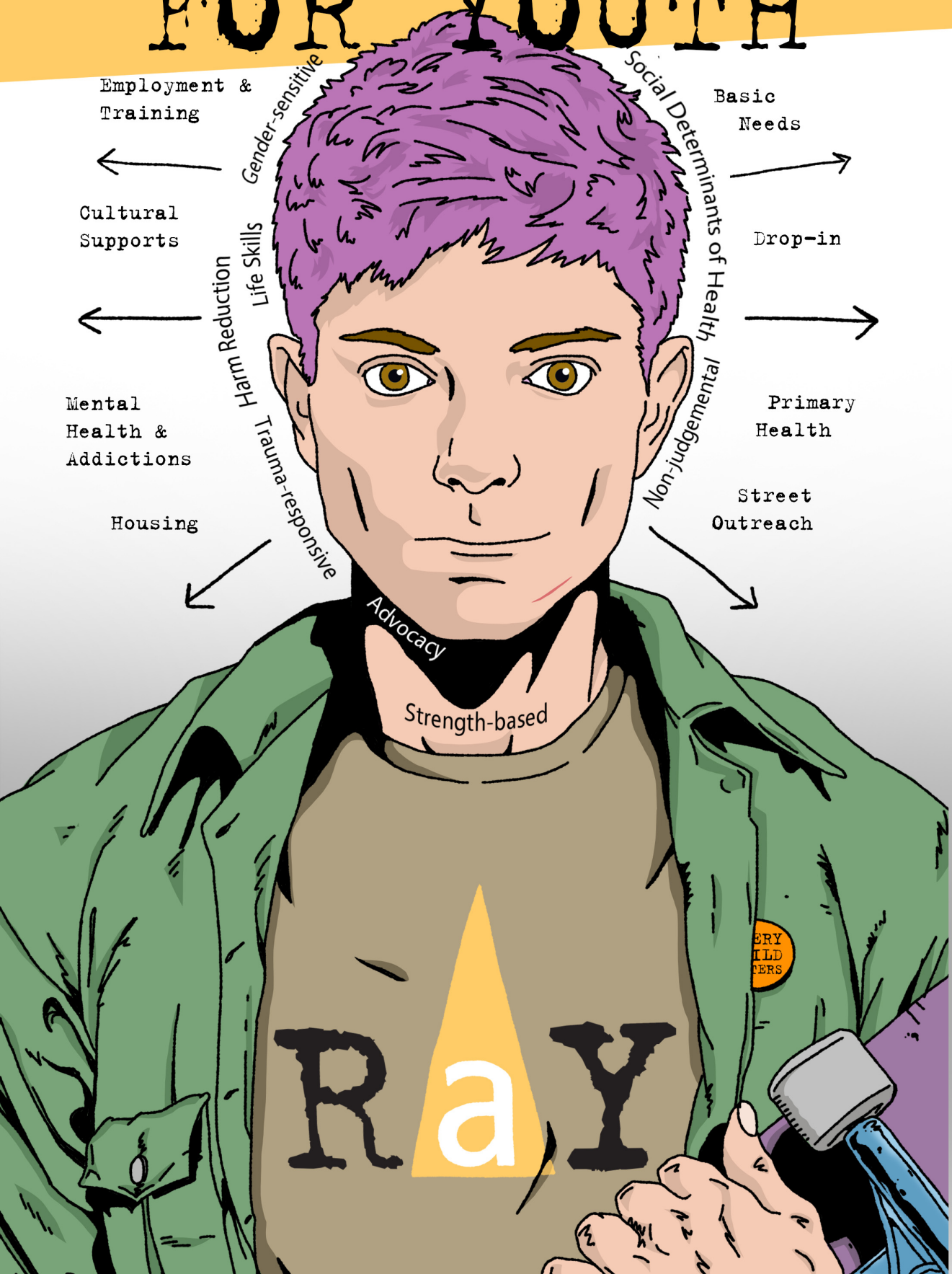


RESOURCE ASSISTANCE FOR YOUTH



About RaY

Since 1994, RaY has empowered disconnected youth through supports, training, and compassion to encourage them to make the best possible choices for their lives. RaY is a nationally recognized and award-winning nonprofit organization located in Winnipeg, MB. RaY supports youth ages 0 – 29 with integrated programs and services in a nonjudgmental and inclusive space.

RaY's Mission

To provide youth with what they need, on their terms, to better their lives.

RaY's Vision

All youth will have the opportunity to live healthy and secure lives; they will be given the chance to develop a belief in themselves through tools, information, and programs that build personal capacity in order to be self-sufficient. They will no longer require RaY's services.

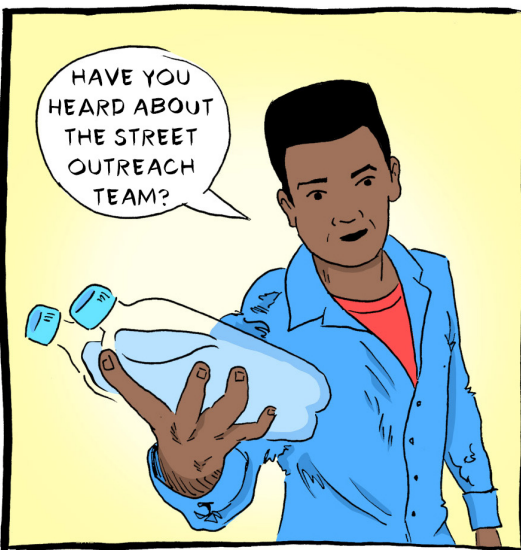
RaY's Values: REALITY

Respect
Efficiency
Advocacy
Leadership
Inclusivity
Trust
Youth-driven

In this comic, you'll follow a fictional RaY participant through each of our programs over the course of a year. We hope you enjoy the story, and learn a little about what we do here.

Written, penciled, inked, and coloured by Nicholas Friesen
Edited by Breda Vosters
2023 RaY Inc
rayinc.ca

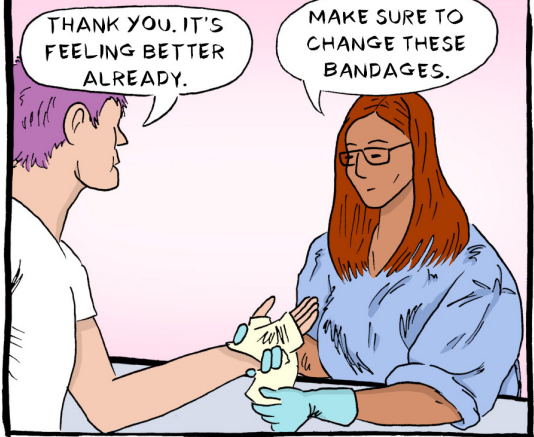




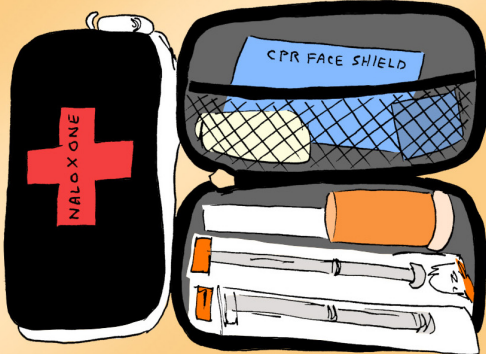
Harm reduction supplies can be anything from safe drug use supplies to clothing and water.



Outreach always travels in pairs. Once a week a nurse practitioner goes out with them.



They also hand out and administer naloxone, a life saving medication that can reverse an opioid overdose.



After months of meeting me where I was at, I thought I'd visit them.



I just need some help to get a safe roof over my head.

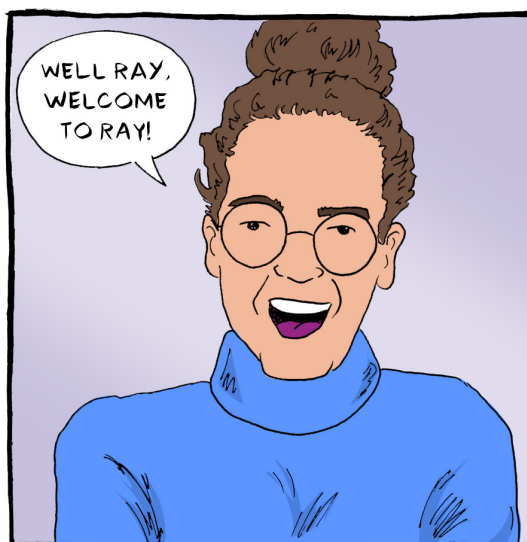
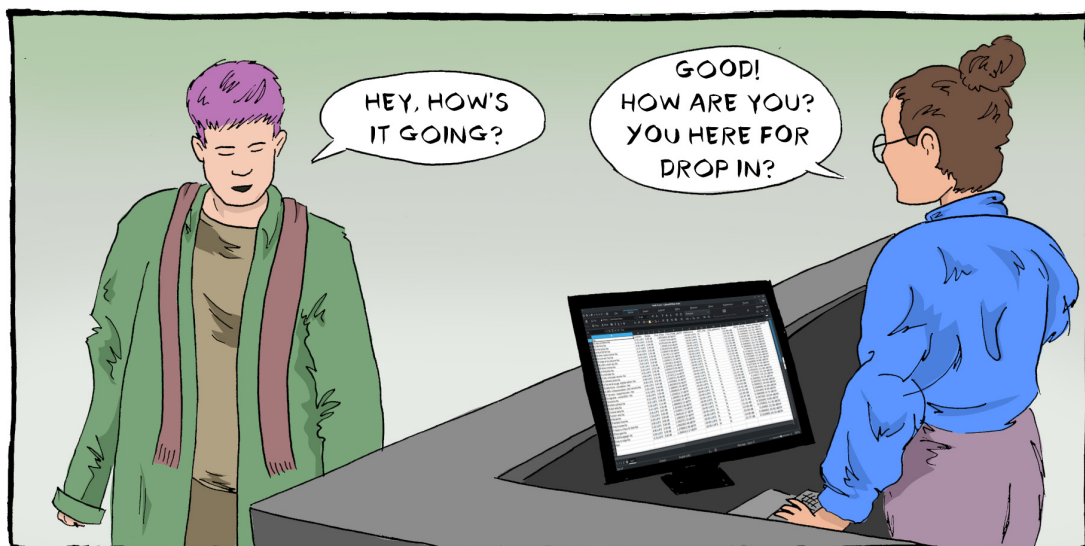
So today, I'm making the choice to go to Resource Assistance for Youth.

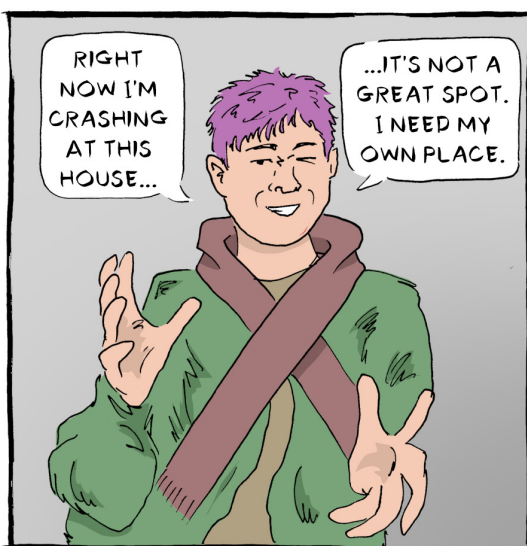
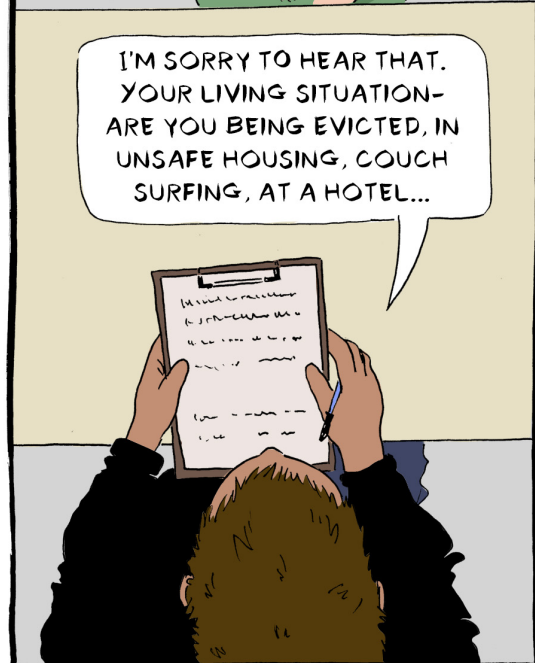
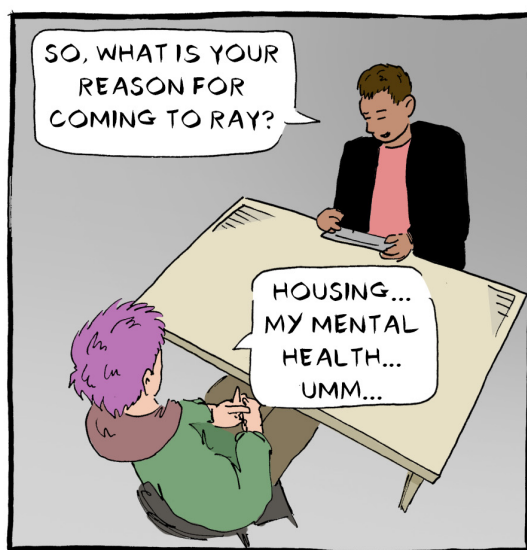
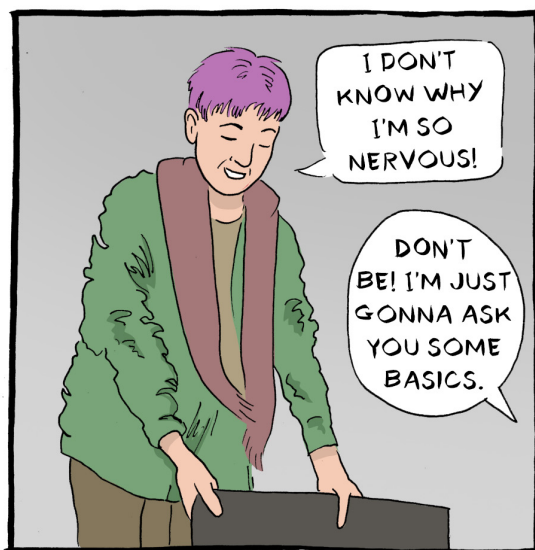
Most people call it RaY.











When you're on the streets, things can feel less safe. Your gear can get jacked. Or worn out. Or frozen and wet.



Or there's some things you just can't afford.



That's the beauty of RaY's Basic Needs department.



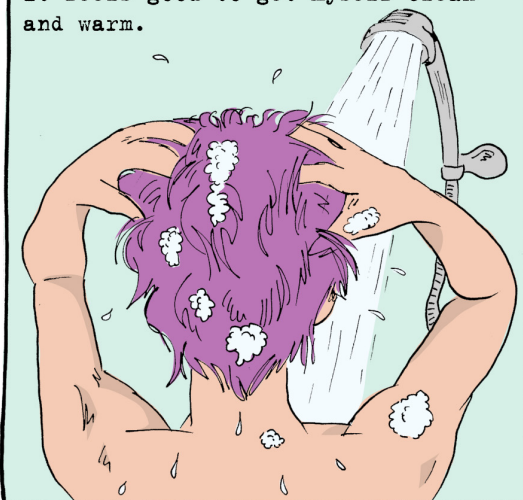
I get to pick out a full outfit once a month - so if I need shoes, clothes, toothpaste, or even underwear, they've got everyone covered.



I carry my world on my back, so getting a new backpack is super helpful. I can even grab a shower and do my laundry.



It feels good to get myself clean and warm.



Ray is a safe space for all youth you choose to attend, no matter their race, religion, back story, or income.



They have one rule - respect. That means respect the youth, the staff, the property, and respect for yourself.

There's no judgement there either. Every time I see my case manager, it's a good conversation. I feel seen.

I'VE JUST BEEN FEELING TERRIBLE THIS WEEK.

IT'S OKAY! EVERY DAY IS A NEW CHANCE.



Sometimes I grab lunch, it's different every day, and it's always really good! I think once I get get on my feet a bit more, I'm going to ask about working in the kitchen.



Sometimes I even come in just to hang out, warm up, and watch YouTube for a bit. I can also pick up my mail! It's also a good place to just get focused and not have to worry.



It's all about the community, here. I always know I'm gonna run into someone I get along with, it's awesome.



It makes me feel safe.

There's also a cultural craft table, to make something for you or a friend, and a whole cultural program!

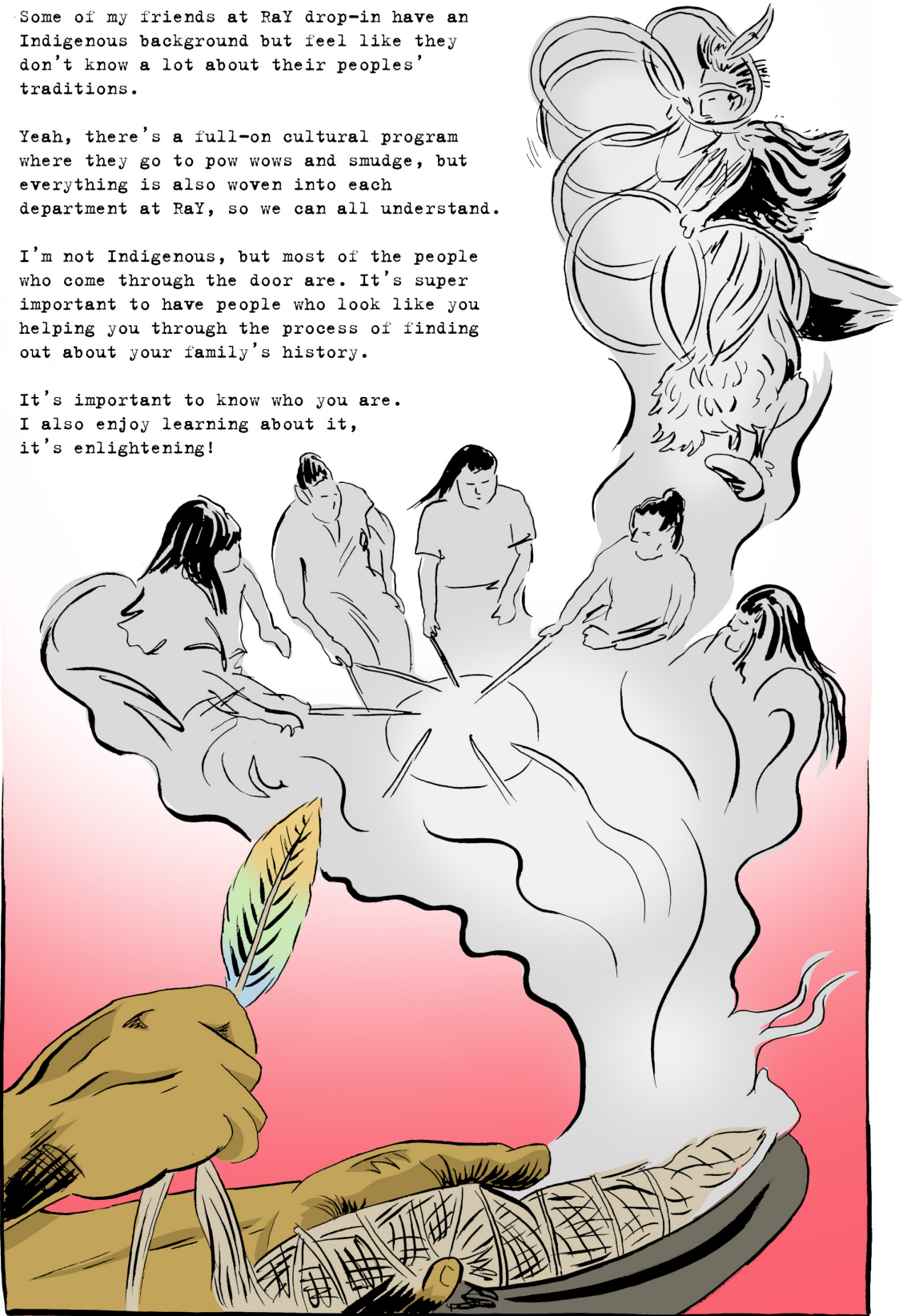


Some of my friends at RaY drop-in have an Indigenous background but feel like they don't know a lot about their peoples' traditions.

Yeah, there's a full-on cultural program where they go to pow wows and smudge, but everything is also woven into each department at RaY, so we can all understand.

I'm not Indigenous, but most of the people who come through the door are. It's super important to have people who look like you helping you through the process of finding out about your family's history.

It's important to know who you are. I also enjoy learning about it, it's enlightening!



My friends who've been housed by RaY explained the three different housing programs to me. There's Rapid, Transitional, and Housing First.



IN THE RAPID REHOUSING PROGRAM, A WORKER HELPS YOU GET YOUR OWN PLACE IN THE PRIVATE MARKET, AND CAN HELP YOU MAINTAIN A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR LANDLORD.

YOU'RE THE LEASE HOLDER, SO IT'S YOUR PLACE! THIS MEANS MORE RESPONSIBILITY, BUT I THINK I'M READY FOR IT.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING IS A PROGRAM WITH A BUILDING THAT I GET TO STAY IN THAT'S RAY'S. IN THE REST PROGRAM I STAY FOR FREE, BUT IN THE ROOM PROGRAM, A SOCIAL WORKER WOULD SET ME UP. I PAY SOME RENT. I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR IT, BUT RAY IS STILL THE LEASE HOLDER.

WHEN I MOVED IN, THEY GAVE ME THINGS LIKE A BED AND KITCHENWARE. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAD RECEIVED BRAND NEW STUFF, OR ANY STUFF. I CRIED WHEN I LEARNED THIS WAS ALL FOR ME.



MY HOUSING FIRST CASE WORKERS COME BY REGULARLY. THEY'RE VERY HANDS ON AND SUPPORTIVE. THEY HELPED ME FIND A PLACE THAT WORKED FOR ME.

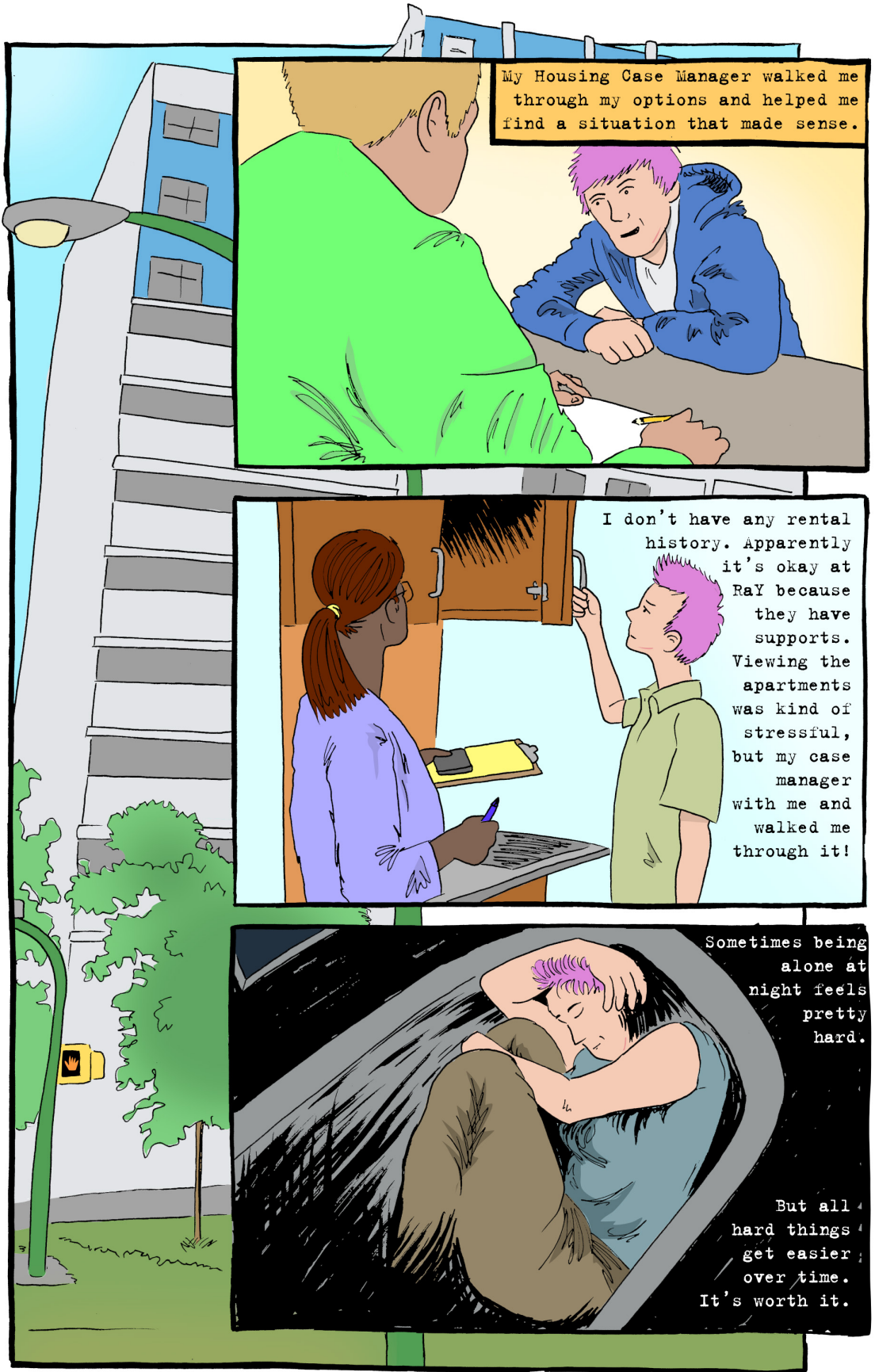
THEY HELPED ME SHOP FOR PLATES, CUTLERY, EVERYTHING I NEEDED.

I LEFT IT IN THE WRAPPER BECAUSE I WASN'T SURE IF I COULD TOUCH IT. I KEPT MY STUFF PACKED AND READY TO GO JUST IN CASE IT WAS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE.



RaY also has supported housing programs where they partner with Manitoba Housing and CPS.

They also advocate with EIA, which is a big part of keeping participants housed.



My Housing Case Manager walked me through my options and helped me find a situation that made sense.

I don't have any rental history. Apparently it's okay at RaY because they have supports. Viewing the apartments was kind of stressful, but my case manager with me and walked me through it!

Sometimes being alone at night feels pretty hard.

But all hard things get easier over time. It's worth it.

Today I did an intake with one of the Mental Health and Addiction Case Managers.

"What has been on your mind lately?"



A LOT OF THE TIME WE HAVE FEAR OF THE FUTURE, ANXIETY, OR ANY MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE THAT BOTHERS US EVERY DAY. IT MAY BE DUE TO LACK OF STABILITY WITH HOUSING, INCOME, OR SENSE OF SAFETY. THANK YOU FOR SHARING WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH.



The intake took about an hour. We talked a lot about my past, but also what I'd like to accomplish.

WHICH OF THESE THINGS IS AFFECTING YOU THE MOST RIGHT NOW?

I'D SAY THE ANXIETY. IT CAN BE CRIPPLING.



I probably said too much, but it felt good to get it all out.

IS IT TRIGGERED BY ANYTHING OR IS IT ONGOING?

IT'S PRETTY NON-STOP.



Turns out that more than half of the people who come in here have some form of anxiety, so I'm not alone.

IF YOU THINK ABOUT GOALS FOR YOURSELF, WHAT COMES TO MIND?

I THINK A BIG PART OF IT IS THAT I'VE BEEN MADE TO FEEL LIKE I SHOULDN'T EVEN MAKE GOALS.



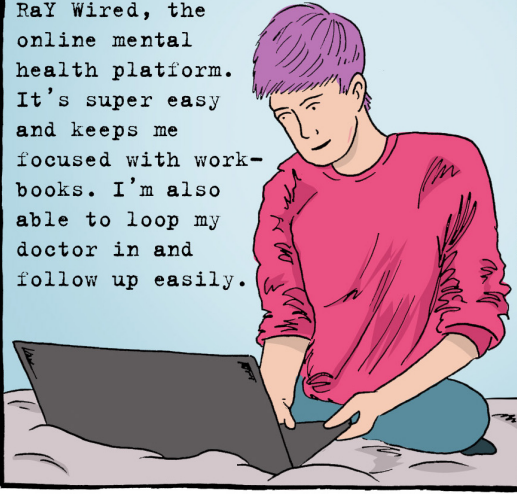
I've got issues with drinking, depression, and probably anxiety. I don't know, I've never been diagnosed with anything.

IT'S QUITE NORMAL TO FEEL STAGNANT AND NOT KNOW WHERE TO START



I've been paired up with a case manager. We're gonna make a plan!

I started using RaY Wired, the online mental health platform. It's super easy and keeps me focused with workbooks. I'm also able to loop my doctor in and follow up easily.



I know my drinking is a problem in my life.



My case manager supported me in getting connected to services to start the dealing with it.



I can reach out to them to talk about my goals for recovery, which helps me stay on track



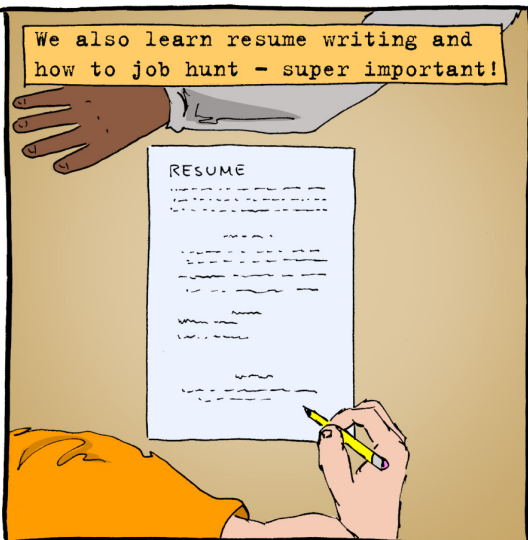
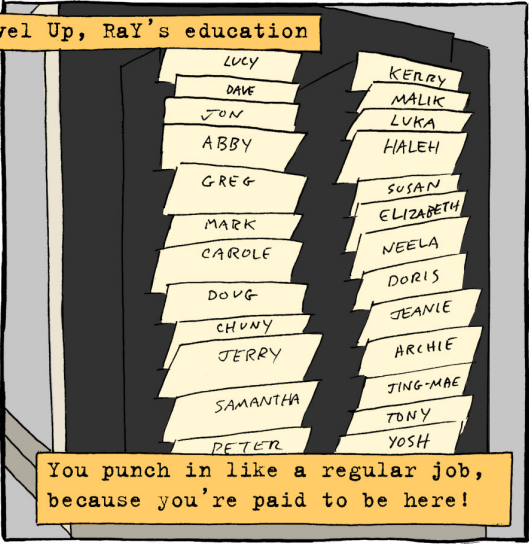
I know that I can't drink anymore...

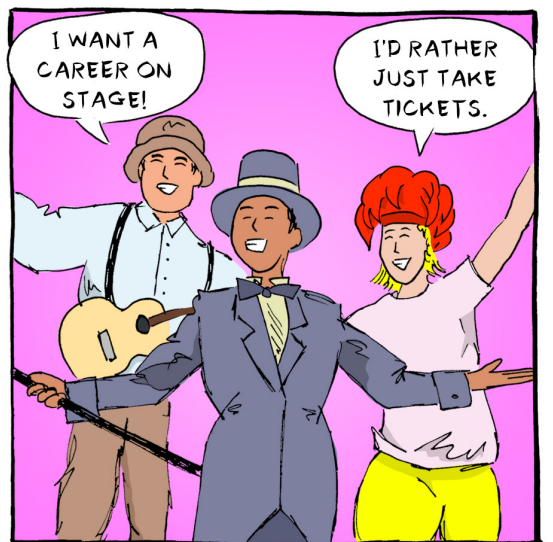


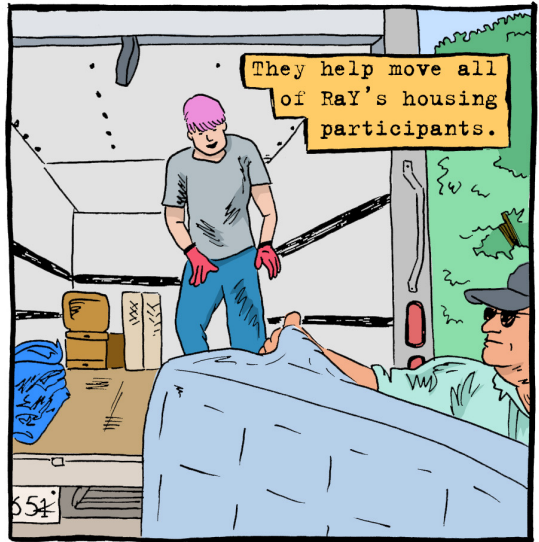
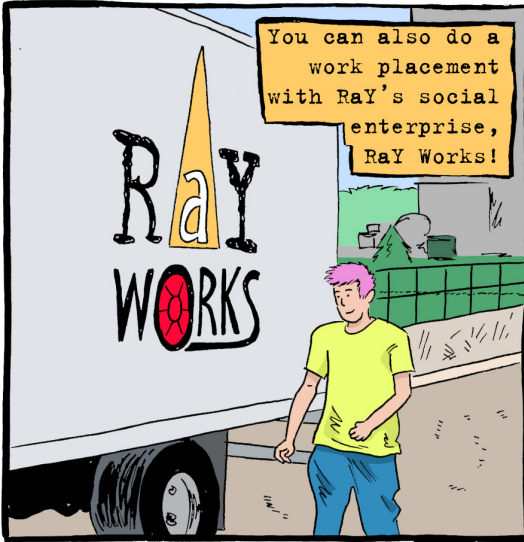
...and I feel very out of place being around my old friend group.











I feel good about working here, too.

It's been a year since
I walked into
RaY.



I've got a job, a home,
and some direction.



I'm also getting better
at guitar! It really
helps me relax and turn
negative energy into
positive.



I still sometimes spend a lot of
time worrying about the pressures of
paying my bills.



But having a home I feel safe in
is definitely worth it.



Some days are still rough, but everyone has
bad days. I'm choosing to get up each day
and do my best, on my terms.





the hub model

