

# **PTSD Sleep Therapy Group: Training Your Mind and Body for Better Sleep**



## **Patient Manual**

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## PTSD Sleep Therapy Group Purpose and Format

### Purpose:

The purpose of the Sleep Therapy Group is to help you (1) learn about sleep problems as a part of PTSD hyperarousal, and (2) to learn and practice strategies that will help you improve your quality of your sleep.

The group's aim is to lessen INSOMNIA, or sleep problems that are related to your PTSD.

Many people with PTSD have had insomnia for years including broken sleep, frequent awakenings and nightmares, all of which contribute to poor sleep quality. Hyperarousal behaviors, part of PTSD for many people, can be stronger at night and contribute to insomnia. Learning new sleep habits and new ways to think about your sleep is the best way to treat insomnia and can improve the overall quality of your sleep.

### Format:

The group lasts 6 weeks and covers the following topics:

Session 1: Introduction and Calm Breathing

Session 2: Relaxation and Bedtime Wind-Down

Session 3: Mind-Body Habits for Good Sleep

Session 4: Reclaim Your Bedroom

Session 5: Sleep Smarter

Session 6: Coping with Nightmares

One booster session is held 4-6 weeks after the group ends.

## PTSD Sleep Therapy Group

### Session 1: Introduction and Calm Breathing

What are the Goals of Session 1?

- Introduction of group members and leaders
- Assessment of sleep difficulties
- Increase understanding of PTSD-related sleep disturbance
- Understand rationale for cognitive-behavioral approach to insomnia
- Learn and practice calm breathing exercise

What is Your Sleep Pattern?

- What was your sleep like before your war-zone service?
- Currently, how long are you in bed before you fall asleep?
- Once you fall asleep, how long do you stay asleep?
- How many times during the night do you wake up?
- Do you feel rested in the morning?
- Do you take naps during the day?
- Do medical conditions contribute to your sleep problems (for example, sleep apnea, sleep movement disorders, chronic pain)?

What have You Tried to Improve Your Sleep?

- Prescribed medications
- Over the counter medications
- Changing habits or behaviors

How is PTSD Related to Sleep Problems?

Sleep problems are one of the main complaints of people with PTSD. Hyperarousal, a state of high physical alertness, is a part of PTSD that interferes with people's lives. Sleep problems in PTSD are part of this high level of alertness. Reducing hyperarousal and returning your body to a lower state of alertness can be helpful in reducing and managing stress and helping to improve sleep.

PTSD reexperiencing symptoms also interfere with sleep. Often reexperiencing symptoms are most prevalent at night, particularly if traumatic experiences occurred at night. Nightmares and upsetting thoughts or memories are reexperiencing symptoms that can make it hard to fall or stay asleep.

### How Can a Cognitive-Behavioral Approach Help Me Sleep Better?

Cognitive-behavioral therapy is a first-line intervention for sleep disturbance. Even though you may have had sleep problems for years, you may be able to make substantial improvements to your sleep quality by changing sleep-related thoughts and habits. Most people serving in a war-zone have to change their sleep habits and beliefs in order to meet the demands of the job. Readjusting sleep habits and beliefs after war-zone service can restore sleep quality.

When sleep disturbance has been present for a long time, people develop habits or strategies that, while intended to help sleep, end up getting in the way. Similarly, people develop beliefs about their sleep that may not be helpful. This group will help you to examine and change thoughts and habits that might be making it harder for you to get a good night's sleep.

### How can Learning Calm Breathing Help Me?

Breathing affects the way we feel. If we are anxious or frightened, we breathe faster to fuel our bodies for action. If we are relaxed, we slow down our breathing. We can feel more relaxed and less anxious/ stressed by slowing down our breathing and focusing on the breath out.

### Calm Breathing Instructions:

1. Take a normal breath in through your nose with your mouth closed. Hold your breath for 5 seconds.
2. Exhale slowly through your nose with your mouth closed, letting all the air out of your lungs, while saying silently to yourself a word you find relaxing (like c-a-a-a-l-m or r-e-e-e-l-a-a-x).
3. Pause for a count of 4 and then take the next breath in.

4. Practice this exercise several times a day and at night while you are in bed preparing to sleep.

**Session 1**  
**Goal Assignment**

- Practice calm breathing 5 minutes per day while awake.
- Practice calm breathing while lying in bed at night in preparation for sleep.
- Read manual and handouts and share them with your significant other.

**Contracting for Change**

This week I will practice calm breathing...

When...?

For how long...?

How many days...?

This week I will read and share the handouts...

When?

With whom?

How certain are you...?*(On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being totally unsure and 10 being totally confident)*

Signature:

Date:

### Removing Roadblocks

Problems encountered with practicing calm breathing during day?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Problems encountered with practicing calm breathing at night?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Possible reasons for problems...?

Possible solutions or other options to try...?

Result or outcome of solutions...?

## Sleep Therapy Group

### Session 2: Relaxation and Bedtime Wind-Down

What are the Goals of Session 2?

- Learn the importance of relaxation to help with sleep
- Learn a way to deactivate your mind at night
- Plan a bedtime wind-down
- Practice relaxation exercise

How Can I Train My Body for Sleep?

- You must be able to relax to sleep.
- PTSD-related insomnia is part of physiological overarousal.
- Relaxation training can reduce overarousal and facilitate sleep.
- Like any training program, learning to relax takes time and practice.
- Set aside 15 minutes during the day to practice progressive muscle relaxation (or another form of relaxation training).
- Practice when you are awake and alert so you can learn what it feels like to be relaxed.
- Practice when you are already relaxed or not too stressed.
- Practice at night as you are lying in bed to help your body relax.

How Can I Train My Brain For Sleep?

Do you tend to lie in bed with thoughts running through your mind? Do you feel like you can't turn off your mind and that your thoughts keep you awake at night?

PUT THE DAY TO REST (Don't try to solve your problems in bed)

- Early in the evening, think about your day
- Write down in a notebook any concerns or worries from the day
- Anticipate what might come to mind in bed tonight and write it down
- Write a "to-do" list for tomorrow
- Use this time to feel more organized; close the notebook when you are finished
- At bedtime remind yourself that you have already dealt with worries and concerns



- If new thoughts come up, leave the bedroom and write them in the notebook
- Focus on positive thoughts and memories in bed

## DEVELOP A BEDTIME WIND-DOWN ROUTINE

Do the same routine every night. Your brain is a creature of habit. Use the same relaxing routine every night in the hour before bedtime. This will get your brain into the habit of expecting sleep to follow. Be sure to choose activities that are calming and relaxing, not ones that are energizing or take too much effort.

Here are some examples of relaxing Bedtime Wind-Down activities:

- Practice calm breathing or other relaxation exercise
- Listen to relaxing music
- Do some light reading
- Take a warm (not hot) bath or shower
- Meditate or pray

## PRACTICE PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Tensing and releasing muscle groups in the body can help us get into a relaxed state. The final part of today's session will be devoted to practicing progressive muscle relaxation. Practicing relaxation on a daily basis can help reduce hyperarousal, manage stress, and help with sleep. Use the CD provided, one of your own, or try this website:

<http://www.shuteye.com/insomnia-treatment/relaxation-techniques.aspx>.

Practice at a time when you are already feeling relaxed, not when you are tense. After a short amount of practice, you will be able to practice without the CD and eventually will be able to get into a relaxed state quickly.

### Session 2

#### Goal Assignment

- Continue to practice calm breathing 5 minutes per day while awake and while lying in bed at night as you prepare for sleep.
- Set aside 15 minutes during the day to practice progressive muscle relaxation (or another form of relaxation training)

- Practice putting the day to rest every night, seven nights per week.
- Practice bedtime wind-down every night, seven nights per week.

### **Contracting for Change**

This week I will practice calm breathing...

When...?

For how long...?

How many days...?

How certain are you...?*(On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being totally unsure and 10 being totally confident)*

Signature:

Date:

### **Contracting for Change**

This week I will practice progressive muscle relaxation...

When...?

For how long...?

How many days...?

How certain are you...?*(On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being totally unsure and 10 being totally confident)*

Signature:

Date:

### Contracting for Change

This week I will put the day to rest...

How many days...?

How certain are you...?*(On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being totally unsure and 10 being totally confident)*

Signature:

Date:

### Contracting for Change

This week I will use my bedtime routine...

How many days...?

How certain are you...?*(On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being totally unsure and 10 being totally confident)*

Signature:

Date:

### Removing Roadblocks

Problems encountered...?

Possible reasons for problems...?

Possible solutions or options to try...?

Result or outcome of solutions...?

## Sleep Therapy Group

### Session 3: Mind-Body Habits for Good Sleep

What are the Goals of Session 3?

- Identify lifestyle and environmental factors that interfere with sleep
- Plan to change lifestyle and environmental factors
- Improve sleep quality

What are Lifestyle Factors that Can Interfere with Sleep?

- Caffeine
- Nicotine
- Alcohol
- Diet
- Exercise

How Can I Change my Lifestyle so I am not Working against My Goal of Improved Sleep Quality?

- ✓ **Limit or eliminate caffeine**
  - Caffeine is a stimulant: it can elevate heart rate and blood pressure and make you feel more alert, adding to PTSD-hyperarousal and disrupting sleep.
  - Caffeine is found in coffee, hot tea, iced tea, soft drinks, energy drinks, chocolate, and some pain medications.
  - Experts in sleep disorders recommend total elimination of caffeine from the diet.
  - If you cannot eliminate caffeine, restrict your intake to 1-2 caffeinated beverages a day before 12 noon.
- ✓ **Limit or eliminate nicotine**
  - Nicotine is also a stimulant. It increases heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, and makes you feel more alert.
  - Nicotine is found in cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and other tobacco products.
  - Serious physical health consequences are associated with nicotine use.
  - Nicotine use leads to chemical dependence, and quitting smoking can be difficult. The VA provides a smoking cessation program.

- Smoking within several hours of bedtime may interfere with sleep. At the same time, heavy smokers may experience withdrawal symptoms when trying to cut back.
  - Quitting smoking will be helpful to your sleep and your health in the long run. However, in the short run there may be some impact on sleep from nicotine withdrawal.
- ✓ **Limit or eliminate alcohol**
- Alcohol can be sedating. Some people with PTSD turn to alcohol in an effort to calm down or go to sleep.
  - While alcohol may help you to fall asleep, it will disrupt the second half of your night. Hangovers are caused in part by alcohol's sleep disruption.
  - Alcohol use is associated with increased dreaming (and nightmares) in the second half of the night.
  - Even a small amount of alcohol as much as 6 hours before bedtime can increase wakefulness during the night.
  - For people with past heavy alcohol use, even after years of abstinence, sleep patterns may never completely return to normal.
  - Eliminate alcohol use if possible.
  - Otherwise, limit alcohol use by not drinking after dinner.
  - Never use alcohol as a sleep aid. It only makes the problem worse.
  - Never mix alcohol with other medications, especially sleeping pills.
- ✓ **Manage diet**
- Large meals in the evening can make it harder to sleep at night
  - Try eating a smaller meal early in the evening.
  - Avoid heavy, spicy, or high-sugar foods.
  - Foods that are rich in tryptophan (turkey, chicken, dairy products), and carbohydrates such as bread or crackers might help you to relax.
  - Reduce fluids after 7 pm.
- ✓ **Manage exercise**
- Exercise is good for sleep because it increases your metabolism.
  - Try to engage in thirty minutes of a moderate exercise routine everyday early in the day (get your doctor's permission first).

- Avoid heavy exercise late in the day, as this may interfere with sleep.
- Exercise helps reduce the risk of developing many health problems and appears to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

### What are Environmental Factors that Can Interfere with Sleep?

- Noise
- Lighting
- Room Temperature
- Air Quality
- Bed Comfort
- Partner Support

### How Can I Change my Environment so I am Setting the Stage for Sleep?

- ✓ **Limit noise**
  - Evaluate your sleep preference and make changes to your environment as needed. Some people like a steady background noise to mask outside noises that might wake them up. Other people sleep better in a room that is quiet.
  - If you like background noise, try using the radio low and tuned in between stations, or try a fan or a "white noise" machine. Don't use the TV for this purpose. Watching TV is a wakeful activity and should not be done in the bedroom.
- ✓ **Make sure the lighting is right**
  - Set your biological clock. Get exposure to sunlight each day, including early morning (after awakening) and early evening. Avoid lying around a dimly lit house at these times.
  - Keep bedroom lighting low. When you walk into your bedroom at night, use a small lamp or other low lighting rather than a bright overhead light.
  - When going to the bathroom or any other room at night, keep the lighting as dim as possible. Even a little light exposure at night can interfere with sleep.
- ✓ **Manage room temperature**
  - A drop in body temperature is associated with sleep onset. Keep your bedroom cooler at night.

- ✓ **Improve air quality**
  - Make sure your room is well ventilated.
  - If the room is too stuffy, it will be harder to sleep.
  
- ✓ **Improve bed comfort**
  - Make sure your mattress and pillows are comfortable.
  - Try to replace a mattress after 10 years with the highest quality you can afford.
  - Sleep with pajamas or comfortable clothes that are different from your daytime clothes. In a war-zone you may have slept in clothes to be ready for action at any moment. At home, changing into pajamas is another way you can prepare your mind and body for relaxation and sleep.
  
- ✓ **Talk to your partner.**
  - Making changes to your bedroom will require your partner's understanding and support.

### **Session 3**

#### **GOAL ASSIGNMENT**

- Continue to practice calm breathing 5 minutes per day while awake and while lying in bed at night as you prepare for sleep
  
- Set aside 15 minutes during the day to practice progressive muscle relaxation (or another form of relaxation training)
  
- Continue to use a bedtime wind-down routine every night, 7 nights per week.
  
- Use putting day to rest technique if needed.
  
- Change at least two lifestyle or bedroom factors.

This week I will...

### **Contracting for Change**

Change the following lifestyle/ bedroom factors to improve sleep  
(name two factors):

Plan for how to work on two factors:

Practice "Put the Day to Rest" (how many days?)

Practice a Bedtime Wind-Down (describe your bedtime routine)

Practice Progressive Muscle Relaxation (how many days?)

Practice Calm Breathing (how many days?)

How certain are you...? *(On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being totally unsure and 10 being totally confident)*

Signature:

Date:

### **Removing Roadblocks**

Problems encountered...?

Possible reasons for problems...?

Possible solutions or options to try...?

Result or outcome of solutions...?



## Sleep Therapy Group

### Session 4: Reclaim Your Bedroom for Sleep

What are the Goals of Session 4?

- Learn the importance of reserving the bedroom for sleep and sex only.
- Learn which activities are better done in another room.
- Learn and plan to practice the 15-minute rule.

**How does service in a war-zone affect sleep?**

- Pre-Deployment: BED = SLEEP
- During War-Zone: BED = Danger, vulnerability, fitful, light or brief sleep
- Post-Deployment: BED = Fear, frustration, anxiety, nightmares

**What do I do in my bedroom besides sleep?**

Watch TV

Argue or have difficult discussions with my significant other

Read

Eat

Use the computer

Pay bills, balance the checkbook

Think or worry about things

Feel frustrated about not sleeping

Lie awake in bed

Watch the clock

Be on guard duty (listening for sounds of danger, positioning bed to face door, booby traps, keeping a weapon in the bedroom)

**These are all wakeful activities.**

**How can I re-gain the BED = SLEEP connection?**

- When we can't sleep for weeks, months or even years, a kind of unconscious learning occurs. Without being aware of it, we learn to

associate the bedroom with frustration, fear, and being awake rather than sleep.

- When that happens, then simply going to bed, turning off the lights, and laying down for sleep brings out those frustrating feelings and the chance for sleep diminishes.
- This is called *conditioned insomnia* which helps to explain why it might be easier to fall asleep in the recliner in front of the TV rather than in your own bed. But you can break this connection...

### **Use the bedroom for sleep only....Sleep only in the bedroom.**

- Use the bedroom for sleep (and sex) only. Avoid engaging in any "wakeful activities" in the bedroom.
- Your bedroom should have a strong association for you with going to sleep. When you walk into your bedroom, your body and brain should automatically associate getting into bed with going to sleep.
- Using the bedroom for wakeful activities will weaken this connection and make it harder for you to sleep.
- Examples of **wakeful activities**: eating, reading, watching TV. These and other wakeful activities should be done in another room.
- Watching the clock is a wakeful activity. Face it away from your bed.
- Remove items in your bedroom that are a signal or cue for arousal or anxiety.
- Weapons must be removed from the bedroom. Being on "guard duty" requires wakefulness and alertness and is not compatible with sleep.
- Resist the urge to get up and check every little noise - stay in bed instead.
- Do not sleep in any other room.

- Avoid daytime napping if at all possible. Even a brief nap during the day can take away from your ability to sleep at night. The goal is to strengthen the connection between sleeping more at night and your bed. Daytime napping will weaken this connection. If you must nap during the day, keep it under 20 minutes and end it before 2 pm.

### Follow the 15-Minute Rule

Often we stay in bed when unable to sleep with the idea that "at least I am resting" or "if I am in bed long enough I will eventually get enough sleep." However, staying in bed when you are not asleep **PROMOTES** insomnia.

- Lie down in bed only when sleepy: stay awake and out of bed until you feel drowsy. This will help make the BED=SLEEP connection.
- If you are not asleep within 15 minutes of lying down, get up out of bed and go to another room. Go back to bed when you're feeling sleepy. Continue to get up if you're not asleep after **15** minutes, even if you awaken in the middle of night. Getting out of bed to promote better sleep may seem like a strange idea, but the reason we do it is to strengthen the BED=SLEEP connection.
- Repeat the previous step as often as necessary throughout the night. You may need to do this several times a night for a period of time. Be persistent and don't give up! Repetition is the key.
- Don't watch the clock for the 15-minute rule - just use your best estimate. Remember that watching the clock is a wakeful activity.
- Before you go to sleep, plan where you will go and what you will do if you wake up during the night. For example, set up a chair in another room with your relaxation tape or reading material so if you need to get up during the night it will be ready for you.
- Set an alarm clock and get up at the same time every morning regardless of how little you slept during the night. This helps you develop a consistent sleep-wake cycle.

- Practice this 7 nights per week with no exceptions.

This might be frustrating at first and you may have to get up several times a night and may not get much sleep. However, it will be easier to fall asleep over the next several nights as your sleep deprivation increases. Typically, this takes one to two weeks.

Stick to your schedule and continue to practice these strategies even if you think it is not working. Retraining your brain to help you get a better quality sleep requires ongoing practice over a period of time.

### **Goal Assignment**

- Continue to practice calm breathing 5 minutes per day while awake and while lying in bed at night preparing for sleep
- Set aside 15 minutes per day to practice progressive muscle relaxation (or another form of relaxation training)
- Continue to find ways to improve your quality of sleep by improving lifestyle factors and bedroom factors
- Use bedtime wind-down and putting the day to rest
- Use the bedroom for sleep only....Sleep only in the bedroom
- Follow the 15 minute rule

### **Contracting for Change**

This week I will practice the above...

When...?

For how long...?

How many days...?

How certain are you...?(On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being totally unsure and 10 being totally confident)

Signature:

Date:

### Removing Roadblocks

Problems encountered...?

Possible reasons for problems...?

Possible solutions or options to try...?

Result or outcome of solutions...?

## Sleep Therapy Group

### Session 5: Sleep Smarter

What are the goals of Session 5?

- Make a plan to consolidate sleep into one block of time
- Learn about impact of thoughts and emotions on sleep

Take the Sleep Quiz (adapted from Hauri & Linde, 1996):

1. Do you often have feelings of apprehension, anxiety, or dread when you are getting in bed? **YES/NO**
2. Do you have arguments in bed or has your bed become a sexual battlefield or the symbol of an unsatisfactory sexual relationship? **YES/NO**
3. Do you have bedroom clock? Do you anxiously check the time when you are awake at night? **YES/NO**
4. Do you worry in bed? **YES/NO**
5. Is your sleep time "catch as catch can" or highly irregular? **YES/NO**
6. Do you often have depressing thoughts, or do tomorrow's worries or plans buzz though your mind when you want to go to sleep? **YES/NO**
7. Do you often work in the evening right up to the time to go to sleep? **YES/NO**
8. Do you often find you are trying to force yourself to sleep? **YES/NO**
9. Do you sleep poorly in your own bedroom but better away from it? **YES/NO**
10. Do you sleep well when it doesn't matter, such as on the weekends, but sleep poorly when you "must" sleep well, such as when a stressful day looms ahead of you? **YES/NO**
11. People need eight hours of sleep every night to feel refreshed. **TRUE/FALSE**
12. When people do not get the amount of sleep they need each night, they have to catch up the next day by napping. **TRUE/FALSE**
13. If people go for two or three nights without sleep people may have a nervous breakdown. **TRUE/FALSE**
14. By staying in bed longer, people can get more sleep and feel better the next day. **TRUE/FALSE**
15. When having trouble sleeping, the best thing is to stay in bed and try harder to sleep. **TRUE/FALSE**

16. If people do not sleep well at night, people cannot possibly function well on the following day. **TRUE/FALSE**
17. When people feel irritable, depressed, or anxious during the day, it is because they slept poorly the night before. **TRUE/FALSE**
18. There is no way to manage the negative consequences of disturbed sleep. **TRUE/FALSE**
19. When people get overwhelmed by thoughts at night, there is no way to control the racing mind. **TRUE/FALSE**
20. Unless a person can kick insomnia, there is no way to enjoy life and be productive. **TRUE/FALSE**

### **How do I know when I am getting the sleep I need?**

- As long as you are not falling asleep at the wheel or during other important daytime activities, you are getting enough sleep.
- Feeling bad during the day because of insomnia is usually caused by worry about sleep, feeling frustrated, anticipating another bad night, and feeling drained from all of the worry.
- Your body will let you know when it is time to sleep.

### **How do my beliefs about sleep add to my sleep problems?**

- Keep your expectations realistic: Not everyone needs 8 hours. There are individual differences in sleep needs; short sleep is not always abnormal.
- Why do you think you are having trouble sleeping? Examine your thoughts about this to be sure you are not causing yourself extra worry or stress.
- Don't blame all daytime problems on sleeplessness.
- Don't think the worst after a poor night's sleep: Worries and fears about sleep problems can increase sleep difficulties.
- Don't give too much importance to sleep. Don't change your activities based on sleep.

- Develop a tolerance to effects of sleep loss: Go on with activities even after a poor night's sleep. Do something pleasurable to disconfirm belief that a good night's sleep is essential.
- Never try to sleep: Sleep can't be achieved on command. Trying too hard often backfires. All you can do is create favorable circumstances and let it come.
- Learn to recognize when your night-time behaviors and beliefs are based on past traumatic experiences rather than present reality. Catch yourself when your "PTSD is talking." Talk with your therapist about past experiences to reduce their power in the present.

### How can I get a better quality sleep?

- Sleep that is broken (a few hours here and a few hours there) is not as refreshing as the same amount of sleep all in one block of time.
- Spending more time in bed, either by going to bed early or sleeping late, makes it more difficult to fall asleep the next night.
- Think about how much total sleep time you get now on average (add up the separate blocks of sleep you get on a typical night).
  - **I get about \_\_\_\_ hours of sleep.**
- This is your average sleep time, and you will spend no more time in bed than your average sleep time. \*If your average sleep time is less than 5 hours, use 5 hours.
- **Decide on a set rising time and put that into practice daily.** A set rising time acts like an anchor to hold the sleep pattern in the same position.
  - **I will get out of bed at \_\_\_\_am.**
- **Consolidate your sleep.** Decide on a time for getting into bed by subtracting sleep time from rising time. For example, if you need to get up by 6 am, and you get a total of 5 hours of sleep per night, do not get into bed until 1 am. Going to bed early to catch up on sleep,



later to feel more tired, or just because it is bedtime is not a good strategy for falling sleep quickly or easily.

- **The earliest I will go to bed is \_\_\_\_\_pm (bedtime), but only if I am sleepy by that time.**
- Get into bed only when sleepy** (lack of energy, aching muscles, yawning). Don't go to bed until you are sleepy *after* your bedtime.
- Build on your success:** Once the broken sleep has been consolidated (90% of your time in bed is spent sleeping), add time in bed by 15 minutes per night for one week.
- Follow this program 7 nights per week.**

### My Sleep Plan:

A) My total sleep time is \_\_\_\_\_ hours (don't go below 5 hours).

B) I want my awake time to be \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock every day, 7 days per week.

C) I will get into bed no earlier than \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock, and only when I am sleepy.

### **Goal Assignment**

- Continue to practice calm breathing 5 minutes per day while awake and while lying in bed at night preparing for sleep
- Set aside 15 minutes per day to practice progressive muscle relaxation (or another form of relaxation training)
- Continue to find ways to improve your quality of sleep by improving lifestyle factors and bedroom factors
- Use bedtime wind-down and putting the day to rest
- Use the bedroom for sleep only...Sleep only in the bedroom

- Follow the 15 minute rule
- Watch your thoughts about sleep
- Follow your Sleep Plan

### **Contracting for Change**

This week I will practice the above...

When...?

For how long...?

How many days...?

How certain are you...?*(On a scale from 0-10 with 0 being totally unsure and 10 being totally confident)*

Signature:

Date:

### **Removing Roadblocks**

Problems encountered...?

Possible reasons for problems...?

Possible solutions or options to try...?

Result or outcome of solutions...?



## PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

### Breathe

- Continue calm breathing both during day (5-min practice) and at night while lying in bed

### Relax

- Practice progressive muscle relaxation once a day while awake for 10-20 minutes

### Use a Routine

- Use bedtime wind-down and putting the day to rest

### Prepare Your Body and Mind

- Practice healthy sleep hygiene: eliminate caffeine, nicotine, alcohol; monitor diet and exercise; optimize bedroom environment (bed comfort, temperature, lighting)

### Make the Connection

- Sleep only in the bedroom; use the bedroom for sleep only

### Get Up

- Follow 15-minute rule: if you are not asleep within 15 minutes, get up out of bed, do something relaxing, and return to bed when sleepy

### Limit Time in Bed

- Wake up at the same time every morning and restrict time spent in bed

### Think About It

- Examine your beliefs about sleep

## Sleep Therapy Group

### Session 6: Coping with Nightmares

What are the goals of Session 6?

- Learn about nightmares as part of PTSD.
- Learn coping strategies for nightmares.

How are nightmares related to PTSD?

- Nightmares are part of PTSD reexperiencing symptoms. Sometimes they are a replay of past traumatic experiences, and sometimes they have elements that are similar to past traumatic experiences.
- Nightmares can be part of a habit and can be controlled.
- Nightmares may be a sign that you could benefit from processing your traumatic experiences: Talk to your PTSD provider about this.
- Improving your sleep habits may reduce the occurrence of nightmares.

What can I do if I am awakened by a nightmare to lessen the impact of the nightmare on the rest of my day?

- Use grounding techniques to re-orient yourself and stop the pull to the past.
- Grounding is an anchor to the present.
- Sit up on the side of your bed, feet on floor.
- Focus on your surroundings by naming objects in your room.
- Keep a calendar with the year on it so you can use this as an anchor.
- Use soothing self-talk: "I am in my bedroom. The year is 2009. I am safe."

- If it is during the night and you can't fall back to sleep within 15 minutes, leave your bedroom, do something relaxing, and return to bed when sleepy.

### **Ground Your Senses:**

**Taste:** Put something in your mouth that has a strong flavor (for example, two Altoids mints). Try keeping them next to your bed in case you wake up in the night. Sugar can also help if you have problems with shaking or trembling after waking.

**Touch:** Putting an ice cube or two in your hand can help you quickly return your thoughts to the moment. Try to notice the cold, wet sensation. Hold onto the ice as long as necessary. Repeat if needed.

**Smell:** Keep a closed container near your bed that holds a strong scent, such as cloves, basil, or coffee beans. You can choose something that brings up good feelings/memories or just a smell that is refreshing for you.

**Sound:** Use non-upsetting sounds to return you to the moment. Before bedtime, make sure that a music source is close to your bed. This can be an alarm clock, a bell, or stereo set to pre-chosen music and volume. Choose music and volume that will ground you to the present, rather than stir up thoughts about the past.

**Combination:** Try combining two or three grounding techniques at once (e.g., playing music while holding an ice cube).

Remember how grounding works: It is hard for to think about a nightmare or past memory, when you are actively engaged in the here and now.

How have some people been able to stop a recurrent nightmare?

- Sometimes when people have the same nightmare over and over again, they can stop the nightmare by using "imagery rehearsal".
- Imagery rehearsal involves selecting a recurrent nightmare and thinking of a way to change one thing about the nightmare. Change it any way you wish.

- Practice rehearsal of the changed nightmare by visualizing the entire dream with the change before practicing relaxation each night before going to bed.
- Attend Nightmare Treatment Group: Ask your PTSD treatment provider.

### **Goal Assignment**

- Continue to practice calm breathing 5 or more minutes per day while awake and while lying in bed at night preparing for sleep
- Set aside 15 minutes per day to practice progressive muscle relaxation (or another form of relaxation training)
- Continue to find ways to improve your quality of sleep by improving lifestyle factors and bedroom factors
- Use bedtime wind-down and putting the day to rest
- Use the bedroom for sleep only....Sleep only in the bedroom
- Follow the 15 minute rule
- Schedule your sleep
- Watch your thoughts about sleep
- Use grounding to cope with nightmares

### Planning for the Future...

What gains have I made?

What do I attribute these gains to?

What is still difficult for me?

What are possible barriers to improving my sleep?

What are possible solutions to these barriers?

What will I do if I start having problems sleeping again?

Patient resources:

[www.aasmnet.org](http://www.aasmnet.org) ("Patients and Public" links)

Hauri, P., & Linde, S. (1996). No more sleepless nights. NY; Wiley.



**Sleep Therapy Group  
Booster Session  
PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER 7 NIGHTS A WEEK**

**Breathe**

- ❖ Continue calm breathing both during day (5-min practice) and at night while lying in bed

**Relax**

- ❖ Practice progressive muscle relaxation once a day while awake for 15 minutes

**Use a Routine**

- ❖ Use bedtime wind-down and putting the day to rest

**Prepare Your Body and Mind**

- ❖ Practice healthy sleep hygiene: eliminate caffeine, nicotine, alcohol; monitor diet and exercise; optimize bedroom environment (bed comfort, temperature, lighting)

**Make the Connection**

- ❖ Sleep only in bedroom; use the bedroom for sleep only

**Get Up**

- ❖ Follow 15-minute rule: if you are not asleep within 15 minutes, get up out of bed, do something relaxing, and return to bed when sleepy

**Limit Time in Bed**

- ❖ Wake up at the same time every morning and restrict time spent in bed

**Use Grounding**

- ❖ Use grounding to cope with nightmares

