



The Healing Collective



SLEEP HYGIENE, SLEEP, DREAMS
& NIGHTMARES



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SLEEP

1. What happens during sleep?

Sleep was once thought to be a period of total inactivity. We now know that there are measurable body and brain changes, which occur during sleep. Sleep is divided into two parts, REM sleep and non-REM sleep.

REM sleep or rapid eye movement sleep is described as the dream period characterized by intense brain activity. It is labeled REM because the eyeballs move actively under the lid during this period.

Non-REM sleep is a period of restful sleep that consists of four stages. As the sleeper moves through the stages, the body becomes more relaxed and body functions such as the heartbeat slow down until the individual is in profound relaxation at stage 4 sleep. When a person goes through all of the Non-REM stages, s/he then begins the REM sleep stage. This is when we usually dream, and it can last 20 minutes. After the REM stage, the person will start all over with Stage 2 and go through the Non-REM stages of sleep again. When one goes through all of the sleep stages, he or she is said to have gone through a sleep cycle. The average person experiences 4-5 complete cycles of non-REM and REM sleep in a night.

The stages of Non-REM sleep occur in a predictable and repetitive way as follows:

Stage 1: This stage is described as very light sleep, with slow eye movement and some muscle activity.

During this time the breathing and pulse become more even and the person may experience vivid imagery (not dreams) and sensations of falling or floating. People sometimes experience a falling sensation followed by sudden muscle contractions. If awakened at this time the person would deny that s/he ever slept.

Stage 2: During this stage, eye movements stop and brain waves as well as bodily functions show down.

The person is asleep, but not deeply. There may be occasional bursts of rapid waves called “sleep spindles” and certain muscles may twitch during this stage. If the eyelids were opened during this stage of sleep, the person would not be able to see.

Stage 3 and 4: Deep Sleep. These are stages of deep sleep from which people do not easily awaken.

There is little eye movement or muscle activity. The person has only very slow brain waves, called delta waves, interspersed with smaller, faster waves. This stage appears to be important to physical body restoration and repair.





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Stage 5: REM Sleep: Rapid Eye Movement. During REM sleep, heart rate, eye movement and breathing increase. REM sleep is thought to be necessary for memory consolidation, revitalizing brain chemical functions, as well as psychological well-being. Most dreams occur during REM sleep.

Sleep cycles are repeated throughout the night with an average cycle of sleep lasting approximately 90 minutes. REM sleep generally becomes longer with each cycle while periods of deep sleep get progressively shorter.

Studies of patients diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder reveal that they often do not experience a normal sleep cycle. Besides difficulty going to sleep and their sleep is often interrupted by traumatic nightmares. **Traumatized people may more quickly reach REM sleep, but it may have a shortened duration, and less effective function.** It may also be significant that traumatic nightmares do not necessarily occur during REM sleep.

Sleep deprivation leads to reduced productivity, poorer performance, difficulty concentrating, irritability, and depression. It is sometimes associated with medical problems such as reduced resistance to viruses and heart disease.





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2. What is the normal length of sleep?

This is like the normal shoe size. What is it? We all need different lengths of shoes and different lengths of sleep to feel comfortable. One man may need size 10 shoe and 5 hours of sleep through his adult years, while another may require size 13 shoe and 9 hours of sleep. However, under abnormal demands like stress and depression a person may temporarily need a greater amount of sleep. If a person feels rested and can function well during the day, he or she is getting enough sleep.

3. Does sleep change with age?

The answer is yes. While the length of required sleep remains constant for the individual throughout most adulthood, after the age of 60, normal changes occur.

These changes involve an increased time spent awake in bed. The older person may notice that it takes longer to fall asleep; that he awakens frequently throughout the night, and that he awakens earlier than he did in the past. It is rare for an older person to experience a full night of sleep without interruption. This is due in part to normal changes in the pattern of sleep with age. As we age, we spend significantly less time in stage four or deep sleep. The sleeper stays in lighter sleep stages longer and is awakened by things in the environment that would not disturb someone younger.

Because of the disruptions, the person may also stay in bed longer, but in fact be getting the same amount or less sleep. Over time, the amount of REM or dream sleep is also reduced.





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What is sleep hygiene?

The rituals, behaviors, and norms you follow around sleep are referred to as sleep hygiene.

Regularly pulling all-nighters, or sleeping in on the weekends so you can “make up” for lost sleep are both examples of poor sleep hygiene. Conversely, following a regular sleep schedule and avoiding caffeine late at night are good sleep hygiene practices.

Improvements in sleep hygiene offer an “easy win” in the search for better sleep, and should be the first thing you go after when sleep troubles show up. In fact, sleep hygiene education is an essential part of the cognitive-behavioral therapy used to treat insomnia.

Why is sleep hygiene important?

Good sleep hygiene ensures you consistently enjoy higher-quality, more restful sleep for a sufficient amount of time each night. Bad sleep habits, on the other hand, lead to poor quality and inadequate sleep. You already know sleep is important. Otherwise you wouldn't be reading this article.

Good sleep on a regular basis is critical to maintaining balanced mental, emotional, and physical health. It helps you stay focused during the day, regulate your mood, and feel more productive and functional on a daily basis.

What's bad sleep hygiene?

The short answer: bad sleep hygiene is doing the opposite of any of the tips we discuss below.

But the answer you're probably looking for is this: if you're waking up unrested each morning, wake frequently during the night, feel tired during the day, or have trouble falling asleep at night, there's a very good chance that you have bad sleep hygiene that's messing with your sleep.

If you have those things covered, great news: you are most of the way to good sleep hygiene.





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How to practice good sleep hygiene checklist

Most of us can benefit from improving at least one aspect of our sleep hygiene. Consider the following tips your guide to getting a good night's sleep.

1. Know how much sleep you need.

If you're going to change your habits to ensure you get enough sleep, it's helpful to start by knowing exactly what "enough" is.

Throughout our lives, our sleep needs change, but as a general rule, adults in good health typically require 7 to 7.5 hours of sleep. Infants, children, and adolescents need more to differing extents. You can find out how much sleep you need here.

You may need less or you may need more than the recommended amount. As you work through the following tips, set aside enough time for you to realistically get at least 7 hours of sleep. If you do this for a few days and still wake up feeling unrested, gradually increase the number.

On the other hand, if you bound out of bed each morning after only 6 hours and still feel great, don't worry about it. What's important is that you feel well-rested – not that you get the "correct" amount of sleep.

The one caveat to this is if **you are regularly sleeping less than 6 or more than 9 hours and still don't feel rested, you may have a sleep disorder.** Get step-by-step instructions for receiving a diagnosis

2. Go to bed the same time every night.

Once you know how much sleep you need, set and follow a regular sleep schedule that provides enough room for it to happen.

Avoid bedtime procrastination at night, which is exactly what it sounds like. Set alarm for the morning and get up the same time every day, even if you had a bad night with frequent awakenings.

Keep your sleep and wake times consistent throughout the week – even weekends. Otherwise, you'll find yourself experiencing an uncomfortable rebound effect come Monday.





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Using a sleep tracker app or keeping a sleep diary can help ensure you're actually following the sleep schedule you set.

3. Find a quiet place to sleep.

Your bedroom should be as quiet as possible. Some people find absolute silence uncomfortable, in which case white noise can be helpful for calming those anxieties or drowning out noisy neighbors or pipes. White noise machines are a bit passe, given the abundance of white noise apps you can easily download for your smartphone. Choose from nature sounds, guided meditation, or classical ambient white noise.

If you live in a noisy neighborhood or apartment building, read our article for tips on making your bedroom quieter. Strategically place furniture, invest in acoustical padding decor, or use more accessible items like earplugs, curtains, and pillows to block out noise.

Sometimes the noise is closer – and furrier – to home. If your pet is waking you up with a jingling collar, scratching, or snoring, consider kicking them out of your bedroom and offer them a nice cushy bed somewhere else in the house.

4. Keep your bedroom dark and cool.

The best temperature for falling asleep is somewhere in the low- to mid-60 degrees Fahrenheit. Maintaining a consistently cool temperature helps your body thermoregulate during sleep.

Keeping your bedroom dark also keeps it cool, by blocking out heat from sunlight in the morning. More importantly, the darkness convinces your brain that it's still night time. If you're in a very light-polluted area (most cities fall in this category), get an eye mask and blackout curtains to aid in this goal.

Small night lights and illuminated clocks might be okay, but some light-sensitive people may find them bothersome. Avoid turning on the full light if you need to get up and use the bathroom during the night. Even a short exposure in the middle of the night can make it harder to get back to sleep.





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5. Dedicate your bed to sleep and sex, and nothing else.

Having a dedicated place for sleep is psychologically important. We don't think expensive mattresses and bedding materials are worth it, but having a comfortable place to lie down and stretch out is important. Find the best mattress for you, so you can't wait to go to bed at night. Invest in comfortable bedding and supportive pillows, too.

It is important to subconsciously connect being in bed with sleeping. Don't read in bed or talk on the phone. Remove clutter and items that remind you of work from your bedroom as well, such as your computer. Instead, treat your bedroom as a haven for sleep.

6. Limit screen time before going to bed.

Some people have televisions in their bedrooms, although watching TV right before going to sleep (or worse, during nighttime awakenings) is not a good idea. Looking up close at computer screens and tablets shortly before bed is actually detrimental to sleep. The light from those screens tricks your brain into thinking it's daytime again.

The problem with these devices is that they all use blue light, the strongest wavelength of light that your brain perceives as sunlight. Besides the intensity of the light, many of these devices find ways to either stress or excite you, whether they ping you with a frustrating work email or a happy Facebook notification.

Try to stop using all electronics 1 full hour before bed. That includes your television, computers, phones, e-readers, and tablets. If you absolutely can't tear yourself away from any of these items, at least turn on the red light filter.

If you're wondering how to spend a full hour without electronics, just read the next tip.

7. Follow a bedtime routine.

Following the same set of activities each night, in the 30 to 60 minutes before bed, psychologically trains your brain to recognize it's time for bed when it's bedtime.

Your bedtime routine should be relaxing. The goal is to wind your mind and body down for sleep.





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Yours might include the following activities:

- Turning off all electronics
- Taking a warm bath
- Aromatherapy
- Meditation or visualization
- Deep breathing or progressive muscle relaxation
- Reading a book by a soft lamp

8. Limit your daytime naps.

Pay attention to how much you nap during the day. Sometimes naps are essential for that extra productivity boost during a long day, but frequent naps or longer siestas can seriously interfere with nighttime sleep.

If you do nap, limit it to a short power nap of 30 minutes or less. Longer than that, and you risk entering deep sleep, from which you'll wake up even groggier than before (and likely experience a tougher time falling asleep later that night).



9. Watch what you eat and drink, and when.

It's hard to get to sleep on an empty stomach, but dinner several hours before bedtime is usually enough to hold you over. Some people sleep better if they have a small snack before bed, but you want to avoid large meals late at night. Large meals, although they can make us sleepy, often result in disrupted sleep a few hours later. Plus, sleeping after a large meal can make acid reflux worse in people who suffer that condition.

A more nutritious diet supports higher-quality sleep. If you want to sleep better, eat better. But when deciding on dinner and your bedtime snack, it's especially important to incorporate foods that are known to promote sleep, while avoiding ones that do the opposite.

Fortunately, the list of the best foods for sleep is a long one, including yogurt, oats, nuts, milk, rice, cherries, and bananas, and much more. The list for bad ones is easy to remember: it's the ones you should already avoid, because they're too sugary, fatty or rich to be good for you anyway.

Staying hydrated is key to good health, but watch your water intake in the evening, too. Go to the bathroom one last time before bed, to avoid being woken up by your bladder.



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10. Limit other substances, too.

Caffeine and alcohol both disrupt sleep. While alcohol may make you drowsy and induce sleep initially, it disrupts your sleep in the latter part of the night – preventing you from getting essential amounts of REM and deep sleep. On the flip side, caffeine is a stimulant. It amps up your nervous system, so your brain thinks it's time to wake up instead of wind down.

Other substances, like marijuana and nicotine, can also interfere with sleep. If you're a fan of any of these substances, limit your intake to avoid them interfering with your sleep. Try to stop using them 4 to 6 hours before you plan on falling asleep.

11. Exercise during the day.

What you do during the day, several hours before bedtime, can have a big impact on your sleep. Exercise improves your overall health, and it helps physically tire your body by the time bedtime comes.

However, **strenuous exercise should be avoided at night, ideally 3 hours before bed.** It energizes you, and the more awake you are, the harder it is to fall asleep.

For intense athletes, quality deep sleep is critical to the recovery process and maintaining their athleticism, so don't ignore this no-exercise-late-at-night rule.

12. Get some sunshine.

It may seem counterintuitive, given our harping about the importance of sleeping in a dark room, but a daily dose of sunshine can actually help you sleep better.

Our sleep-wake cycle is closely connected to our circadian rhythms. Your brain relies on sunshine during the day to recognize it's time to be awake and alert. The more natural light you receive, the more your body stays in tune to the regular day-night rhythms, and your brain learns to associate the darkness that comes in the evening with falling asleep. That's why it's so important to limit your exposure to bright light late at night from electronics.

Aim to get some sunshine in in the morning. Pair it with your exercise if you can. It will help wake you up, energizing you for the day, and make you more tired by bedtime.





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13. Stay calm when you can't sleep.

Even if you put all these sleep hygiene tips into practice, there will still be nights when you have difficulty falling asleep. When that happens, don't panic.

If you can't fall asleep after 20 minutes, leave your bedroom and do something relaxing somewhere else. You don't want your mind to associate your bed with frustration. Do the same if you wake up during the night and can't fall back asleep. In either scenario, don't focus on the time, as it will just cause unhelpful anxiety. Read a book, sketch, or do another calming activity that can be done in low lighting. Do NOT turn on your electronics!

14. Experiment!

The right way to sleep is different for different people, and it may change for you over time. So just because you've found one optimal sleep regimen doesn't mean that five years later your "optimal" won't change. Even in the short term, optimal **sleep hygiene practices can vary from week to week**. For instance, pain or sickness may cause you to shift to a different bedtime.

The best approach to sleep hygiene appears to be "strong opinions, loosely held". Go whole hog with your hygiene practices and keep doing them every night, but be ready to change them when needed.

15. Get help when you need it.

Unfortunately, it is possible that you'll implement all these tips and follow them dutifully, and still not experience improved sleep.

If this is the case, you may have a sleep disorder or another health issue. Keep a sleep diary and talk to your doctor to get help.





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The 3-2-1 Sleep Rule: A Guide to Better Rest

Getting quality sleep is essential for mental and physical well-being. The 3-2-1 Sleep Rule is a simple yet effective strategy to help you establish a relaxing nighttime routine and improve sleep quality.

How It Works:

3 Hours Before Bed:

- Stop working and engaging in stressful activities.
- Allow your mind to unwind and transition from productivity to relaxation.
- Engage in calming activities such as reading, stretching, or listening to music.

2 Hours Before Bed:

- Avoid eating large meals, snacks, or caffeine.
- Give your body time to digest and prevent discomfort or acid reflux.
- Opt for herbal tea or warm water if you need a soothing beverage.

1 Hour Before Bed:

- Turn off screens (phones, tablets, computers, TVs).
- Reduce blue light exposure, which can interfere with melatonin production.
- Engage in screen-free activities like journaling, meditation, or deep breathing.

Why It Works:

Following the 3-2-1 Rule creates a structured routine that signals your body and mind to prepare for rest. By reducing mental stimulation, digestive activity, and light exposure, you set the stage for a deeper and more restorative sleep.

Try it for a week and notice the difference in your sleep quality and overall well-being!





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STEPS TO BETTER SLEEP WORKSHEET

NAME: _____ Date _____

Daily Sleep Activity Log: Part I

During the next week, practice your dream rehearsal several times each day. Each morning, complete the Sleep Activity Logs. On the log below, answer the questions by placing a Y for Yes or an N for No in each box. For Question 9, rate the distress you experienced on a scale of 0 to 10 if you had your target nightmare.

Usual time I go to bed: (within a half-hour) _____

	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	S
1. Did you consume coffee, soda pop, or caffeine tea within six hours before bedtime? (Y/N)							
2. Did you go to bed at within a half-hour of your usual bedtime? (Y/N)							
3. Did you use a relaxation procedure before going to bed? (Y/							
4. Did you take all your medication as prescribed? (Y/N)							
5. Did you nap at all during the day? (Y/N)							
6. Did you dream your target nightmare? (Y/N)							
7. Did you feel any sense of control in your nightmare? (Y/N)							
8. Did the target nightmare change in any way? (Y/N)							
9. How disturbing was your target nightmare, if you had it? (Rate 1 - 10 with 10 being the most disturbing.)							
10. Did you have a different nightmare than your target nightmare? (Y/N)							



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STEPS TO BETTER SLEEP WORKSHEET

Name _____ Date _____

Daily Sleep Activity Log: Part II

Upon awakening each morning, block in the hours you slept during the night by marking "X" in the boxes that correspond to those hours. If you took a nap or slept during the days, darken those hours also. You can designate half-hours by filling in "1/2" inside the box. It is very important that you complete both Sleep Activity Logs for every night of the week.

Notice the Example at the right: This person is recording that on Monday night, Feb. 4, he went to sleep about 11pm, woke up at 3:30am, went back to sleep for an hour at 6am, then slept for two hour between 1-3pm.

On Tuesday, Feb. 5, this person went to sleep at about 11:30pm, woke up this time at about 5am, went back to sleep at 9am for one hour, then slept for 1 ½ hours between 2:30-4pm.

Night of week	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	S	EXAMPLES	
								M	T
Date:								2/4	2/5
7:00 PM									
8:00 PM									
9:00 PM									
10:00 PM									
11:00 PM								X	1/2
12midnt								X	X
1:00 AM								X	X
2:00 AM								X	X
3:00 AM								X	X
4:00 AM									X
5:00 AM									
6:00 AM								X	
7:00 AM									
8:00 AM									
9:00 AM									X
10:00 AM									
11:00 AM									
12noon									
1:00 PM								X	
2:00 PM								X	1/2
3:00 PM									X
4:00 PM									
5:00 PM									
6:00 PM									



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SLEEP, DREAMS, NIGHTMARES

Dreams and Nightmares: A Coaching Guide to Restful Sleep and Healing

Sleep is a vital part of our overall well-being, yet many struggle with disturbed nights filled with distressing dreams or nightmares. This handout offers **practical tools and insights designed to help you understand and transform your dream experience, fostering healing and peaceful rest.**

Included are worksheets for tracking your sleep patterns and dreams, giving you clarity on what you experience nightly. You will find **guidance on targeting troubling nightmares and creating new, positive dream changes through symbolic exploration and meaningful reframing.**

Our coaching approach integrates the **EMDR Nightmare/Dream Protocol**—a proven method to resolve traumatic nightmares and install calming, resourceful images and feelings. This protocol supports a gentle yet powerful transformation of your dream life, helping you reclaim restful nights.

Whether you wish to understand the symbolic meaning of your dreams, track your sleep for patterns, or actively work on trauma-related dreams, this handbook provides a structured path toward healing and renewal.





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Steps to Better Sleep Client Instruction Sheet

1. Place the new dream next to your bed.
2. 20 to 30 minutes before bedtime, turn off all noise such as the TV, radio, phone, or anything else you may think of that could be disturbing.
3. Do your deep breathing and gradually bring in your place of comfort. This will clear or clean the part of the brain from any disturbance from the past, future and present by grounding yourself to the here and now.
4. Go to bed and read the New Dream. Lie down and focus on your breathing noticing how the air goes in and out while bringing in the image of your place of comfort.
5. If you wake up during the night, just ask, "What do I want to happen next?" and repeat breathing with the focus on your place of comfort.
6. If you wake up without remembering any dream but you are in a pool of sweat, bed items tossed around, knowing you had a restless sleep; ensure you Maintain a quiet, comfortable bedroom. Find a comfortable bedroom temperature and maintain it throughout the night; avoid temperature extremes. (65 degrees is recommended for good sleep.) Be sure there are no disruptive lights or sounds. Use earplugs, eyeshades, a good mattress and pillow, and/or low background noise to help you sleep. before going to sleep the next time.





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SLEEP, DREAMS, NIGHTMARES

Suggestions for dream changes

The purpose of this handout is to assist you in generating ideas for changing your dream. Whatever changes you decide on should provide you with an increased sense of mastery over your dream. This list offers some options but you may be able to think of many others.

Remember, there is no limit to how you can change your dream because it is only a dream.

1. Devise alternate endings to the dream. The alterations in the ending may range from minor to extreme differences.
2. Insert reminders into the dream that prompt different ways of viewing the events of the dream. For example, you may place meaningful objects into the dream that remind you that you survived. You may want to place other people you know in the dream who remind you of your strengths or you may wish to see a spiritual being in the dream that represents safety or peace.

3. Transform threatening weapons into harmless objects.
4. Distance yourself by viewing the dream through a screen or TV that you can switch off or change the channel.
5. Remind yourself in some way that this is only a dream and not real.
6. Transform what is frightening in the dream to something harmless or helpful.
7. Visualize yourself transported to a place of safety or peace.
8. Make peace with whatever is trying to harm you.





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SLEEP, DREAMS, NIGHTMARES

Symbolic Meaning of Dream Elements

• **chase or attack:** The pursuer usually represents a fearful aspect of our shadow, and hence an exaggerated version of a denied or inhibited portion of our own personality that would benefit us if integrated and appropriately expressed.

- (ideal outcome: standing our ground, facing and dialoguing with our pursuer, and eventually, acceptance and embrace)

• **falling dream:** Am I feeling heavy, unsupported, worried about something? How can I feel freer, lighter? Also, do I need to be more grounded?

- (ideal outcome: feeling safe, landing, floating or flying)

• **car out of control:** Is life too hectic, out of control? How could I slow down, act more peacefully and "enjoy the ride"?

- (ideal outcome: driving well & within speed limits, walking peacefully)

• **unprepared, late for or failing an exam:** Am I feeling unprepared for some upcoming event? Unconfident about my performance? Am I worrying needlessly or do I actually need more preparation in order to feel confident and do a good job?

- (ideal outcome: feeling assured about oneself, performing well)

• **stuck in slow motion, unable to move or make any noise:** Where am I feeling stuck in life, like I'm getting nowhere or unable to voice my true feelings? What can I do to change it?

- (ideal outcome: relaxation and acceptance, and eventually, peaceful action & self-expression)

• **embarrassed to be nude or naked in public, though nobody seems to notice or mind:** Where in life am I feeling unconfident, embarrassed, unskilled? This type of dream is usually pointing out, by the fact that the other characters in the dream don't seem to notice, that we are the only one viewing our self this way, and usually mistakenly so.

- (ideal outcome: comfortable with oneself as is, confident)

• **personal injury, dismemberment:** What part of my life — not usually the physical body — have I been neglecting, mistreating, forgetting — i.e., disremembering as opposed to remembering?

- (ideal outcome: healing)





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SLEEP, DREAMS, NIGHTMARES

trapped, locked in: Where am I feeling trapped in life? How might I open myself up to a new perspective, and explore new courses of action?

- (ideal outcome: breaking out, exploration)

• **drowning, threatening waves, tsunami (tidal waves) or flooding:** Am I blocking, denying or feeling overwhelmed by my emotions? How might I better acknowledge, accept, and feel these feelings—which often include vulnerability?

- (ideal outcome: swimming, surfing, breathing underwater)

helpless, abandoned, or crying baby, monkey, bunny or small animal: Have I been taking care of my "inner child"? Maybe I need to laugh more, play outdoors, express my creativity, be more spontaneous, or enjoy more personal warmth and intimacy?

- (ideal outcome: caring for baby or animal, playing, simply having fun)

EMDR Nightmare/Dream Protocol

1. Install a calm state/safe/place of interest. Check for positive stabilization. Get the sleep history.

You can use the Daily Sleep Activity Log for the history. Have the client write the original nightmare in your presence on the "Target's Nightmare" sheet. There may be a high chance the client will re-experience the trauma so you need to be there for the stabilization.

Have the client rewrite the original nightmare by completing it with a new positive ending. The newly scripted dream should provide an adaptive resolution to the distress generated by the nightmare. Ask the client to start from the point of the dream where the client woke up or the most disturbing part. As needed, prompt the client by asking, "What do you want to happen next?"

Remember, the ending can be as bizarre as the client's brain wants.

If the client is unable to come up with an ending, use the provided suggested changes. Ultimately, the new ending should be sufficiently positive to include an "Aha, this feels much better" realization. When the ending is imagined, it should also have a positive gut-level feeling with little or no disturbance.





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SLEEP, DREAMS, NIGHTMARES

2. Once the dream has been crafted, ask the client how disturbing it is for her / him when s/he thinks of the new dream ending now on a scale from 0-10 (SUD) Complete a body scan bringing in the new image with the new ending, and scan the body for any feedback. It should be a comfortable zero (0), though one (1) is acceptable. If not, find a new dream ending.

Resource Installation

1. Ask, "What is the image that describes that dream change best?" (Look for a still image that has the most positive affective resonance).

2. Ask, "Where do you feel it in your body?" (Look for the positive body state that is connected with the image)

3. "Get in contact with that image ... and the body feeling. Are you connected with it?"

If yes: "Think of that and follow with the eye movements." (set of 5-8 slower BLS)

If no: Ask "What keeps you from getting in contact with that image and body feeling?" You may have to engage in discussion to modify the changes out of client fear or secondary gain issue.

4. After a set of BLS, ask "How is it now?" Ask for the change in the body state.

If the positive body feeling gets stronger add another set of 5-8 eye movements.

If negative material (like negative arousal) comes up, change to another image that shows the positive change.

5. Follow the Client Sleep Hand-Out "Steps to Better Sleep" for the remainder of the Protocol.





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SLEEP, DREAMS, NIGHTMARES

Traumatic Nightmare Resolution Examples

Original Nightmare: Symbolic Bizarre Nightmare

A gigantic monster is chasing me. The monster has a human head but it has great claws, giant wings and a beak with large teeth. As it chases me it often changes shape and size as if by magic. It is black and brown in color and terrifying. I run as fast as I can and try to shoot at it whenever possible. However, I am always sure it will devour me and I wake up soaked in sweat, with my heart racing.

Changed Dream:

As the monster is chasing me, I turn and face it. I ask it to stop chasing me and promise I will stop trying to kill it. The monster shrinks down and turns into a beautiful palomino horse with a white mane and white tail. I leap on its back and ride triumphantly away. I can feel the strength of the horse beneath me and feel very powerful and safe. (This patient stopped having his traumatic nightmare from the time he began the imagery rehearsal therapy.

He reported feeling empowered by the repeated visualization which he practiced often throughout the day.)

Original Nightmare: Historical Nightmare

I am in “a chopper” in Iraq. We are flying over a hot zone and we are shot down. The chopper is on fire and begins to go down. The chopper hits the ground and rolls over several times. We get out and discover are not seriously injured. We think we hear enemy soldiers nearby. I am terrified that I will be shot. I call for help on the radio and a rescue chopper arrives soon. We all get on board and are taken back to the base camp.

Changed Dream: (Group generated options)

1. You have an automatic foam system on board that is activated and the fire is quickly put out. You do not crash.
2. You crash to the ground but the soldier you see has no arms and cannot hurt you.
3. You crash to the ground but when you look up into the sky all you see are soft clouds.
4. You are in a chopper that lands safely after you are hit. Other choppers land with you and rescue all of you.
5. You hear a thump on the side of your chopper but nothing happens. You do not catch on fire and do not crash.

