

The Story of Jo

Explaining EMDR to Children: A Guide For Children And Their Parents



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The Story of Jo

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Every day, Jo went to school feeling happy, looking forward to seeing her friends and learning new things.



Jo's favourite subject was Science. She liked asking many questions, since she wanted to become a doctor.



But one day, as Jo returned home from school, something horrible happened. A cat was crossing the main road and was hit by a car. Jo was so shocked. She wanted to help, but there was too much traffic.



Jo felt very sad and ran home as fast as she could. She wanted to see whether her cat, Shadow, was safe.



As she got home, Jo shouted her cat's name as loudly as she could. She could not see Shadow anywhere. Her mum was at home and had no idea why Jo was so upset.

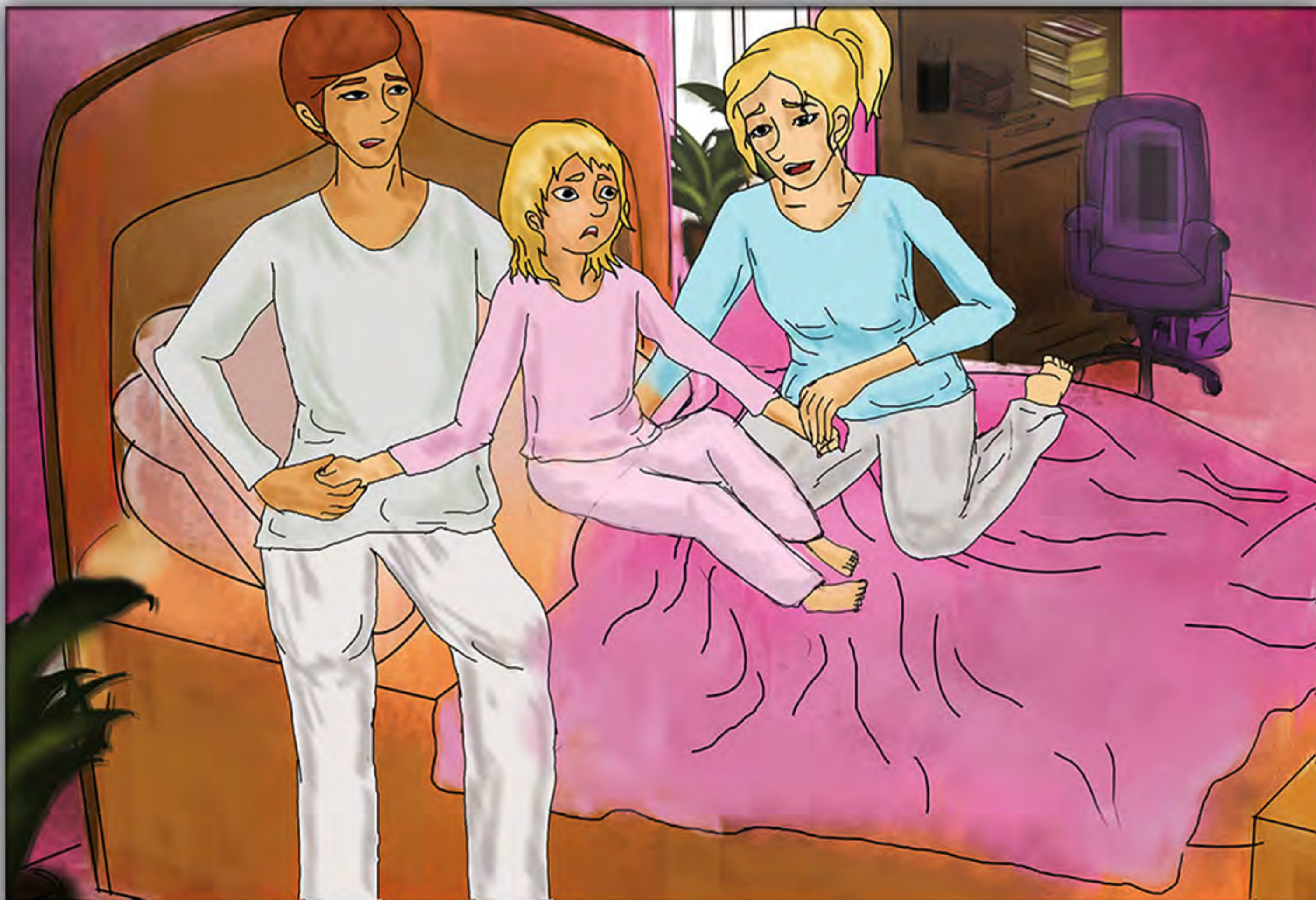


Thankfully her cat was okay. He heard Jo's voice and jumped back into the house through the window. Jo saw her beloved cat and ran to hug him. She felt so relieved and happy.

Unfortunately, Jo's problems were about to start.



From that day on, Jo didn't want to play anymore. She felt worried that she or her cat could be killed by a car and was reluctant to go to school without her mum. She also had horrible nightmares.



Jo's parents were worried and felt sad because they couldn't help Jo feel happy again. They had explained that what happened to the other cat was a tragic accident, but Jo kept feeling bad. Her parents decided to see a therapist who helps children to return to happy thoughts and feelings.



The therapist met with Jo's parents first, and then with Jo too. When they all met together in the therapist's office, he explained that our brain is like a very special recording machine that keeps track of everything we do and see, as well as how we feel at the time when something good or bad happens. Jo was very interested in this, since she liked to read about how the brain works.



The therapist explained that sometimes when something very bad happens, the brain is taken by surprise and can't cope well, so it keeps reminding us that it needs help to feel okay again. "In these cases, you may feel sad or nervous for a while, and this is normal" he said, looking at Jo. He asked "Would you like to help your brain to feel good again?" Jo said "YES, I would!"



The therapist explained that the name of the therapy he used was called EMDR. “EMDR can help your brain to feel okay again,” he said. “First, you need to bring back those memories of the past that bother you. Just imagine they are like clouds passing by in the sky far away on a windy day, moving one after the other.”



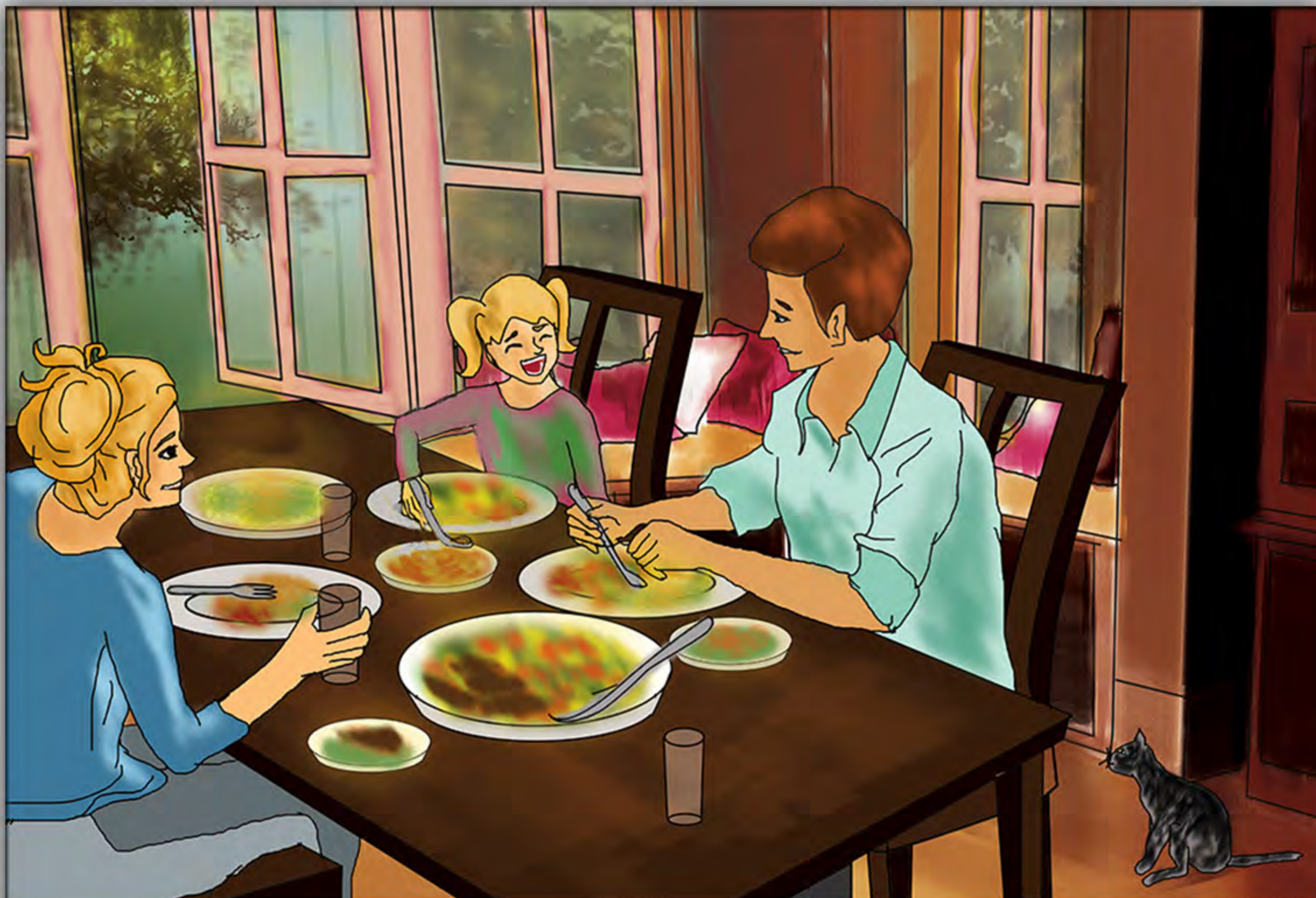
The therapist asked Jo to draw the most upsetting part of her memories, and to write a title on the top saying how that made her feel when she remembered it. He also asked Jo to use another sheet of paper to draw how she wanted to feel instead.



The therapist then asked Jo to hold two tiny vibrating plastic blocks, one in each hand. While she held them, he asked her to think about the upsetting memory she drew earlier, and let her mind wander freely wherever it wanted to go. Jo did this a few times and the more she did it, the less bothered she felt about the memory.



Jo attended a few sessions with the therapist, and every day she felt better and better. In just a few weeks her nightmares stopped, and she also felt less nervous about going to school.



It was not long before Jo felt happy again and enjoyed things as she used to.

I hope you liked “The Story of Jo”

EMDR is very effective in helping children to resolve problems like the one Jo struggled with and many others.



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