

Checklist for Session 4: Targeting Nightmares and Deep Breathing, Part 2

- Review Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log and Changes to Sleep Habits** (5 minutes)
- Develop New Sleep Plan** (5 minutes)
- Review Relaxation Practice and Troubleshoot** (5 minutes)
- Nightmare Rescription** (25 minutes)
 - Come Up With Rescription Ideas
 - Rescript Nightmare
 - Read Rescripted Dream
 - Process Rescription
- Deep Breathing** (5 minutes)
- Assign Home Practice** (5 minutes)
 - Follow your “New Sleep Plan.”
 - Complete the Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log.
 - Review session information in the patient packet and bring any questions to the next session.
 - Practice the relaxation exercise at least two times per day, with one of these times near bedtime, and record your practice on the Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log.
 - Imagine your new dream in as much detail as you can for about ten minutes each night, followed by relaxation exercise. Record your practice on the Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log.

Session 4: Targeting Nightmares, Part 2

I hope you found the information and skills in the last session useful. Today, we'll review your Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log and change your sleep routine as needed. Then we will work on changing your nightmare and reading it in session.

REVIEW SLEEP DIARY AND NIGHTMARE LOG AND DISCUSS CHANGES TO SLEEP HABITS

Let's take a look at your Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log and see how you did this week.

- How did it go following each step of the sleep plan since last session?
- Did you notice any changes in your nightmares or sleep?
- What were the major challenges you faced?

Develop New Sleep Plan (5 minutes)

- Let's update your "New Sleep Plan"
- Are there any habits that you feel are pretty natural to you now? The more you practice the new habits, the more natural they will become.
- What new habit or habits would you like to add to your sleep plan? Let's work on those habits that are the most likely to have the biggest impact on your sleep.



Troubleshoot and Encourage as Necessary (as noted above)

- Review Healthy Sleep Habit rationales as needed.
- Poor sleep habits may include avoiding thinking about the trauma or nightmares. This may make it more difficult to change these types of habits.
 - Formal or informal cognitive restructuring techniques may be used to assist the patient in identifying thoughts to help them engage in changing some habits.
 - Recognizing the motivation behind unhelpful habits can inform you how you might proceed. Are the patient's symptoms leading them to feel overwhelmed with making changes? Is avoidance leading to difficulties making changes?
 - Using a more gradual approach by changing one or two habits at a time, using a hierarchy instead of changing a lot of habits all at once, or making changes to a specific habit gradually may be indicated (See Session 1 Troubleshooting section "Setting Patients Up for Success in Changing Sleep Habits for more details").
- Help the patient recruit support from others as needed. For example, encourage the patient to have their bed partner review the material or even join session to understand why these changes to sleep are important for the patient. Alternatively, consider role-playing the discussion they can have with their bed partner at home. Teaching others the guidelines will reinforce learning.
- Remind them:
 - It is common for people to experience some trouble staying on track throughout treatment. How they handle this can make all the difference between getting the most out of the treatment and dropping out.

- Instead of feeling guilt, self-blame, or thinking there is no use in continuing to work on the treatment, it can be helpful to focus on any progress made so far and to set realistic goals.
- A slip is just a mistake and not a sign of weakness. People often have such slips, and most learn from them and succeed in the long run.
- It can be helpful to think about what got them off track and how to help prevent similar problems next time.
- It can be helpful to push oneself to practice even when one does not really feel up for it. If it's not the best effort, that's okay. At least practice will be in gear rather than staying stuck in neutral.

REVIEW RELAXATION PRACTICE AND TROUBLESHOOT

Were you able to practice your relaxation techniques last week?

Review relaxation practice on the sleep log.

[Troubleshoot and encourage if necessary.]

Remember, this is like learning any new skill; it takes practice to get good.

GENERATING NIGHTMARE DESCRIPTION IDEAS

As mentioned last session, today we are going to work on changing your nightmare.

For practice, you were asked to think about ways to change your nightmare.

- What changes are you considering making?
- How do these changes address the themes we discussed from your nightmare?

[Review Rescription Examples from previous session if needed.]

RESCRIPT NIGHTMARE

Now you will have time to write out your new dream:

- Remember to write your changed dream like it is happening right now.
- Use first person.
- Use all of your senses (smell, touch, taste, feel, hear), and use as many details as possible.
- You can make changes to the beginning, middle, or end as long as there is at least some connection between the nightmare and the new dream.
- We are going to focus on changing one or two themes within the nightmare.
- It may also be helpful for you to take an active role in the rescription.
- Here are some ideas that others have found worked well for them:
 - **Power-focused ideas:** more or better weapons, size change, rank change, control of time, control of environment.
 - **Safety-focused ideas:** body armor, physical cover, additional exits, change injury location/type, night vision, scopes, advance warning, prophetic dream/bad feeling, support person, law enforcement, ability to fly/teleport/be invisible. You can also consider changing/reducing the intensity of what happened—i.e., turning down the volume of what happened, or making a PG13 version of what happened.
 - **Intimacy-focused ideas:** add in a trusted friend, have a battle buddy, increase honesty, emotional honesty.

- **Trust-focused ideas:** being believed, leadership following through, promises kept, consistent rules and punishment, added security, making multiple copies of items, conversation changes or adding conversations you wish would have happened.
- **Esteem-focused ideas:** act in a way that is in line with your beliefs, recognition from others, different/better training, honoring the dead/injured, result is a different ending, “spirit or ghost discussion” (can talk with someone who is dead/knocked out).

Before you begin, rate how tense/upset you feel on a scale of 0–100. [Make a note of response.]

[Have patient write out the rescription. Allow the patient to have about fifteen minutes (rescriptions are often shorter than exposures and need less time). Consider setting a timer in the patient’s view if it would be helpful for the patient. Give the patient reminders when time is running low, without pressuring them. Allow them to finish if they need a few more minutes.]

How upset do you feel after writing the changed dream (on a scale of 0–100)? [Make a note of response.]

Congratulations!

[Reinforce effort and progress. If the SUDS increased, consider revising the rescription to more fully address the themes.]

READ RESCRIPTED DREAM

- Now we are going to have you read your changed dream out loud.
- As you read your changed dream, pay attention to the differences between your old nightmare and this new, changed dream.
- Remember, looking for the ideas and making them part of your changed dream can make you feel more in control.

[Have patient read the rescripted dream out loud.]

How tense/upset do you feel after reading the rescripted dream (on a scale of 0–100)? [Make a note of response.]

[If the SUDS increased, consider revising the rescription to more fully address the themes.]



Troubleshooting: Nightmare Rescriptions (This section is repeated from prior session)

- It is important for dream rescriptions to come from the patient. When in doubt, use what the patient comes up with, and do not be too quick to jump in and make

suggestions. However, some patients can get stuck or the therapist may be unsure if the first rescription will be effective.

- It is important to reinforce progress made, wonder about how the rescription makes them feel, how it could be stronger or more meaningful, and to let the patient experiment with the rescription or possible additions to it over the next week.
- There will be opportunities to work on the rescription again in the next session.
- See section on “Troubleshooting: Nightmare Rescriptions” in Session 3 for additional tips.

INTRODUCE IMAGERY REHEARSAL

- Over the next week, practice imagining your new dream in detail for about 10 minutes each night before your relaxation practice, right before you go to bed. Record your practice on the Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log.
- You can also practice during the day. The more times you imagine this new dream, the more it will help. This is called imagery rehearsal.
- Remember the theories about why nightmares happen (trauma processing and mood matching). Imagining the new dream when you are awake gives your mind a different direction to go during sleep.
- This is also similar to the way athletes visualize their actions before a competition. If you have ever watched the Olympics, they typically show athletes closing their eyes and making body movements right before their performance. This visualization can improve athletic performance. Imagining the new dream is a way of improving sleep performance.
- When you practice:
 - Sit comfortably in a relatively quiet place.
 - Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so. If no, keep your eyes open and focus on a point on the floor or on a wall.
 - Mentally create the images of your new dream. Make the images, sounds, feelings, thoughts, and emotions as clear as possible.
 - If within 10 minutes, you get through the new dream, repeat it again and again.
- You can also make a recording to listen to or read it over.

Practice Imagery Rehearsal in Session

- Let’s practice imagining the new dream now for a few minutes in session so you can get an idea of what this will be like. There are a few options for how we can do this.
 - I can read the dream to you while you close your eyes or focus on a neutral spot to imagine the new dream.
 - You can close your eyes to picture the new dream.
 - You can read your dream to yourself quietly or outloud.
 - The main point is for you to picture the imagery and imagine what you are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling.

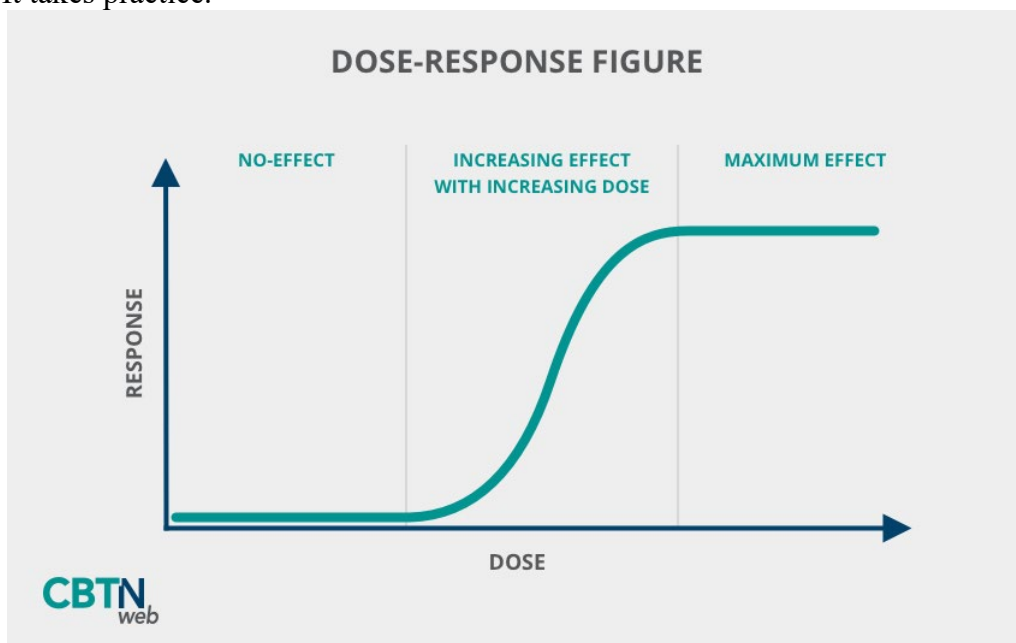
[Practice imagery rehearsal for approximately 5 minutes.]

What was it like for you to imagine the new dream? [Problem solve as needed.]

Some people find themselves wanting to avoid practicing the new dream. Let’s make a plan in case that happens. What can you do if you have an urge to avoid practicing your new dream?

Dose-Response Curve

- This curve shows what we know about treatments and people’s responses. Let’s take a medicine given for a physical problem for an example.
 - X-axis = dosage of the medicine, how many milligrams you take
 - Y-axis = how much your condition is improving
- The graph shows us a few things:
 - Under a certain dose, there is no effect (flat line).
 - You have to get enough of the medicine to get any improvement.
 - The more of the medicine you get, the more improvement.
- The same holds true for psychological or behavioral treatments.
 - X-Axis = the amount of practice imagining your new dream.
 - Y-Axis = the amount of improvement we expect to happen
- Just as it is not enough to have the prescription for a medicine, it’s not enough to know what to do to work on your nightmares.
- It takes practice.



Signs of Progress

- Most people do not end up dreaming their new dream. However, the original nightmare starts to change. Here are some signs of progress:
 - Fewer nights of having your old nightmare.
 - If you do have your old nightmare, it will not seem as “intense.”
 - You may dream something new or have pieces of your new dream.
 - Feel less stressed about going to bed or about having a nightmare.
 - Waking up less in the night.
 - Falling asleep faster after waking from a nightmare.
 - Feeling more rested during the day.
 - Having fewer thoughts of trauma, or not being as upset by your thoughts.

RELAXATION

[Practice either PMR script 1, PMR script 2, or audio recording or Deep Breathing depending on remaining time and patient preference.]

Tell me how tense you feel on a scale of 0–100, with 0 = completely and deeply relaxed throughout your body, and 100 = extremely tense throughout your body. [Make a note of response.]

[Play relaxation recording, or read the following script:]

Put one hand on your upper chest and one on your belly, just below your rib cage.

Close your eyes and breathe in slowly through your nose.

Expand your belly as you breathe in.

The hand on your belly should move a lot, while the hand on your chest will barely move.

- Pause naturally, then tighten up your stomach muscles and slowly exhale, allowing the air to gradually escape through your lips.
- The hand on your stomach will fall quite a bit, while the hand on your chest will hardly move.
- Try to keep your breathing slow, smooth, and easy. Many people find it easiest to breathe through their nose, but do whatever is most comfortable for you and allows you to breathe most naturally.
- When you breathe in, think “one” to yourself.
- Then breathe out slowly and think the word “relax.”
- On your next breath, think “two” as you breathe in, and “relax” as you breathe out.
- Continue counting until you reach “eight,” and then count backward, back down to “one.”
- Try to focus only on your breathing and the words. Open your eyes when you are finished.

[When patient is finished:] *Great, now can you tell me again how tense you feel on the same 100-point scale, with 0 = completely and deeply relaxed throughout your body, and 100 = extremely tense throughout your body. [Make a note of response.]*

How was that for you? Any difficulties? [Troubleshoot.]

Before we move on, what questions do you have?

SESSION 4 HOME PRACTICE

- Follow your “New Sleep Plan.”
- Complete the Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log.
- Review session information in the patient packet and bring any questions to the next session.
- Practice the relaxation exercise at least two times per day, with one of these times near bedtime, and record your practice on the Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log.
 - These media files are available to share or download:
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation Guided Imagery Script One:
<https://vimeo.com/480387339>
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation Guided Imagery Script Two:
<https://vimeo.com/480399123>

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation without Music:
<https://vimeo.com/480401030>
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation with Music: <https://vimeo.com/480402598>
- Other relaxation resources that are preferred can be used as well. It is recommended that relaxation practice be at least 10-15 minutes and include some element of guided imagery.
- Imagine your new dream in as much detail as you can for about ten minutes each night, followed by relaxation exercise. Record your practice on the Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log.
- You can also practice during the day. The more times you imagine this new dream, the more it will help.
- When you practice:
 - Sit comfortably in a relatively quiet place.
 - Close your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so. If no, keep your eyes open and focus on a point on the floor or on a wall.
 - Mentally create the images of your new dream. Make the images, sounds, feelings, thoughts, and emotions as clear as possible.
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