeks. They sit next to each other in class and spend the lunchbreaks together. It is still hard for Aleyna to understand everything in class. She wants to graduate from Realschule, but her grades aren't good enough, yet. Her teacher suggests maybe settling for graduating Hauptschule and then start training for a job. ●●●



Education

»It was very difficult to learn the language, but I worked hard at it and succeeded. I took pictures of things with my mobile phone and wrote down the German words, so I could practise them. It helped me learning the words.« –Fero

This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Aleyna's:

- Try to learn about the German school system and what options there are for you to achieve your goals. You can ask your teachers, social workers at the „Jugendmigrationsdienst“ for young refugees, the social workers at your school or your classmates to help you.
- If you need help in school, ask for tutoring outside of regular classes. Tutoring may be available at your school or at other places in your local area. It will be paid for via the „Bildungs- und Teilhabepaket“.
- Sometimes it helps to come up with a plan for better learning by yourself. Try out different things like YouTube channels or making your own learning cards.
- Ask for help if you need it. The important thing is that you try to achieve your goals.
- Don't give up too fast, even when others don't believe in you or try to convince you to do something else. Get informed about all the possible ways you can achieve what you want in Germany, it may take you longer than you thought, but it will still be worth getting the job of your dreams. You can ask for advice at the job center.

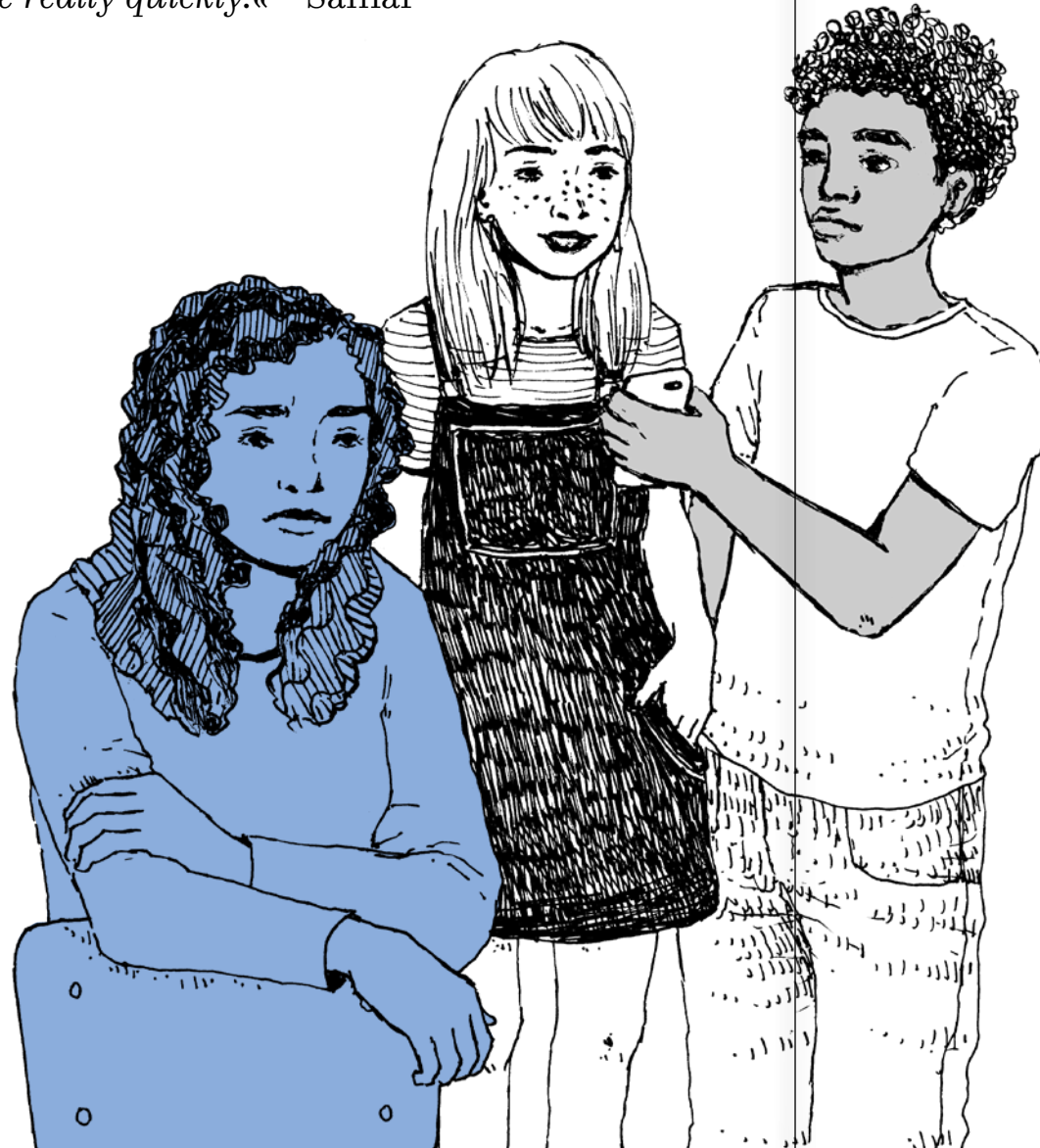
»At first, I couldn't understand the teachers' questions or the students' answers. I felt like a chair. Seriously, I didn't understand a single word. But fortunately, I had a very nice teacher who helped me to learn the language really quickly.« –Samar

Aleyna is now about to graduate Realschule. She is very proud of herself and plans to start training to work in the social sector.

But even though she's doing well and met a lot of people, Aleyna still feels lonely sometimes. Especially at school, she finds it hard to feel like she belongs in her class.

Somehow she feels like her classmates aren't interested in the same things she is and she feels left out a lot when they talk. She doesn't think they can understand her. She doesn't have the words to explain what she's lived through and she misses her friends back home.

Today, she and Hannah are visiting a local festival. At first, people keep their distance from her, but over time they grow friendlier and more open towards her. Aleyna is used to that by now. •••



Social Contacts

»In my home country, the people are all warm and open. Germans are rather cold, it took me a while to get used to that.« –Nesrin

»It was hard for me to talk to people my own age. They were talking about rap music and cheese sandwiches and I couldn't say anything, because I don't like either. When you got nothing in common with someone, the relationship is just not as good and a bit cold.« –Samir

This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Aleyna's:

- Look to find a person you can trust and tell everything that is troubling you. It can be a member of your family, a fellow student, friends from back home or a social worker or teacher. It is important to talk about what is going on with you.
- Sometimes it helps to talk to people who have experienced similar things as you.
- Try to meet new people at school, at your clubs or in your area. Even if you don't end up becoming best friends right away, sometimes it helps to just do fun things together to get to know one another better. Is there something all of you like? What kind of music do you listen to? What do you like to eat? Do you enjoy the same activities in your spare time?
- You may find that you have more in common with older youths from your school or clubs.
- Try to find out what's going on in your area. Maybe you and your friends can meet new people at festivals or other local events.

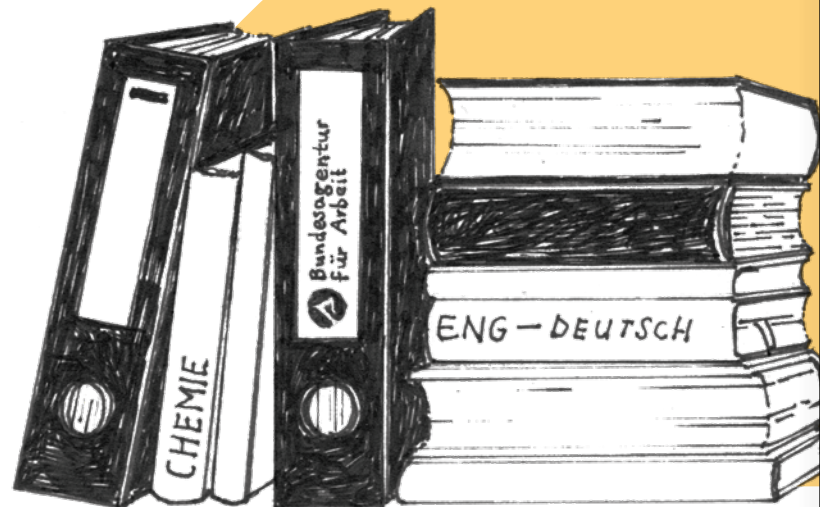
Aleyna

»I do everything with my parents: go to doctors' appointments with them, I do the paperwork and I translate. It's very stressful. I don't get a note for school to say I had to go to the job center with my parents, either. Sometimes I feel like I have to do much more than other kids my age.« –Alia

Aleyna and Hannah are best friends by now and are spending a lot of time together.

School is going well, too, but Aleyna still feels stressed a lot of the time. Aside from learning for exams, she accompanies her parents to their appointments and does the family's paperwork. Her mother and father are taking a course to learn German, but it is hard for them. Aleyna's father is a trained engineer, but here he is not allowed to work as one and drives a cab. Her mother is a nurse, but she, too, isn't allowed to work as one. Now, she's often home alone and finds it hard to meet new people. Aleyna is worried about her parents, especially her mother.

And also, she finds it hard to go her own way. She feels like she's expected to assimilate. On the one hand, she is supposed to make a lot of decisions other people her age wouldn't have to make, even for her parents, but on the other hand she feels like others are deciding things for her about her own life. She doesn't want to always just be seen as a »stranger«. •••



Being Myself

»Everyone has three faces. One to show to everyone, one to show only your family and closest friends and one that you only show yourself.« –Haias

This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Aleyna's:

- Take your time to find out who you are.
 - Who are you?
 - What are you like?
 - Who would you like to be?
 - How would you describe yourself?
 - What do others think you are like?
 - What is expected of you and who expects it from you?
 - How does that make you feel?
 - You decide who you are!
- Who is important in your life? Look for support from the people you love, your friends and family.
- Tell people when you get the feeling that they don't accept you just the way you are!
- Look for support from places like the „Migrationsberatung“ (advice for refugees). There are people there who can help your family with the paperwork and appointments. You don't have to do it alone!

Aleyna

»I want to help women who wear a headscarf so that no one has to experience what I did and feel bad about it.« –Rachida

By now, Aleyna's parents feel more comfortable in Germany as well. Her mother has made friends and her father is joining a training so he can work in his old job again.

The family feels safe in Germany and is happy to enjoy the freedom the war back home took from them. Aleyna is doing well, too. She has started training to work at a day care and is happy with her decision. Everybody at the day care she's working at made her feel welcome and accepted.

It's her first day at vocational school today. Some of her fellow students stare at her and whisper about her behind her back. Suddenly, two boys start to insult her and make fun of her. They say „Go back to your country!“ and „What are you doing here, go stay in the kitchen where you belong!“

Aleyna doesn't know what to do. She's scared and feels very alone.

•••



Freedom & Security

»At school, some people say nasty things about me. They say I don't belong here and that if I wanted to stay here I'd have to take off my headscarf and that if I won't do that, I'd have to go back to my country.« –Rachida

»The thing I like most about Germany is that everyone is free and can say their opinion.« –Haia

This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Aleyna's:

- If someone threatens or insults you, go look for support right away. Tell a teacher, other students or just the people who are present.
- Talk about your experiences. Tell your friends, your family, your teachers or other people you trust, like social workers or others. Talk to other young people about similar experiences like that you've all had. It can help to think about solutions together.
- Discrimination is prohibited by law in Germany. No one may be discriminated against based on their sex, their nationality, language, religion, political opinion or disabilities. Look up your rights in the Grundgesetz (the German constitution) and in the »Allgemeinen Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG)« (the equality law). You can turn to the national Anti-Discrimination-Office for advice: https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/DE/Home/home_node.html
- Maybe you'd like to organise a political protest to resist discrimination. The group »Jugendliche ohne Grenzen« (Youths without borders) is a national association of young refugees who work together to counteract against discrimination and fight for their rights: <http://jog-space.net>

Aleyna

By now Aleyna talked to her teacher about her problems in class. The whole class went to a workshop to get to know each other better and the two boys have apologised to Aleyna. She has made a lot of new friends in her class with whom she spends time after school, too.

But still Aleyna feels lonely sometimes. She is worried about her future and that of her parents.

She's afraid that one day they'll still all have to return to their home country and the war there.

She works hard to finish her training with good grades so she can secure the family's stay in Germany. That takes a lot of effort; Aleyna is often exhausted and is prone to headaches. But still she can't sleep at night, because she worries about so many things.

Even though she has experienced many victories – big and small – in Germany, it still feels like she has to fight for every new little thing and every day. ●●●



Emotions

»At night, I often ask myself, did I do that right? What should I do next? I think about so many things but I don't find any answers to my questions.« –Faheema

»A good day for me is when I can go to bed and fall asleep right away, but that hardly ever happens.« –Amina

This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Aleyna's:

- Think about what you already achieved. What gave you the strength to do that? Use all your resources!
- Talk to the social worker at your school if you feel down often or if you have trouble sleeping and keep worrying about the same things over and over again. You may have to start therapy and talk to a professional about your problems. It is perfectly all right to seek psychological help. You'd go let a doctor look at your broken leg, so it's only natural to let a therapist look at your broken heart.
- Talk about your feelings, your worries and fears with someone you trust, be it a friend, your family or a social worker. You are not alone and you don't have to get through this by yourself!

Aleyna has successfully finished her training as a day care worker. Her teachers and friends have helped her not to stop believing in herself and she is very proud of herself for successfully taking this big step towards achieving her goals.

Even though there are still many challenges ahead, Aleyna is optimistic about her future.

Something she worries about, though, is the political development in Germany and Europe as a whole. The right-wing populists are getting louder. Aleyna is now an active member of „Youth without borders“, where they discuss the AfD's and other right-wing parties' rhetoric and political goals. Aleyna is scared that her family's future in Germany is in danger after all. •••

»I've achieved a lot of my goals. I would like there to be more tolerance, though. Unfortunately, parties like the AfD are getting stronger at the moment. That's a sign of less rather than more tolerance and, to be honest, I'm very concerned.« –Varwin

Goals

»The teachers tried to motivate us the whole time. They always told us when we'd done something well and that really helped and felt good. It always made me feel strong and think: I really can do it!« –Fawad

»Never give up. One day you'll make it anachieve your goals, believe me!« –Nesrin

This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Aleyna's:

- Know what your goals are:
 - What do you want to achieve?
 - Where do you want to be in a year?
 - Who could help you achieve your goals?
 - Think of small steps you can take one after the other to achieve your goals.
- Seek help, people who will support you, be it your friends, teachers or family or social workers.
- Sometimes it helps to look at things from a lighter side. Try not to lose your humour.
- Never give up!
- Believe in yourself and make the people who doubt you see that they are wrong!
- Sometimes it helps to engage in political activities to lose the feeling of helplessness. Try to get active through parties, clubs or groups.

Today, Aleyna and Hannah have gone to a protest for diversity and tolerance. At the gathering site, she sees a boy she thinks looks familiar and taps him on the shoulder. When he turns around, she can't believe her eyes! It's Amir, her best friend since childhood! Just before she and her family left their country, they lost sight of each other because Amir had to move. The two oft hem hug and talk for hours. They don't have to say out loud what they are thinking, they just know. They talk about their experiences in Germany and it feels so good to share it all with someone you have known all your life. ●●●



Today, Amir has gone to a protest for diversity and tolerance. Suddenly, someone taps him on the shoulder. When he turns around, he can't believe his eyes! It's Aleyna, his best friend since childhood! He had to move back home and lost sight of her. The two hug and talk for hours. They don't have to say out loud what they are thinking, they just know. They talk about their experiences in Germany and it feels so good to share it all with someone you have known all your life. ●●●

»I try not to lose my good humour. I'm not letting myself stressed out.« –Eason

»I just lost one home and I worked so hard to start a new one here. I don't want to lose it again from one day to the next. I'm very scared of that happening.« –Amar

Amir did it! He's graduated, he's got his Abitur and now he's applying at universities to study medicine. Despite all the challenges, he has never lost sight of his goal to become a doctor. He has never stopped believing in himself even when others have. By now, he's moved into his own flat. He's enjoying the new found freedom, but he also has to deal with new restrictions. He only has very little money, for example. Also, there are still challenges ahead. His asylum is still pending and it's still not decided, whether his family can come live in Germany with him. But Amir won't give up. He wants to make a better future for himself and his family so they can all live in peace and freedom and he'll fight and difficulties ahead. •••

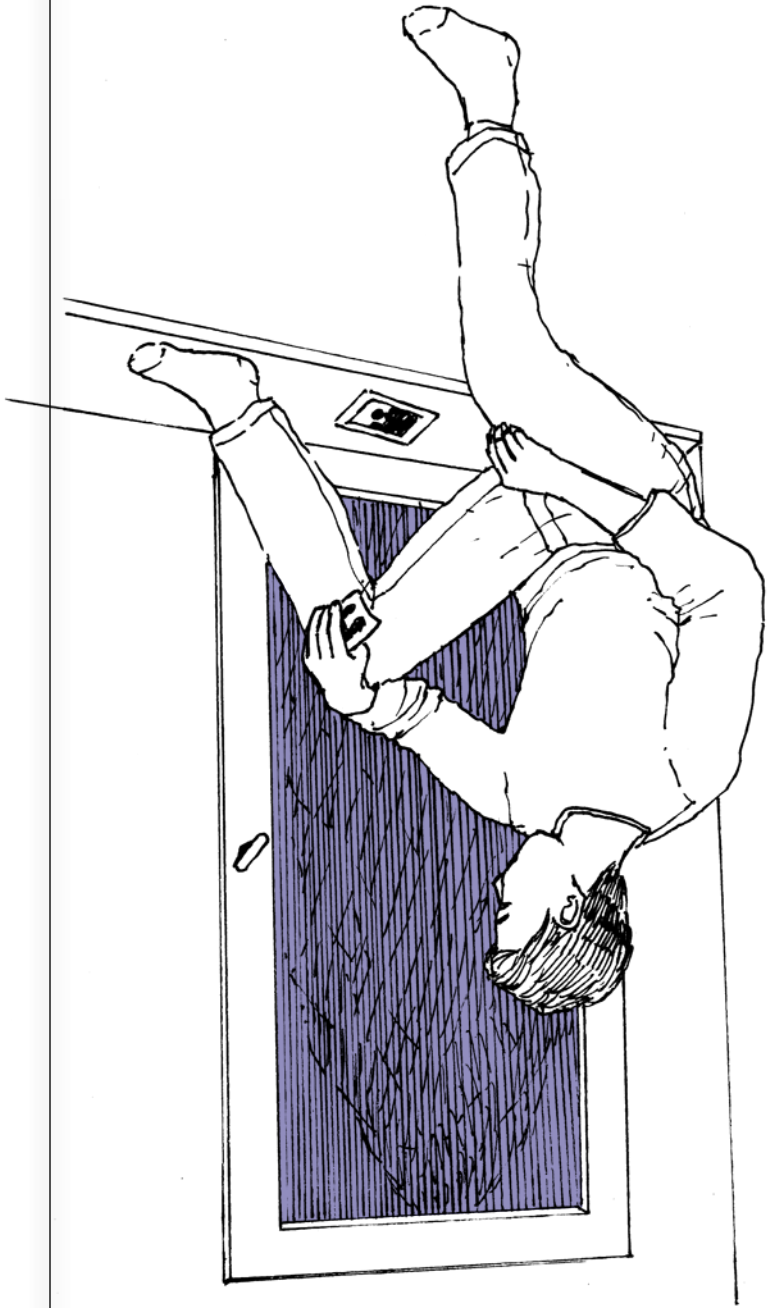
»I want to make a future for myself here, I want to have my family come live with me and we'll all have a good life.« –Fawad

»You are responsible for your own future. It's laying right ahead of you and it's up to you to use it.« –Ashtar

This is what you can do when you're in a situation like Amir's:

- Know what your goals are:
 - What do you want to achieve?
 - Where do you want to be in a year?
 - Who could help you achieve your goals?
- Think of small steps you can take one after the other to achieve your goals.
- Seek help, people who will support you, be it your friends, teachers or family or social workers.
- Sometimes it help to look at things from a lighter side. Try not to lose your humour.
- Never give up!
- Believe in yourself and make the people who doubt you see that they are wrong!

Amir has talked to Martin and his friends about what happened at the club. Now he feels a bit better prepared for situations like that, but he's still scared of them. And that's not the only thing troubling him, he feels a lot of pressure again and he worries about his family and all the other things that are still going on. He finds it hard to sleep at night. He has achieved many things and has had a lot of happy times with his friends but that all still doesn't make the loneliness go away completely, or the fear. He misses his family and even though he works hard at school, it's still not clear what will happen to him. Sometimes, when he wakes from a particularly bad nightmare, Amir is scared of losing his mind. ●●●



»On some days, I work out twice just so I'll stop thinking. I'm scared of becoming depressed. I'm not sure exactly how you get depressed, but sometimes it just happens all by itself because you've been sitting home alone too much, thinking about things. I have to think about my family, too, they need my support. That's why I have to move on quickly.« –Hakim

»I miss my family and friends the most, because they're always there for you, no matter what.« –Abdo

This is what you can do when you're in a situation like Amir's:

- Think about what you already achieved. What gave you the strength to do that? Use all your resources!
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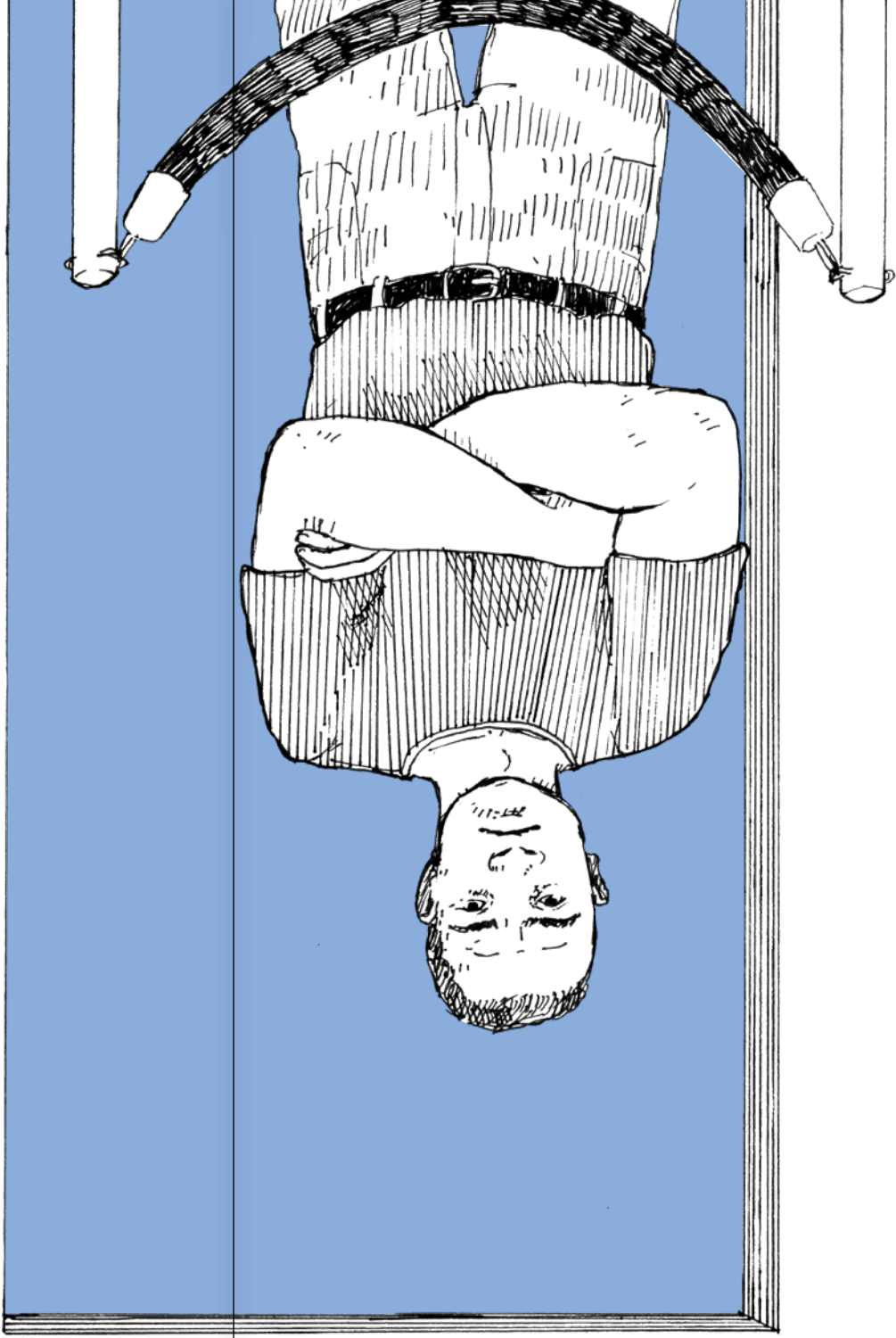
Amir has graduated Realschule and is now preparing to take his Abitur. Everything is going well. He feels safe in Germany and enjoys the freedom here that the war had taken from him back home.

Today he and his friends want to go to a club. The bouncer eyes them suspiciously when they step up to the door. He whispers to his colleagues and then one of them says, "We don't let people like you inside anymore."

"People like us?" Amir asks.

"We got enough foreigners inside for tonight. You'll just start trouble, go back home," the bouncer says.

Amir and his friends are shocked and angry. They don't know what to do. They're desperate and just turn around to go back to their house. This isn't how they expected the evening to go. ●●●



Freedom & Security

»Some places like clubs or so, they won't let us in because we're black. People are even afraid of us. But it shouldn't be about what we look like but what we are like on the inside.« –Abdo

»If I had one wish, it'd be that people stop being scared of me.« –Jamal

This is what you can do when you're in a situation like Amir's:

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»Everything happened so fast for me.
Suddenly I was alone and had to make all the
decisions by myself.
There was no time for puberty.« – Ashtar

Amir has become best friends with Tufan and spends a lot of time with him. Still, sometimes he feels lost. He often wonders who he really is. His family and friends at home tell him he's become "German", but the people here in Germany often still treat him like a "stranger". Somehow he's stuck between two worlds. On the one hand, he has to make a lot of decisions on his own that other people his age don't have to make, yet. He's responsible for himself as well as for his family back home. But on the other hand his future life depends on his residential status, his grades and the support of his caretaker and legal guardian. That's very difficult sometimes.

Amir feels pressured to assimilate. He'll turn 18 soon and it might be he'll have to move out of the house, then. He'd be all by himself. His asylum has still not be decided upon and more and more people advise him to start training for a job, even though he still wants to go to university and become a doctor. •••



Being Myself

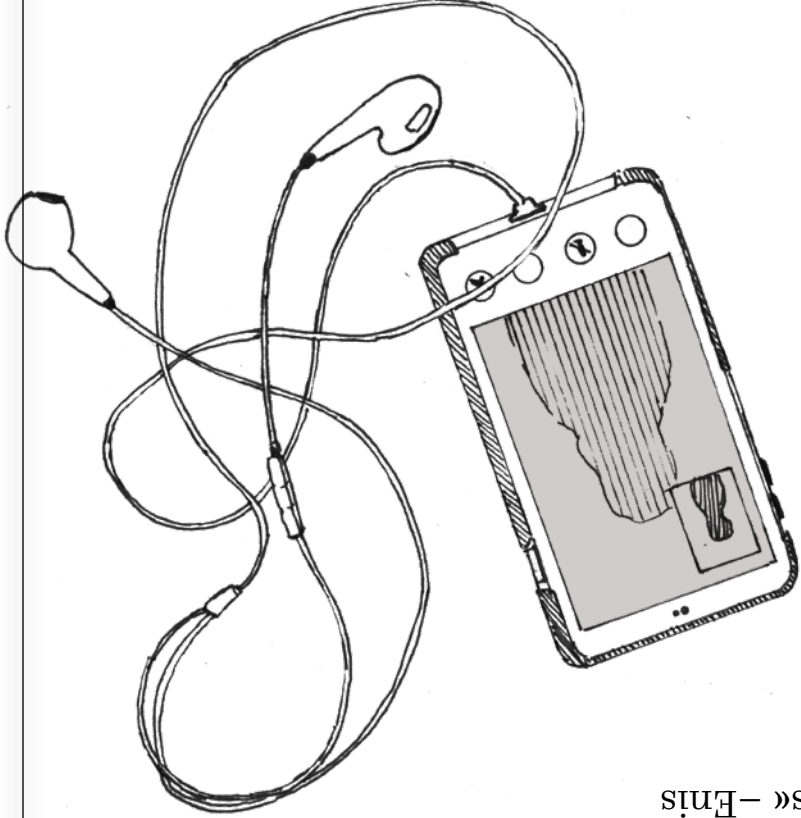
»Right now, I'm a German »kanacke«,
half German, half »kanacke.« – Wajih

»One moment, you think I've made it!
You learned the language, you met friends
and you're training for a job and then in the
next you get smacked down again because
your classmates applaud you for solving an
easy math problem. And then you feel like a
stranger again.« – Samir

This is what you can do when you're in a situation like Amir's:

- Take your time to find yourself:
- Who are you?
- What are you like?
- Who do you want to be?
- What do you think about yourself?
- What do others think about you?
- What would you like people to stop saying about you?
- How do you feel about that?
- You define who you are!
- Who is important in your life? Ask for help and support from the people closest to you, be it your friends, family or caretakers!
- Tell people when they make you feel like they don't accept you just the way you are!
- Go ask the youth welfare office for help if you need support after you've turned 18. They can continue your youth aid in different forms, be it that you continue to stay at a house in a residential group or that social workers visit you at your own flat.

”I haven’t found someone to talk to, yet, but I really need someone to listen sometimes» – Enis



Amir is still fighting to be allowed to graduate Realschule so he'll be a step closer to fulfilling his dream of becoming a doctor. Martin and Klaus are supporting him all the way, even though neither of them has a lot of time. Sometimes Amir still feels very lonely. He misses his family and friends back home and he doesn't know who he can talk to about his troubles. He's met a few cool friends at the vocational school, but some German customs still seem very strange to him. The people seem colder here than back home. ●●●

»Sometimes I'm not sure if I fit in with my classmates. I've lived through a lot and I think about different things. I think I'm not a kid anymore but maybe already more of an adult.« – Samir

»We talked to each other, but not about our problems. We understood each other without words.« – Valid

»I felt welcomed right away. It was like being hugged.« – Tahmineh

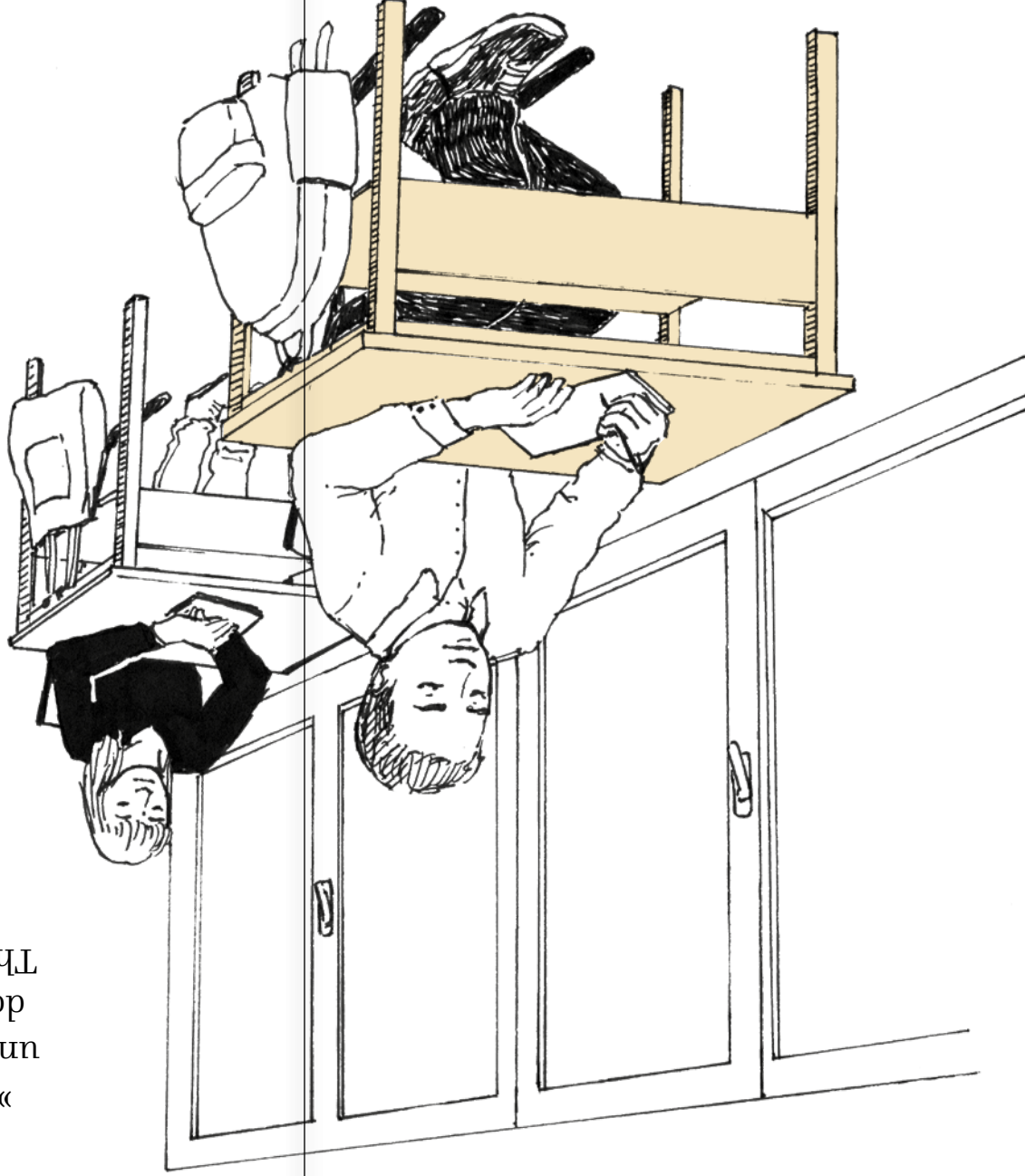
This is what you can do when you're in a situation like Amir's:

- Find someone you can talk to about your problems, be it a caretaker, a friend, a classmate, your family, friends at home or a social worker at school or your teacher. It is important to talk about the things that worry you!
- Sometimes it helps to talk to someone who has lived through the same things you have.
- Try to meet new people at your school or clubs. Even if you won't be best friends right away, sometimes it helps to just look for things you have in common. What kind of music do you listen to? What do you do in your spare time? What's your favourite food?
- If you find you don't have much in common with young people your age, maybe try to meet older ones.
- Try to find out more about activities in your local area. Maybe there are festivals or other events you can visit with your friends in order to meet new people.

Amir has become friends with most of his roommates. They do a lot together and go jogging almost every day.

Today, finally it is Amir's first day at the new school. Martin accompanies him to his first day at the local vocational school. There, he has enrolled in a language course. Amir hasn't really understood the German educational system, yet. Martin has explained to him, that his exam isn't recognized in Germany, but that Amir is also too old to be required to go to school in Germany, too. That is why he wasn't accepted at a regular school. At the vocational school, he'll now learn the language and prepare to start training for a job. Amir doesn't want to start training, though. He wants to study to become a doctor.

His friend Sami back home has just graduated school and enrolled at the university to study medicine. Amir feels like he has to start all over again here. At his first day, Amir is very nervous, but he instantly gets along with his classmates. Most of them are refugees, too. Amir hears a lot of different languages. Everybody talks to each other and is eager to learn. The teacher Ms. Müller is very nice; she is mostly teaching German courses. Amir feels comfortable in class, but he still has doubts: what should he do next?



»At home, I'd be in my second semester at university now. All my friends back home are doctors or engineers or something like that. That's still a long way away for me.« –Fatima

This is what you can do when you're in a situation like Amir's:

- Think about what kind of education you want and define your goals. Maybe your friends, family and caretakers can help you make decisions. You could work as a temp to find out what sort of job you would like to learn.
- Learn more about the German educational system, so you'll know what your options are. You can ask your caretakers, the social workers at your school, your teachers or your classmates to help you with that. Don't give up too fast even if others are telling you to. Maybe you'll have to try a few things first in order to achieve your goals.
- Be brave and tell people when they make you feel like they are forcing you to go a way you don't want to! Try to learn more about alternative options (at the job center, for example)!
- Find people who will support you on your way to achieve your goals! If you need help learning, you can get tutoring at your school or other places in your local area.

Amir has made the decision to have Klaus apply for asylum for him. Klaus has explained everything to him and now Amir is preparing for his hearing.

At the moment, Amir is still waiting to be allowed to go to school. He spends a lot of time alone in his room, worrying about a lot of things: Am I going to be granted asylum? How is my family doing? Will I be able to get them to come to Germany? What will happen to me?

Amir is proud of himself, he has made it this far. But he also still worries about a lot. On the one hand, he would like to have more privacy at his home. The others sometimes come into his room without knocking. But on the other hand, he feels lonely a lot, too. He gets along with most of the caretakers, but he can really talk to only a few of them and they're not always working at the house. Also, they have to take care of all the youths at the house. Amir doesn't always dare to ask for a private conversation when he worries about something. •••

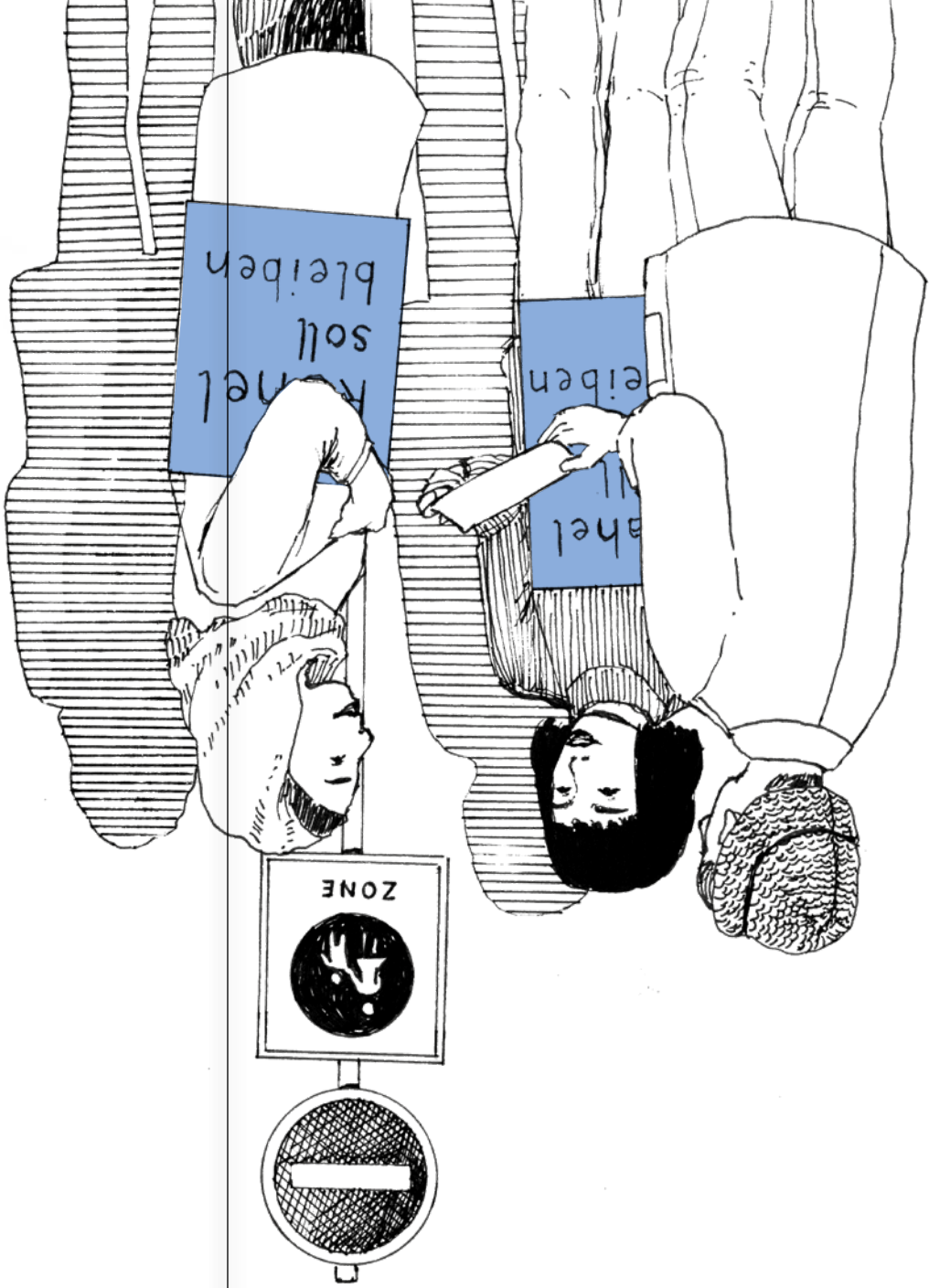


»When I'm sad or when I think too much, I go play sports. That instantly makes me feel better. –Abdo

This is what you can do when you're in a situation like Amir's:

- Talk to your caretaker about what is troubling you! They are there for you! If you don't get along too well with them, you can talk to your legal guardian or other social workers at the youth welfare office.
- Talk to other young refugees about your experiences and worries. Maybe you can help each other or do something together like cooking or exploring your city.
- Tell others, when you need a moment for yourself. They will understand.
- Having hobbies can help you get rid of some of your stress, meet new people and organize your day. Try to find out what possible activities there are on your local area (football, dancing, boxing, basketball, music etc.). If you're scared or insecure, ask a friend to come ask around with you or ask one of the caretakers.

Amir has settled in at the residential group. He is getting along with his roommates and he often talks to his caretaker Martin. By now he has met his legal guardian Klaus, too. Klaus wants to talk to him about his residential status here in Germany. Amir's roommate Rahel just turned 19 and has been refused asylum. She's preparing to take her Abitur at the moment and her lawyer has advised her to immediately start training for a job. This made Rahel very sad. She wanted to graduate and study computer sciences in Germany. Her teachers and classmates have started a petition so she may stay after all. Amir, too, has to consider whether he wants to apply for asylum for him. Klaus is going to turn 18 soon. He hasn't quite understood, yet, how things are decided in Germany and he is scared he'll be sent away. He's worried about his parents, too, because he had planned to have them stay with him in Germany one day. •••



Asylum

»When your residential status isn't secure, you're constantly afraid of being deported. I think that fear demotivates a lot of young people.« – Walid

»I didn't know what I was supposed to do, so I told my teachers and classmates about my refusal of asylum. The whole school started a petition, demanding I should be allowed to stay.« – Ferro

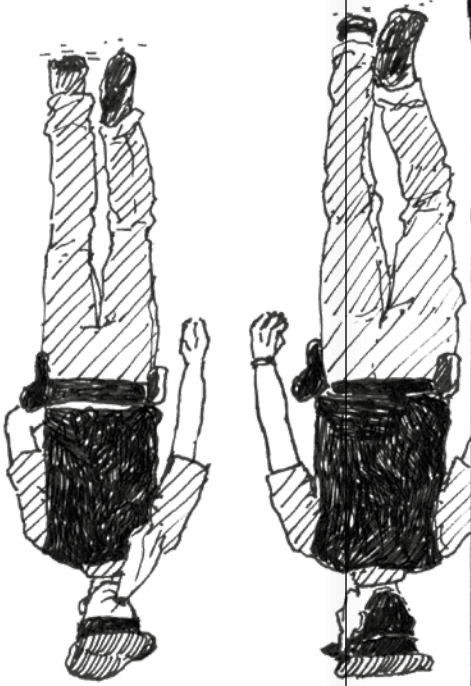
This is what you can do if you're in a situation like Amir's:

- Find out what your rights are! You can ask your caretaker, your legal guardian, help desks for refugees, the refugee council or seek out other places where you will get information regarding asylum in Germany.
- German residential law is complicated to understand. It is important that you know how decisions are made so you can fight for your rights!
- Find a lawyer who will support you and fight for you
- Here is a leaflet where you can find all important information regarding asylum and your rights: "Das Asylverfahren. Deine Rechte, deine Perspektiven – erklärt für unbegleitete Minderjährige" <https://www.nds-fluerat.org/38219/aktuelles/das-asylverfahren-deine-rechte-deine-perspektiven-erklart-fuer-unbegleitete-minderjaehrige/>
- Don't give up. Get informed about all the possible ways of achieving what you want. Applying for asylum or starting training for a job in order to stay may not be the only alternatives you have.
- Support each other, talk about your experiences, your fears and concerns. Know your rights!

Amir is met by two policemen when he arrives in Germany. He is afraid, because the police hasn't been nice to him in the past. He runs away and hides. Then he meets Jamal. Jamal has been in Germany for a short time already and tells Amir that the police can help him. He goes to the police with him. There, Amir is being picked up by a social worker and taken to a house for young refugees. 20 other youths from many different countries are living in this residential group together. Amir is being assigned a caretaker: Martin. Martin and Amir both speak English and Martin explains to Amir that he will answer any questions Amir may have and that he will always have time for a chat with him. Then, Amir is welcomed by his new roommates Enis, Malla and Fawad. They all speak Amir's language, too, and show him his room and the community areas.

At dinner, Amir doesn't know whether he wants to really eat what he has been given. It's called „Eintopf“, but he doesn't know if it's halal.

There are so many new and strange things around Amir and the people's behavior is strange to him, too. He feels very homesick and lonely. •••



Arriving

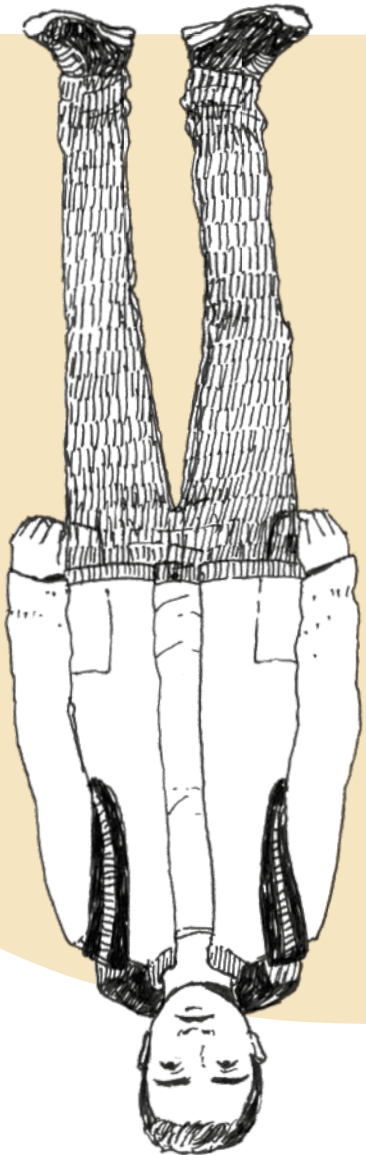
»I felt like a new person when I arrived in Germany after my journey. Everything was so strange and I didn't know what I should do without my family.

It felt like being born again.« – Samir

This is what you can do when you're in Amir's situation:

- Talk to your roommates. They were new once, too, maybe they can give you advice and share their experiences with you!
- Ask your supervisor or other social workers in the shelter when you have questions. They are there to help you settle in and it is okay to ask for help! Don't be scared to ask when you haven't understood something at first. If there are troubles regarding the language barrier, you can ask for a translator. Try to find people you can talk to, be it other youths at the shelter, your caretaker or other social workers, including those at the youth welfare office. You can tell them if you are not getting along with your caretaker.
- Your legal guardian's job is it to be there for you and support your wishes and rights.
- You could also call your family and friends back home and talk to them about your problems.
- If you're not sure whether or not you can eat the food, tell the others. Maybe you can all cook food you know from back home. Eating well and feeling good about it will help you face other challenges ahead of you.
- Get to know the others. Who are they? What are they like? Where are they from?
- Always remember that you can be proud of yourself. You've made it this far!

This is Amir. He is 17 years old. He had to flee his home country without his parents, because there is a war going on there. Amir had to leave behind all his friends and everything he loved. The journey was long and hard and Amir is very happy to have finally arrived in Germany. But here, too, he will be faced with many challenges.



Dear Reader,

Young refugees are confronted with many challenges after their arrival in Germany. We spoke to particularly difficult for them and how they dealt with them. In this booklet, we would like to tell you the stories of Aleyna and Amir. These stories are based on the stories and experiences of the young people we spoke to.

When you read the stories, you will always find a situation from Aleyna and Amir's life in Germany on one side. On the other side you will find possible solutions to these difficult situations. There we have collected how other young refugees have dealt with such situations and written down suggestions on what you can do if you are in a similar situation to Aleyna or Amir.

Aleyna's story begins here. She fled to Germany with her family. If you want to read the story of Amir, who fled to Germany alone, turn the booklet around. If you are in a difficult situation yourself and need support, you can turn to a counselling centre, for example.

In Germany, there are various non-governmental human rights organisations that advocate for the rights and protection of children and young people who have fled. You can get advice, information and help there, as well as support to help you find your way around. They can also help you find a counselling centre near you.

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0511 98246030
0157 38201758
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Shaping Transitions!
Answers for young accompanied
and unaccompanied refugees

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We would like to thank you again from the bottom of our hearts for your support as well as your openness and courage!
You are great! Go your way and don't be discouraged!

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Shaping Transitions!

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