

# When you are stressed, overthinking, and sleeping poorly

The consequences of forced migration and dramatic events

**Due to war or violence you had to leave your home and have fled to the Netherlands. You have just gone through a difficult period. You might feel less healthy. That is quite normal. Such issues can go away on their own after a while, but sometimes you do need help to feel better again.**

## Do you have the following issues?

When you've gone through a lot, you can experience symptoms and problems. These problems could be caused by stress. You don't feel that good and are unable to enjoy life. Such problems can go away after a few weeks. It concerns the following issues:

- Sleeping poorly
- Overthinking things
- Being too tired to do things
- Poor concentration
- Being forgetful
- Getting angry easily
- Crying easily
- Getting rattled easily
- Having dreams that frighten you
- Feeling gloomy and anxious
- Not wanting contact with people
- Not trusting people



## What can you do about these issues?

Keeping busy helps. Below you can read some tips that you can apply:

- Try to be active, even when you don't feel like it. It will help you feel better.
- Try not to be alone all the time. Spend time with people. Doing things together and talking about daily things helps you to worry less and not overthink.
- Talk about it with someone you trust. It will make you feel less alone. That can help.
- Try waking up and going to bed at the same time every day.
- Do not lie in bed or sleep during the day. If you're tired, do something.
- Have three meals a day and try to eat healthy, even if you don't feel like eating.
- Do not watch TV before going to bed. It is better to listen to music or to read.
- If you have children, do something with them. You could go to a play area in the neighbourhood.
- You can do many things and, if possible, do them with other people:

- cook or clean together
- make or listen to music together
- go outside for a walk or a bike ride for at least half an hour every day
- help others with chores or moving house
- if you like sports, try fitness or running, or join a sports club
- see if you can do volunteer work in the neighbourhood
- if you speak English or Dutch, you can help people with interpreting
- if your religious beliefs can help, go to a church, mosque or other house of worship

### When to ask for help?

Complaints do not always last long. They often lessen after a few weeks or go away. If the problems are still there after a month and are getting worse, then you have to do something. Do not think of it as being weak, and do not wait too long. Go see your GP.

### What can the GP do?

- The doctor will listen to you.
- He or she will ask questions about your life.
- He or she will usually give advice on sleeping, eating and staying active.
- They may give you a pill as a sleeping aid for a few days.



In your doctor's practice there may be someone you can speak to, and who you can go to a few times to talk about how you're doing and what you can do about the problems. This would be the GP assistant for Mental Health Care (POH-GGZ). But sometimes more is needed. In that case, the doctor will explore, jointly with you, where you can go for the treatment of symptoms and problems. They will give you a referral to a nearby facility that can offer you help. This would be a mental healthcare facility, the GGZ. Each region in the Netherlands has facilities that offer help for people who have gone through a lot, and who – after trauma and/or forced migration – develop symptoms like anxiety or depression.

In addition to regional facilities, there are also specialized facilities. One nationwide facility for the diagnosis and treatment of psychotrauma is ARQ Centrum'45. You can register via their registration and information bureau Team Aanmeldingen with a referral letter from your doctor. This is usually the case when treatment is not available in the region or has not helped. Your family doctor can look up where treatment is possible, via: [national social map culturally sensitive care](#). Bring this leaflet to your doctor if you are seeking help.

This information is based on a [Pharos leaflet](#).