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Nightmare rescripting worksheet pdf

Nightmare exposure and rescripting worksheet pdf.

Skip to main content Psychology Tools Exposure to- and rescripting of- nightmares is a helpful technique for taking control of bad dreams. There is evidence that imagery rescripting for nightmares can be used as a stand-alone intervention. Nightmare Exposure And Rescripting contains instructions and worksheets for conducting this technique. As with traditional imagery rescripting the client is guided through a helpful sequence of questions: Eliciting the nightmare/image Eliciting the current emotion Considering the desired emotion Then developing a new image to accompany the desired emotion Davis, J. L., & Wright, D. C. (2006). Exposure, relaxation, and rescripting treatment for trauma-related nightmares. *Journal of trauma & dissociation*, 7(1), 5-18. Krakow, B., Kellner, R., Pathak, D., & Lambert, L. (1995). Imagery rehearsal treatment for chronic nightmares. *Behaviour research and therapy*, 33(7), 837-843.



Long, M. E., Davis, J. L., Springer, J.

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Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Techniques

- Journaling (thought records)
- Unraveling cognitive distortions.
- Cognitive restructuring
- Behavioral experiments
- Exposure and response prevention.
- Interoceptive exposure.
- Imagery based exposure
- Nightmare exposure and rescripting
- Play the script until the end
- Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR)
- Relaxed breathing

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D., & Teng, E. (2011). Imagery rescripting and exposure group treatment of posttraumatic nightmares in Veterans with PTSD. *Journal of anxiety disorders*, 25(4), 531-535. Swanson, L. M., Favorite, T. K., Horin, E., & Arnedt, J. T. (2009). A combined group treatment for nightmares and insomnia in combat veterans: a pilot study. *Journal of traumatic stress*, 22(6), 639-642. Nightmares can result in sleep deprivation or sleep avoidance, so either way, body, and mind won't get the rest they need. Keep in mind, though that having nightmares from time to time is entirely normal and trying to reduce them is only worth it if your sleep is frequently disturbed by them. The technique of exposure also comes from cognitive behavioral therapy.

In its core, what exposure does is to help you face your fears, and strip them of their power, by allowing you to spend some time with them and to see that there is nothing to be objectively feared.

Therapy Worksheet for Nightmares

Answer the questions related to your nightmares.

Write down the nightmare that you find disturbing

Write down your feelings and emotions about this nightmare

What changes do you want in this nightmare? Pick a different outcome for the nightmare. Write an ending that gives you a sense of tranquility

Visualize the complete dream with the adjustments each night to reduce the altered nightmare. Also, practice deep breathing or pleasant imagery during the day.

Deep Breathing

• Lay on your back. You can be on your back in bed or on the floor with a pillow under your head and knees. Or you can sit in a chair with your shoulders, head, and neck supported by the back of the chair.

• Breathe in through your nose. Let your belly fill with air.

• Breathe out through your mouth.

• Place one hand on your belly. Place the other hand on your chest. Notice which belly moves more. Notice the one that's on your chest. The hand on your belly should move more than the one that's on your chest.

• Breathe in slowly, deep breaths. Breathe fully into your belly as it rises and falls with your breath.

Pleasant Imagery

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Nightmare exposure goes hand in hand with a technique called rescripting. Rescripting is frequently used to help people who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and are haunted by flashbacks of a traumatic experience from the past. As the name suggests, the premise of this technique is that -while we can't change past events- we can change how we perceive them. This approach allows people to regain control over upsetting images. It can be very useful, whether the images are about something that happened in reality, or are the fruit of imagination, as may be the case with nightmares. Rescripting also helps with the negative experiences, such as frustration, nervous tics, fear, or sadness, that often accompany nightmares. The Benefits Studies have shown that this technique can reduce the frequency of nightmares if applied in an organized, constant manner, for a minimum of one month. If your sleep problem involves constant nightmares, don't hesitate to try this approach. Remember that challenging our thoughts and mental images can have significant benefits for our sleep, as well as our psychological state. While doing so, don't forget to continue taking care of your sleep hygiene. How to Apply It Confront Your Nightmares When you have a nightmare that upsets you, don't try to avoid it the next day. Confront and challenge it instead. Remember that just like stories have many different interpretations, dreams do too. Look into the Abyss Take some time (remember, this is an investment), and when there're no distractions around, confront your nightmare by answering the following question: What was the worst part of your nightmare? Describe it. Better yet - write it down. This may be painful, as it is only natural not to want to relive the nightmare, but sadly you can't change it unless you know it quite well. Even if you have had the same recurrent nightmare and you know it well, it still makes a difference to write it down and say it out loud, since it takes some of the weight off. Keep in mind that you don't need to say it to anyone unless you want to - all you have to do is say it out loud, even if you are by yourself. Focus on Your Experience Now that you have described the details of your nightmare, focus on your experiences - both emotional and physical, since both groups can be present in dreams. Apply the same descriptive method to your experiences, preferably while writing them down, and then say them. Dream vs. Reality Although some nightmares may be as vivid as it is to read this line right now, there is usually a tell-tale sign that reveals it is only a dream. Consider what, in your nightmare, regarding sensations and experiences, differs from reality. Repeat the writing and speaking procedure for this step as well. This will help you separate reality from the falsity of the dream, and will, therefore, make it less traumatic, in time. What Would Be a Better Feeling? Now is the time to focus, once again, on the negative experiences you have during your nightmares. This may be something you've never thought about, but if you had a magic wand, what experiences would you choose to have, in place of those in the nightmare? What are the experiences, sensations, and emotions, which would make you feel good? Try to be as specific as possible. Change the Story As you now know, we have the power of changing how we perceive the world - both inner and outer. Although you may feel like your nightmares are something that happens to you or that you are under their control, it doesn't have to be that way. The point of rescripting is to change the story, and gradually teach your mind to recreate what you want in your dreams. For that purpose, your next step is to use the feelings from the step above, as well as the details of your nightmare, and change the story, so that it corresponds with what you want. Turn frightening events into something else, transform the settings, change the ending - let your imagination go wild! Remember, there is no use to succumb to restrictions or stigmas - this is your dream, and it is only going to be visible to you, so you can do whatever you like with it! Visualize the New Story Now that you have changed how the story plays out to try to imagine the new and improved dream as vividly as possible. The more you visualize it, the more your mind will become used to it, and will, therefore, be more likely to reproduce it, once you go to sleep. However, be patient and remember that this won't work overnight. The first few days, or even weeks, you may find yourself significantly challenged. Despite the difficulties, sticking to the approach can be extremely beneficial. Start Light If you would like to avoid getting turned off by the technique, before you have even actually started, don't begin with your worst nightmare. Instead, create a list of your nightmares and start with the least scary one, then gradually build up to those who give you more trouble.