

MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR SLEEP EXERCISE

OVERVIEW

The following exercise is to be used in conjunction with the, "*Trauma Treatment Online Program*" for best effect. Please visit www.WhatIsPTSD.com for additional resources.

After trauma many people struggle with reclaiming a regular sleep pattern. It may be difficult to fall asleep, or you might wake up throughout the night after a disturbing dream and then not be able to fall back asleep. Or maybe you wake up early in the morning leaving you feeling tired for the whole day. Whatever the struggle, there are several things that you can do to help improve your sleep.

We need to start with the basics of sleep hygiene and then I want to talk to you briefly about what to do when you wake up in the middle of the night or you simply cannot fall asleep at any time.

GOAL

The goal of the *Making Peace with your Sleep Exercise* is to help you break through the barriers that may be keeping you from a restorative sleep. The exercise below provides you with basic steps for sleep hygiene as well as exercises to assist you to remain calm when you cannot sleep. Remember, if you become anxious because you cannot sleep – this creates a vicious cycle where your anxiety about sleep further undermines your ability to relax and allow sleep to happen.

TIME OUT

Always reflect on your inner state and notice if you need a break from the exercise to find your inner calm.

MATERIALS AND LAYOUT

Pen or pencil, timer, and the form we have provided on the following pages.

PATH TO COMPLETE

1. **SLEEP HYGIENE BASIC STEPS CHECKLIST**

- REMOVE TELEVISION/LAPTOP/SMARTPHONES/IPADS FROM THE BEDROOM - NO BRIGHT SCREEN 1 HOUR PRIOR TO SLEEP
- REGULATE YOUR SLEEP / WAKE SCHEDULE – THIS WILL BE DIFFICULT TO START – SAME TIME TO SLEEP – SAME TIME TO WAKE DAILY
- NO CAFFEINE AFTER 1 PM
- NO HEAVY MEALS 3 HOURS BEFORE BEDTIME
- EXERCISE DAILY
- IF SOMETHING IS BOTHERING YOU WRITE OUT YOUR THOUGHTS AND SOLUTIONS DURING THE DAY WELL-BEFORE YOU GO TO BED
- ENSURE THE BEDROOM IS DARK, QUIET, AND COMFORTABLE
- A COOL ROOM IS EASIER TO SLEEP IN

2. **CANNOT GET TO SLEEP OR HAVING NIGHTMARES?**

- IF YOU WAKEN AND CANNOT FALL ASLEEP WORK ON DEEP BREATHING OR RELAXATION EXERCISES
- IF AFTER 15-20 MINUTES OF THIS, IF YOU CANNOT FALL ASLEEP GET OUT OF BED AND DO SOME REWRITING THE ENDING EXERCISES (See outline below) FOR DREAMS OR FOR ANXIOUS WORRIES OR FEAR
- THEN GO BACK TO BED FOR MORE DEEP BREATHING AND RELAXATION

3. **CANNOT GET TO SLEEP OR HAVING NIGHTMARES?**

- WRITE OUT THE DREAM CONTENT / OR ANXIOUS FEELINGS AND REWRITE THE ENDING TO A POSITIVE OUTCOME ... THEN TRY TO RETURN TO SLEEP.
- WORK ON ANY OF THE DEEP BREATHING / RELAX EXERCISES THAT YOU HAVE FOUND TO BE HELPFUL IN THE DAILY PRACTICE / OR TT_ONLINE PROGRAM.
- IF YOU CAN FOCUS ON YOUR BREATHING AND REMIND YOURSELF THAT YOU ARE SAFE AND CAN HARNESS CALM IT WILL HELP THE BODY / MIND FIND SOME REST EVEN IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO SLEEP

4. PRACTICE THIS WHENEVER YOU NEED HELP WITH SLEEP. KEEP A COPY OF THE SLEEP PRACTICE BY YOUR BED AS A REMINDER. PRACTICE WHENEVER YOU NEED TO RECAPTURE FEELINGS OF COMFORT OR CALM.