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My Name is Alicia



Short story based on “Rafaela’s Test”

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Rafaela's Test

My Name is Alicia

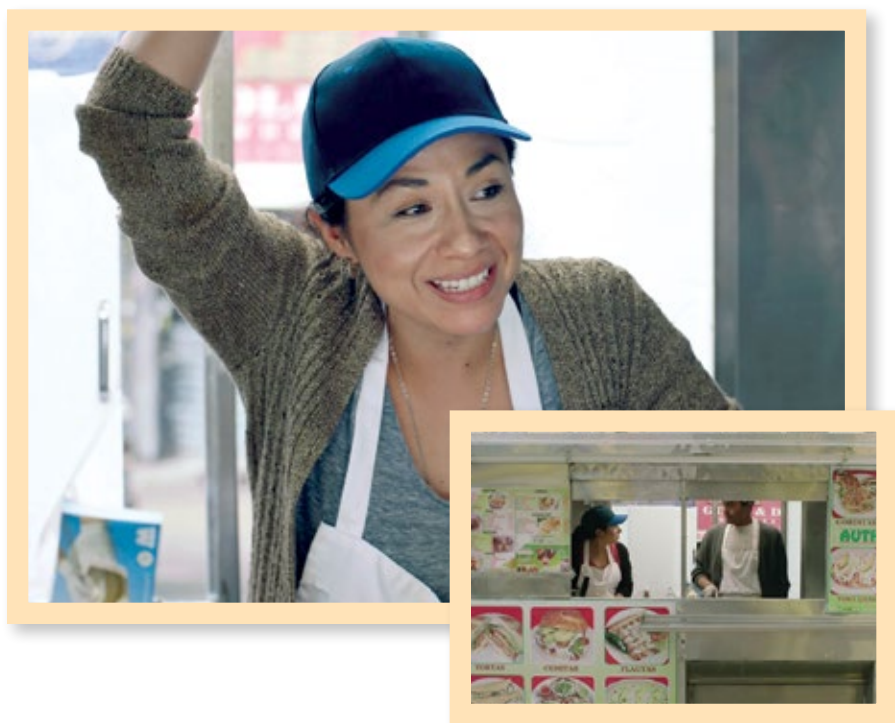


My name is Alicia.

I am from Mexico.

I am a mother and a grandmother.

I have two children and one granddaughter.



I am a single mother.
I own a food cart in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.
It's a family business.



**This is my son.
His name is Martin.
He works in the food cart with me.**



This is my daughter.

Her name is Rafaela.

She is a student.

She works in the food cart with me too.



This is my granddaughter, Isabel.

She is Martin's daughter.

This is Isabel's first year in school.

She goes to Pre-K.

Pre-K is the start of your school life.



School is an important part of life.

Some people never finish school.

I never finished school.



**But I never stopped learning.
I learned how to raise a family.
I learned how to run a business.
I learned the City rules for a food cart.
I am still learning.**



**Recently, I am learning how to help
my daughter, Rafaela.**



Rafaela didn't finish school either.

She needed to help me with the family business.

**She wanted to go to college one day
but she didn't have a high school diploma.**



So, Rafaela went back to school.

She studied for her HSE diploma.

It's the High School Equivalency diploma.

You need to take the HSE test for the diploma.



High School
Equivalency Test
Dates: June 15 & 16

The test is not easy.

There are many subjects on the test:

**Reading, Writing, Social Studies, Science,
and Mathematics.**

There are free programs to study for the test.

Rafaela found a free class.



**On the HSE test day, Rafaela got up early.
But she came home very late.
And she didn't go to the food cart after the test.
I was worried.**



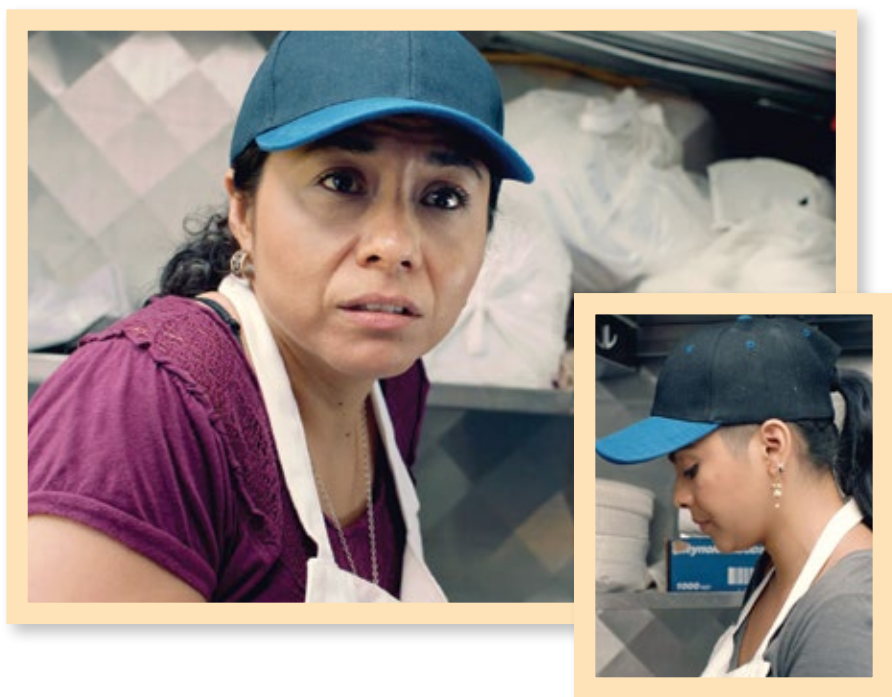
The next morning, Rafaela stayed in bed.

She didn't get up.

She didn't get ready for work.

She looked sad and tired.

**I wanted to help her,
but I didn't know how to help her.**



At work, Rafaela was quiet.

She didn't speak.

She didn't listen to me.

I lost my patience.

I got angry.



“What is wrong?” I asked Rafaela.

Rafaela got angry with me.

“Leave me alone,” she said.

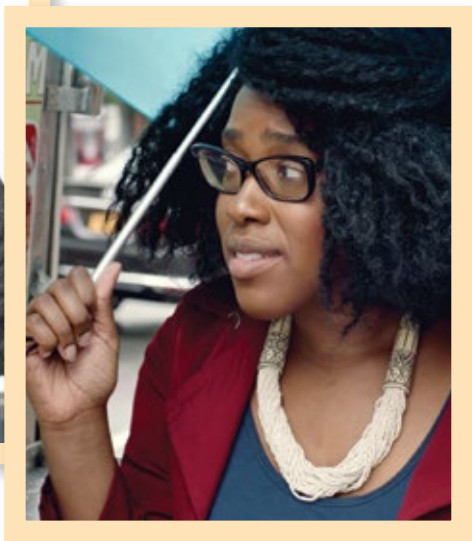


I called Rafaela's friend, Zara.

Zara is Rafaela's friend from her HSE class.

Zara came to our house.

She talked to Rafaela.



**The next day, Zara came to the food cart.
She told me that Rafaela didn't take the test.**

**She said that Rafaela's heart
was beating very fast.**

Rafaela couldn't breathe.

**She had a panic attack on the test day.
She went to the emergency room at the hospital.**



The doctor at the hospital told Rafaela about *NYC Well*.

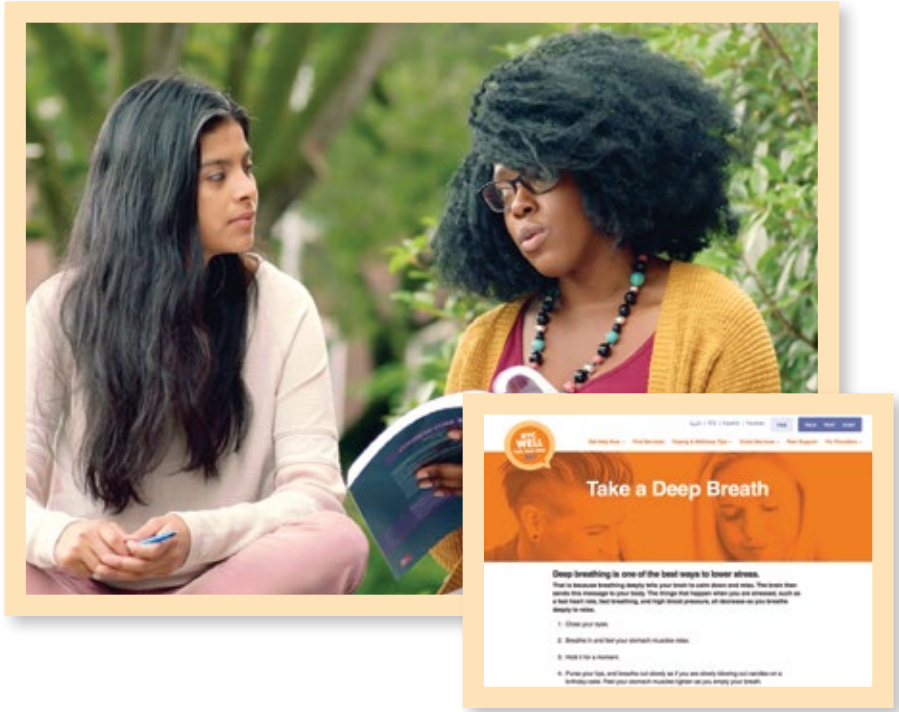
It's a free program to help people manage stress and other personal problems.

There is a number to call: 1-888-NYC-WELL.

You can speak to someone who can help you.



**After I spoke with Zara, I apologized to Rafaela.
“I am sorry for getting angry with you,” I said.**



**Rafaela started to feel better.
She went back to school with Zara.
They studied together again.
They helped each other relax.
They got ideas from NYC Well.**



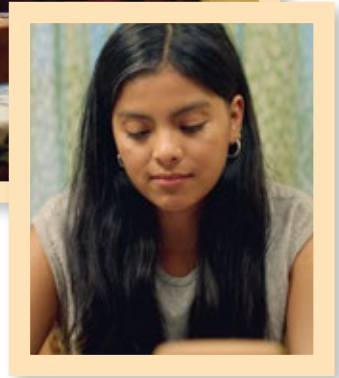
Soon, it was time to take the HSE test.

This time, Rafaela took the test.

After the test, Zara was excited.

But, Rafaela didn't feel excited.

Maybe she was too nervous?



Rafaela got her test scores.

She passed the test!

I was so happy for her.

**I said, “I am so proud of you.
Now you can go to college.”**

But Rafaela didn’t look happy.

Something was wrong and I was worried again.



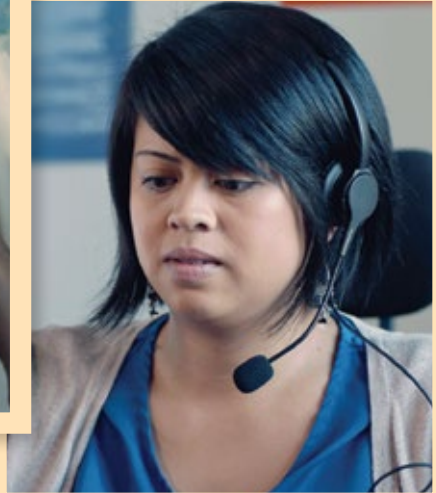
Rafaela made an important decision.

She decided to call *NYC Well*.

She spoke with a counselor on the phone.

“I am here to listen,” the counselor said.

“I am glad you called.”



Rafaela talked to the counselor about her feelings.

Rafaela said, “I think I am depressed.”

**The counselor said,
“Depression and anxiety are very common.
We can help you.”**



I was so worried about Rafaela.

I called *NYC Well* too.

“I don’t know how to help my daughter,” I said.

“What do you recommend?” I asked.

A counselor gave me good suggestions.

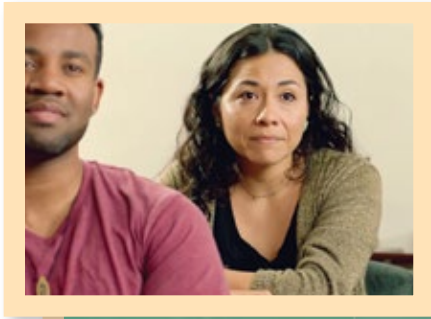


That day, Rafaela and I talked together.

We love each other.

We help each other.

We listen to each other.



**I decided to go back to school too.
Now, I am studying in the HSE program.
One day, I will pass my test too.
Rafaela will help me.
She is in college now.
She is an inspiration to me.**

Words used in this story

- alone
- am, is, are, was (be)
- angry
- anxiety
- apologized (apologize)
- beating (beat)
- bed
- better (good)
- breathe
- business, family business
- called (call)
- children
- class
- college
- common
- couldn't (can't)
- counselor
- daughter
- decided (decide)
- decision, made a decision
- depressed
- depression
- diploma
- doctor
- each other
- early
- easy
- either
- embarrassed
- emergency room
- excited
- fast
- feel
- feelings
- finished (finish)
- first
- food cart
- found (find)
- free
- friend
- future
- gave (give)
- get ready
- glad
- got (get), got up (get up)
- granddaughter
- grandmother
- had (have)
- happy
- heart
- help
- high school
- High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma/test
- hospital
- ideas
- important
- inspiration
- know
- late
- learning (learn)
- life
- listen
- looked (look)
- lost (lose)
- love
- manage, manage stress and anxiety
- mathematics

- Mexico
- mother, working mother
- needed (need)
- nervous
- never
- number
- NYC Well, 1-888-NYC-WELL
- own
- panic attack
- part
- passed (pass)
- patience
- people (person)
- personal
- Pre-K
- program, free program
- proud
- quiet
- raise, raise a family
- reading
- recommend
- relax
- rules
- run, run a business
- sad
- school
- science
- service
- single mother
- social studies
- sorry
- spoke (speak)
- start (*n*)
- started (start)
- stayed (stay)
- stopped (stop)
- stress
- student
- studied (study)
- subjects
- suggestions
- test, test scores
- think
- tired
- together
- told (tell)
- took (take)
- went (go)
- works (work)
- worried
- writing
- wrong
- year

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