

Your companion

From the women's shelter
to your own apartment

Help for residents of women's shelters in finding a flat, moving house and feeling at home.



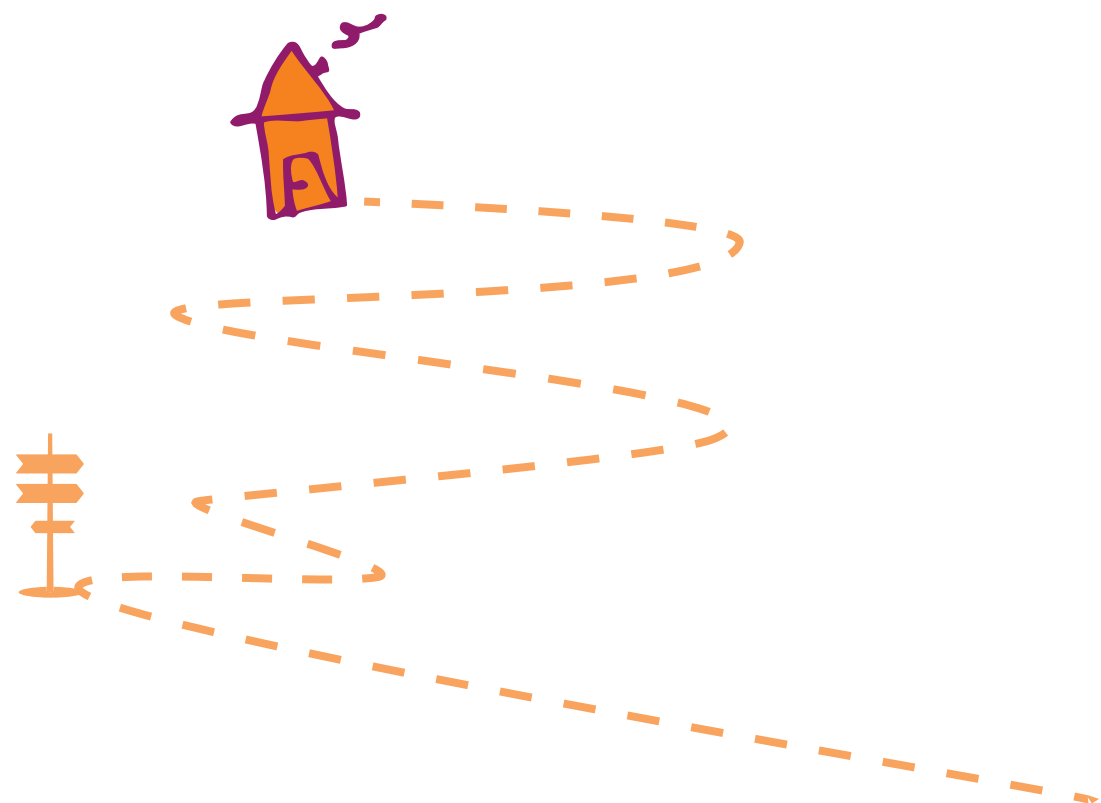
Frauenhaus Essen



From the women's shelter to your own apartment

You have taken the courageous step of moving out of the women's shelter and into your own apartment. After a period of uncertainty, this is a big step. Congratulations on making this decision!

To help you, we have put together a booklet. Here you can find everything you need to know when moving into your own apartment. The coloured blocks contain everything the Jobcenter or social services need from you or which you need to be aware of. We have also included ideas to help you feel safer in this booklet. These are also highlighted in colour. So let's go! We wish you all the best for this next stage in your life, in which you can decide how you want to live. And we hope you quickly feel at home in your new apartment!



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Looking for a flat how, where, what?



Where do I want to live (e.g. city, district, neighbourhood)?

What do I need nearby?

- Bus/train station Nursery/school Supermarket Park
 Shopping centre Weekly market Playground Doctor

Who do I want to live with?

- Alone With my children In a shared flat
 With a partner With a friend

How many neighbours do I want (more, fewer, none)?

What is important in my apartment?

Number of rooms _____ Highest possible floor _____ Floor area from _____ qm

What extras do I want?

- Lift Balcony Garden Window in bathroom Cellar
 Renovated apartment Carpeted Wallpapered
 Pets allowed Garage/parking space Playground by the house

What kind of heating should the apartment have?

- District heating Gas heating Storage heaters Fireplace Don't mind
 No storage heaters

What kind of television connection should there be?

- Cable Satellite Digital Internet

If I get money from the Jobcenter, what is my maximum rent? How much do I want/can I pay for my apartment?



Where can I find an apartment?

There are different websites on the internet where you can find somewhere to live. Here are the most well-known:



www.immowelt.de

www.immobilienscout24.de

www.wohnungsmarkt24.de

www.waz.immowelt.de

www.ebay-kleinanzeigen.de

www.meinestadt.de



The best-known housing associations

On these websites you can often fill out a form when looking for somewhere to live. You will then receive suggestions for places that might be right for you. Sometimes you will have to wait longer.

Vonovia	www.vonovia.de
LEG Wohnen Dortmund GmbH	www.leg-wohnen.de
GEWOBau	www.gewobau.de
VIVAWEST	www.vivawest.de
Aachener Siedlungs-und Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH	www.aachener-swg.de
Covivio	www.covivio.immo



Abbreviations you might come across in the newspaper when flat-hunting

2ZKDB – 2 rooms, kitchen, hall, bathroom

FW – district heating

KM – „cold rent“ (not including bills)

NK – bills (heating, waste disposal, water and sewage)

KT – deposit


E-Altenessen, 55m², 2.OG/DG, 2ZKDB m.Fenster, gerne an 2 Pers., keine Haustiere, FW, KM 320€ + NK + 3 MM, KT sofort frei, T: 0123/45678910

E-Holsterh., Nähe Klinikum, ruh. Lage, Hochparterre, 89qm, 4 Zi., Wohnkü. m. EBK, Duschbad, WC extra, Blk. Gartenn., ab 1.3., WM 880€, v. priv. T: 0198/7654321

EBK – fitted kitchen

Blk – balcony

WM – “warm rent” (cold rent + bills = warm rent)



JOBCENTER

For every city, the Jobcenter sets an upper rent limit (“Mietobergrenze”). The cold rent plus utilities may not exceed this upper limit. Heating is not included in the utilities; it is paid separately by the Jobcenter.

CAUTION: sometimes, landlords include heating costs in the utilities.

To find out the upper rent limit in your city, enter the following in a search engine: Mietobergrenze Jobcenter [City]...

SAFETY QUESTIONS

- Questions about the apartment regarding safety:
- Does the apartment have an intercom system?
 - Is the apartment on an upper floor?
 - Is the front door well lit?
 - Do you feel safe in this part of town?
 - Are there nice neighbours who could help in an emergency?
 - Is the apartment far enough away from the person you are afraid of?
 - Do you have female friends living nearby?
 - What do other people say about the neighbourhood?

Tenancy agreement

The lessor: *Anne Anyone, Anystreet 5, 45123 Essen*

and the tenant: *Leila Lionheart*

conclude the following tenancy agreement:

§ 1 Rental spaces

1. In building: *Löwenstr. 123, 45123 Essen, 2nd floor right*, the following spaces are to be let:
3 rooms, 1 kitchen, 1 bath with window, 1 basement. The apartment has a balcony.
2. The tenant is permitted to use the washing facilities in the basement as per the house rules.
3. For the duration of the rental period, the tenant will be given the following keys:
2 front door keys, 2 apartment keys, 5 room keys, 1 basement key, 1 bin room key, 2 letter box keys
4. The floor area of the apartment is *75 qm*.

§ 2 Rent

1. The rental contract starts on 01.03.2019 for an indefinite period. The notice period for termination is three months. Notice must be given at least by the third working day of the month.
2. The monthly rent is *620,85 €*, consisting of:

heating cost prepayment of:	<i>66,45 €</i>
utility bills of:	<i>70,50 €</i>
The deposit is two months' cold rent:	<i>967,80 €</i>
3. The entire rent must be paid by the third working day of every month to the following account:

Account holder: *Anne Anyone*
 Sort code: *123456*
 Account Number: *987 654 321*
 or IBAN: *123456 987 654 321*
 Bank: *Sparkasse Essen*

§ 3 House rules

1. Quiet must be maintained during the night from 10:00 p.m. to 06:00 a.m.
2. Tenants on each floor must alternate in cleaning the stairway every two weeks.
3. Small animals need no permission; larger pets such as dogs and cats must first be approved by the lessor.

(place, date, tenant signature)

(place, date, lessor signature)

JOBCENTER

If you receive money from the Jobcenter you may NOT sign the rental contract without permission. Take the rental contract to the Jobcenter and have it approved. Then sign it and send it back to the lessor.



As a rule, your rental contract will contain more information than this, such as how the operating costs are billed or who has to pay for repairs. Read the contract through very carefully. If there is something you don't understand, ask the lessor, your interpreter or the employees of the women's shelter before signing it.

JOBCENTER

Some lessors want the Jobcenter to pay the rent directly to them. You have to tell this to the Jobcenter.

The start of the rental arrangement is also important: the Jobcenter pays rent to the women's shelter. As soon as you sign a rental contract, the Jobcenter has to pay rent for your apartment. Often, the Jobcenter will not pay rent for an apartment and the women's shelter at the same time. Talk to an employee of the women's shelter to find out what arrangements the women's shelter has made with the Jobcenter. They will be able to help you further.

The Jobcenter also pays the deposit. After this, the Jobcenter deducts 10% of your money every month and you pay off the advance in instalments. You will receive the deposit back when you move out if the apartment has been properly maintained.

JOBCENTER

You can request money to renovate the apartment from the Jobcenter. Tell the employee everything that needs renovation.

Apartment handover form

Apartment handover before moving in

Date: 28.02.2019 Moving in on: 01.03.2019
 Apartment viewed: Löwenstr. 123, 45123 Essen, 2nd floor, right
 Lessor: Anne Anyone, Anystreet 5, 45123 Essen
 Tenant: Leila Lionheart
 Further participants: Loredana Lionheart (tenant's sister), Senta Strong (tenant's friend)

Keys handed over: 2 front door keys, 2 apartment keys, 5 room keys, 1 basement key, 1 bin room key, 2 letterbox keys

Meter handover:
 Electricity meter: Number 12345678987 Meter status 78,678 kWh
 Water meter: Number 98765432123 Meter status 12,345

Defects determined:

Room	Status/defect	To be removed by:	Note
Living room	new white wallpaper, no defects		Previous tenant's laminate accepted
Large bedroom	No defects, no wallpaper		Previous tenant's rug accepted
Small bedroom	No defects, no wallpaper, no carpet		
Kitchen	Tiles damaged, no wallpaper, floor tiled	Lessor	Tiling will be changed
Bathroom	Duschwand nicht vorhanden, Boden & Wand gefliest	Lessor	New glass wall to be installed
Corridor	Old wallpaper, floor tiled	Tenant	Wallpaper will be repainted
Basement	Mould in rear left corner	Lessor	Mould will be removed by a professional company

_____ (place, date, tenant signature)

_____ (place, date, lessor signature)

Furnishing your apartment

What sort of things do you need for your apartment?

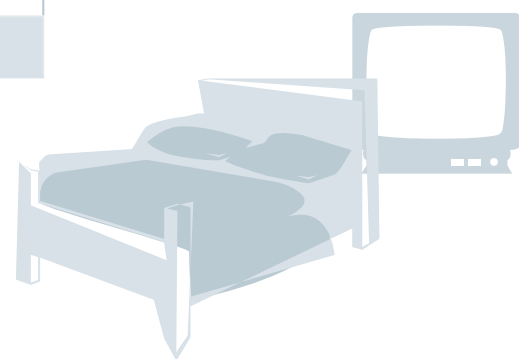
Copy the list on the next pages. Things you already have can be crossed off (X). This will give you a better overview of what you still need. You can also enter the prices here to keep track of your money.

JOBCENTER
When you submit your tenancy agreement you will also be applying for money to furnish your apartment. If your apartment has a tankless water heater you can request an additional sum.

Checklists:

Furnishing a new apartment		
Room/object	Number	Where to buy?
BEDROOM		
Bed		
Mattress		
Bedlinen		
Bedcover		
Pillows		
Carpet		
Bedside table		
Wardrobe		
Coat-hangers		
Curtains		
Chest of drawers		
Bedside lamp		
Ceiling light		

Furnishing a new apartment		
Room/object	Number	Where to buy?
LIVING ROOM		
Sofa		
Sofa cushions		
Living-room table		
Standard lamp		
Carpet		
Shelves		
Television		
Television unit		
Curtains		
Ceiling light		



Furnishing a new apartment		
Room/object	Number	Where to buy?
CHILD'S ROOM		
Bed		
Mattress		
Bedlinen		
Bedcovers		
Pillows		
Carpet		
Bedside table		
Wardrobe		
Coat-hangers		
Curtains		
Chest of drawers		
Storage boxes		
Desk		
Chair		
Desk lamp		
Ceiling light		

Furnishing a new apartment		
Room/object	Number	Where to buy?
KITCHEN		
Kitchen units		
Sink		
Taps		
Stove and oven		
Extractor hood		
Wall cupboards		
Refrigerator		
Dishwasher		
Large plates		
Small plates		
Bowls		
Cups		
Glasses		
Plats		
Cutlery		
Spice containers		
Other containers		
Ladle		
Set of pots and pans		
Spatula		
Wooden spoons		
Chopping board		
Sharp knives		
Kitchen table		
Chairs		
Ceiling light		
Coasters		
Microwave		



Registering ("Anmelden")

in your new apartment

Within two weeks, you have to register as living in your new apartment. To do so, go to the Einwohneramt or Bürgeramt (Citizens' Office). If you don't have a German passport and are moving to another city, you may have to go to the Ausländeramt (Immigration Office). Find out beforehand. You can find the opening times online, and sometimes book an appointment. Take with you all you and your children's passports and confirmation from your landlord that you have moved in.

IMPORTANT! Have the women's shelter write you a letter requesting your information not to be disclosed. Take this with you to registration!

IMPORTANT! If you receive child benefit, print out your household certificate ("Haushaltsbescheinigung") from the child benefit office, take it with you to registration and have it signed.

Who do I have to tell about my new address?

· Health insurer	· Telephon provider
· Tax office	· Associations
· Federal Agency for Work/Jobcenter/Social Services	· School/nursery
· Employers	· Newspaper subscriptions
· Electricity provider (if making a new registration)	· Lawyers
· Bank	· Family support fund
· Insurers	· Maintenance advance fund

Making a house a home

In your time at the women's shelter, you certainly got to know a lot of things that gave you strength. Perhaps there were happy moments you have taken photos of. It can help to try and find a place in your new apartment which gives you strength or where you can find all the things you need if you suddenly feel you don't know how to go on. This could be a wall with pictures on it. It could also be a kind of small altar or a drawer. Or maybe you want to collect all the things you have brought with you from the women's shelter in a box that you can get out whenever you need it. Decide what is the best for you! These don't have to be just things you brought from the women's shelter; maybe you have other possessions that you connect with happy memories. Decorate your new apartment with curtains, candles, flowers or anything you feel like. This will soon make your new house a home. A new apartment is a new start in life.

It can make sense to keep a folder for important papers. If it happens that you have to leave the apartment in a hurry, you can pack them quickly and take them with you. This may give you a sense of safety.

RELAXATION EXERCISE

Exercise

If you are having unhappy thoughts, can't get to sleep or feel scared, you could try this exercise. It can be done sitting or lying down.

Take time out for this exercise!

Concentrate on your surroundings.

Name 5 things
that you can see right now.

For example:
I can see a car.
I can see a plant.

Say 5 things
that you can hear right now.

For example:
I can hear my stomach.
I can hear a bird.

Say 5 things
that you can feel outside your body.

For example:
I can feel my feet on the floor.
I can feel my hands on the covers.

Then do the same thing 4 times.

Then 3 times.

Then 2 times.

Then 1 time.

You might make a mistake counting.
You might say the same thing twice.
This doesn't matter.
Just keep going.

This exercise comes from the brochure by the Trier women's shelter "What is wrong with me? Stress and trauma explained in simple language."

Starting life in your new apartment

BUDGET MANAGEMENT

How much money do I get each month?

This is how much money I have:

Wages from work	
Unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld I)	
Unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld II)	
Social security	
Pension	
Child benefit	
Housing benefit	
Total	

In each line, write how much money you have.
Then add it all up and write the total at the end.

Example

Mrs Lionheart is 27 years old and has two children (7 and 3 years old). She has a part-time apprenticeship in a supermarket. She receives top-up payments from the Jobcenter. For each child she receives € 204.00 in child benefit (as of 08/19), € 212.00 in maintenance advances for the older child and € 160.00 for the younger one (as of 01/19).

Wages from work	750,00 €
Unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld I)	
Unemployment benefit (Arbeitslosengeld II)	387, 64 €
Social security	
Pension	
Child benefit	408,00 €
Maintenance advances	372,00 €
Housing benefit	
Total	1917,64 €

Mrs Lionheart has € 1,917.64 a month for herself and her children..

(Example calculation; correctness of the entries not guaranteed. The Jobcenter can give you the information you need!)



WHAT DO YOU NEED TO SPEND MONEY ON?

➔ Rent

The amount is in your rental contract and will be paid by you or the Jobcenter directly.

➔ Telephone and internet

For telephoning, you need a connection and a telephone. For this, you need a contract with a telephone company. Telephone connections always come with internet now, letting you access the web via a computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone.

If you have a mobile phone you also need a mobile phone contract or prepaid card.

Important! ! If you enter into a telephone contract you must indicate that your address has to be kept secret and not listed online or in the telephone book (ex-directory). This is called an "Auskunftssperre".

➔ Electricity

You must register for electricity from an energy (electricity) company and pay a monthly advance payment. At the end of the year you receive a bill. If you used less electricity you get money back; if you used more, you have to top up your payments.

➔ GEZ / ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio fees

You have to pay license fees for television and radio. For 3 months you have to pay 53 Euro. If you receive money from the Jobcenter/Social Services, you don't need to pay any fees. But you do need to make an application. A certificate for this is enclosed with the entitlement notice from the Jobcenter.

➔ Public transport or car

If you travel by bus or rail it is usually worthwhile to buy a monthly ticket from your city's transport company. If you receive money from the Jobcenter you can get a cheaper subsidised ticket. If you have a car, you have to include the costs in your own expenditure.

➔ Insurance

There are many types of insurance and several companies that sell it. Get good advice and make sure you are well informed.

Home insurance – this is important because it pays out if furniture in your home are damaged. For example, if there is a fire or water penetrates into your apartment.

Personal liability insurance – this pays out if you or your children break something belonging to somebody else. Some lessors will require that you take out third-party personal liability insurance.

Important! Get good advice – for safety, ask a friend or another person who knows about insurance. Insurance companies want to make a sale. So make sure that you really need the insurance.

➔ Other payments

You need money for everything. Write out how much money you will pay per month for everything to get an overview of your expenditures. Think about things like:

Eating and drinking ➔ Clothing ➔ Body care ➔ Cigarettes ➔ Leisure ➔ Etc, etc, etc...

In some months you may need more money, perhaps if you want to go on a trip or need winter shoes. Plan ahead. Perhaps in a different month you will be able to cut back. Try to save money. Some things are easy to get for free or for very little money, so you will have savings left over.

Write your own list with all the payments you make in a month. This is so you can get an overview of your monthly outgoings.

THIS IS THE AMOUNT OF MONEY I SPEND IN A MONTH:

Rent _____

Utilities _____

Heating _____

Telephon and internet _____

Mobile phone _____

Electricity _____

ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio fees _____

Train ticket _____

Children's train ticket _____

Insurance _____

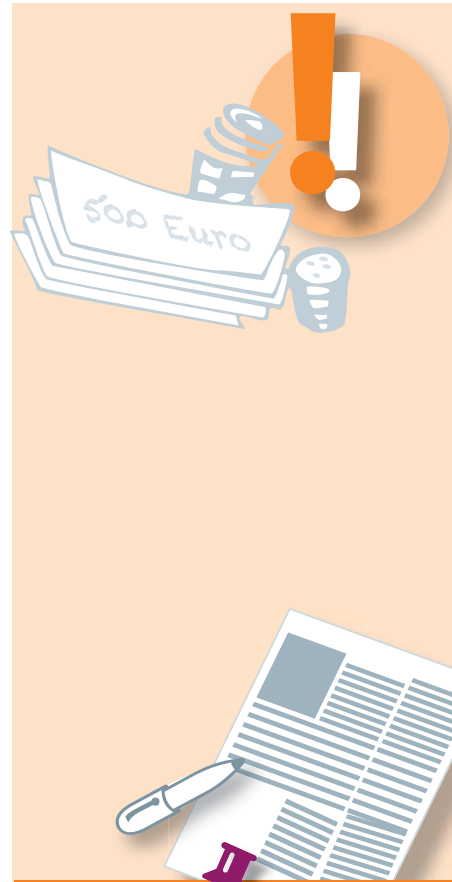
Eating and drinking _____

Clothing _____

Body care _____

Cigarettes _____

Leisure (courses, sports clubs etc.) _____



JOBCENTER

So you can continue to get money from the Jobcenter, you must make a continuing grant application ("Weiterbewilligungsantrag") before leaving the women's shelter. You also have to fill out the "income" and "children" forms again and hand them in to your Jobcenter. When the grant is made you will receive a letter stating how much you receive per month and until when. Note the day before you receive the money in your calendar. On this day you will need to make another application if you still need the money.

Example

Since Mrs Lionheart gets extra money from the Jobcenter for some services, she has written a JC after each item that is covered by the Jobcenter.

Rent	464,00 € JC
Utilities	100,00 € JC
Heating	80,00 € JC
Telephon and internet	30,00 €
Mobil phone	19,90 €
Electricity	79,00 €
ARD ZDF Deutschlandradio fees	€
Train ticket	38,65€
Children's train ticket	€
Personal liability insurance	12,00 €
Eating and drinking	600,00 €
Clothing	200,00 €
Body care	50,00 €
Cleaning products	30,00 €
School equipment	€
Cigarettes	€
Leisure (courses, sports clubs etc.)	€

**A safety plan
for your own apartment**

Even though you cannot foresee some acts of violence and threats, you have many options to protect yourself and your children. If you end up again in a violent situation, you can do the following:

1. In an emergency:

➔ Run away

- I know the escape routes from the apartment: exits, windows, lifts and stairways.
- I have put money and a spare key _____, so that I have them to hand in an emergency.
- I have given spare keys, copies of the most important papers, clothing and things the children need to _____, who will keep them and bring them to me when I need them.
- If I need to flee, I will go to _____, We have agreed this together.
- If I cannot speak openly, I will use _____, as a code word so that my children know that we are leaving and so my friends understand that I am coming.

➔ Get help

- I use the word _____ as a code word so that my friends know that they should get the police.
- I can talk with my neighbour _____ about violence and ask her to call the police if she suspects something or hears my knocking signal on the heating pipes. I can save emergency numbers on my phone and show my children how to call the police or fire brigade. I will make sure that they are able then to give the address.
- I trust my instincts. If I see a violent exchange coming, I will try to stay close to the phone or leave the apartment. I have a mobile phone with me.

2. I have an escape plan

- The most important emergency numbers are _____
- I will write out the most important numbers on a piece of paper and keep it with me.
- I will telephone from a safe location.
- I can talk about my plans with _____
- I will partially involve my children in the plan.
- I will open my own bank account with my own bank card and make copies of all the important documents to leave with _____

3. I have packed a "grab-and-go" bag

- Passport / ID and children's passports
- If applicable, proof of citizenship
- Documents relating to your legal residence
- Birth certificates / marriage certificates
- Health insurance card (for children too)
- Rental agreement, employment contract
- Pension, social security and Jobcenter notifications
- If applicable, custody documents
- Bank documents, savings books, securities (copies)
- If applicable, earlier police documents, reports
- Jewellery
- The most important things for one day:
Clothing, hygienic items, school items, favourite toys, medicine
- Spare key for apartment/car
- Address book
- Memories: diaries, photos and favourite items

4. I look after myself

- I know a lawyer who can help me _____
- If I feel bad or need help, I can call _____
or talk to _____

This safety plan is based on the "Separation Safety Plan" issued by the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department. It was put together and translated by Angelika May.



Safety planning can make you forget that you no longer live in a violent situation. It is good to plan ahead, but don't forget: today you live in your own apartment and are making your own decisions.

Exercise

If memories of what happened get too much for you, this exercise can help. This exercise shows you

The past is the past.
Today is today.

You can fill out this sheet alone,
or together with someone.
Then you can copy it.
That way you always have it with you.

Right now I am feeling: _____

In my body, I feel: _____

I know this feeling from a different time.

The feeling reminds me of: _____

I look around myself.

Then I see:

Now is a different time.

Today is the _____

I am now here in _____

I know this.

Because here is _____

And that's how I know:

The past is the past.

The past is just a memory.

This exercise comes from the brochure by the Trier women's shelter "What is wrong with me? Stress and trauma explained in simple language."

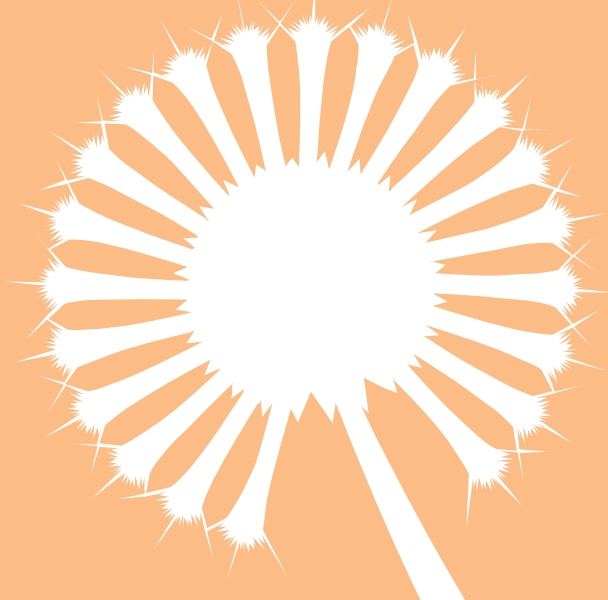


If you have a question about looking for an apartment or about this brochure then contact a women's shelter employee and ask her for help!

We wish you plenty of success in your new apartment!



You can fill out the well-being cards on the final page. You can carry them with you or put them in your treasure chest.



What improved during my time in the women's shelter:



In this situation, I felt strong:



What was good today:



This helped me particularly well:



This person can help me:



I can talk to this person:



I am peaceful here:



This is what I like about myself:





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For simplicity, this brochure has used feminine pronouns.
This can of course also refer to men.

The idea for the well-being cards was suggested by the brochure by the Trier women's shelter "What is wrong with me? Stress and trauma explained in simple language." The exercises were drawn up by Lydia Hantke and Hans-Joachim Görge of the Institut Berlin. You can find all the exercises on their website, www.institut-berlin.de

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