

# Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for **Nightmares**

Minneapolis VA Health Care System  
VAPE 10-0813 (618) 07/2024

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## SESSION 4: TARGETING NIGHTMARES, PART 2

Today, we'll review your Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log and change your sleep routine as needed. We will work on changing your nightmare and reading it in session.

- Are there any habits that you feel are 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.

### REVIEW RELAXATION PRACTICE AND TROUBLESHOOT

Were you able to practice your relaxation techniques last week?

- Review relaxation practice on the sleep log.
- Remember, this is like learning any new skill; it takes practice to get good.

### GENERATING NIGHTMARE RESCRIPTION IDEAS

Today we are going to work on changing your nightmare.

For practice, you were asked to think about ways to change your nightmare. Another word for changing or rewriting your nightmare is "Rescripting".

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

### RESCRIPT THE 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 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).

You can use this space below to write out your new dream:

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]





## READ THE RESCRIPTED DREAM

- Now you will 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.

<b>SUDS Rating:</b> How tense/upset do you feel after reading the rescripted dream (0–100)?	
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## 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 a new dream while awake gives your mind a different direction to go during sleep.
  - This is like how athletes imagine 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 can improve athletic performance. Imagining a 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 you get through the new dream before 10 minutes, repeat it again and again.
- You can also make a recording to listen to or read it over.

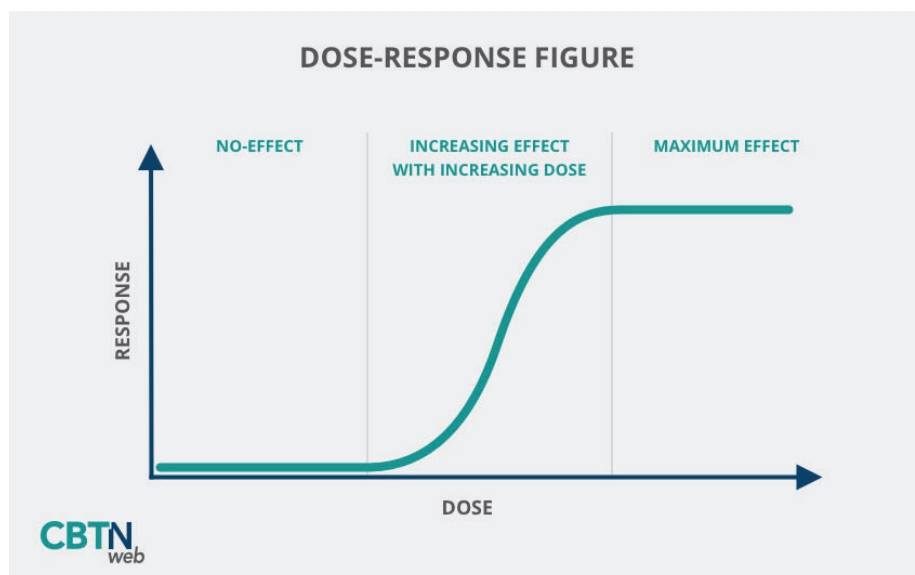
## Practice Imagery Rehearsal in Session

- 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 out loud.
  - The main point is to picture the imagery and imagine what you are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling.
  - *What was it like for you to imagine the new dream?*

If you want to avoid practicing the new dream, it is important to talk about that. What could you do if you have the urge to avoid practicing your new dream? Let's make a plan to support the process of practicing imagery rehearsal.

## Dose-Response Curve

- This curve shows what we know about treatments and people's responses. Let's take medicine given for a physical problem for 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 a prescription for a medicine, it's not enough to know what to do to work on your nightmares. It takes practice, and that is perfectly normal.

### 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

<p><b>SUDS Rating:</b> 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.</p>	
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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.

<b>SUDS Rating:</b> 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.	
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## 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.
    - If you get through the new dream before 10 minutes, repeat it again and again.
    - You can also make a recording to listen to or read it over.

My New Sleep Plan: Session 2-6												
Habits		Under "Habits," check which habits you want to focus on now or later in treatment. Write "NA" for habits that don't apply.										
Now	Later	Date:										
		1. *To help me get out of bed at the same time every day at _____, I will:										
		2. *I will use the bed and bedroom for sleep and sex only. I will not sleep in places other than the bed. To help me do this, I will:										
		3. I will unwind before bed by:										
		4. I will go to bed only when I am sleepy. I will know I am sleepy when:										
		5. *I will get out of bed if awake more than ~ 15 minutes. I won't clock-watch. I will do these activities until I feel sleepy (or for a limited amount of time):										
		6. *I will not nap during the day (or I will only nap for less than 30 minutes before 3:00pm). I will keep myself from napping by:										
		7. I will change my sleep environment by:										
		8. *I will cut down or stop nicotine, alcohol, and/or cannabis at bedtime and at night and will do the following to help myself make these changes:										
		9. I will stop having caffeine at this time:										
		10. I will use these grounding skill(s) to help me after a nightmare:										
		11. I will reduce safety behaviors at night by:										
		12. I will have scheduled worry time or planning time at:										
		13. Other:										
* One of the most important habits.												

## Sleep Diary and Nightmare Log Instructions

**General Instructions:** Complete your sleep diary every day within one hour of getting out of bed in the morning, if possible. If you forget to fill in the diary or are unable to remember, leave the diary blank for that day. Try not to worry about giving exact times and you should not watch the clock. Just give your best estimate.

This diary can be used for people who are awake or asleep at unusual times and in places other than a bed.

"Day" is the time when you choose or are required to be awake. The term "bed" is the place where you usually sleep.

### Step-by-step Instructions:

0. **Date.** Enter today's date even though some of the information you input will be from yesterday.
1. **What time did you get into bed?** Record the time you physically got into bed.
2. **What time did you "try" to go to sleep last night last night?** Record the time that you began "trying" to fall asleep. Some people begin trying to go to sleep as soon as they get in bed, while others get into bed and read, watch TV, or other things. *What we want to know for this question is when you first started trying (e.g., closed your eyes, turned out the lights) to go to sleep.*
3. **How long did it take you to fall asleep in minutes?** Beginning at the time you wrote in question 2, record how long it took you to fall asleep.
4. **How many times did you wake up, not counting your final awakening?** How many times did you wake up between the time you first fell asleep and your final awakening? This would include if you woke up for any reason (e.g., nightmare, sounds, perimeter check, check on the safety of the house or a family member).
5. **In total, how long did these awakenings last in minutes?** What was the total time you were awake between the time you first fell asleep and your final awakening? For example, if you woke 3 times for 20 minutes, 35 minutes, and 15 minutes, add them all up ( $20 + 35 + 15 = 70$  minutes or 1 hour and 10 minutes).
6. **What time was your final awakening?** Record the last time you woke up for the day.
7. **What time did you get out of bed for the day?** What time did your feet hit the floor with no further attempt at sleeping? This may be different from your final awakening time (e.g., you may have woken up at 0625 but did not get out of bed to start your day until 0720).
8. **How would you rate the quality of your sleep?** "Sleep Quality" is your sense of whether your sleep was good or poor.
9. **In total, how long did you nap or doze yesterday?** Estimate the total amount of time you spent napping or dozing, in hours and minutes. For instance, if you napped twice, once for 30 minutes and once for 60 minutes, and dozed for 10 minutes, you would answer "1 hour 40 minutes." If you did not nap or doze, enter 0 hours 0 minutes.
10. **Last night, how many nightmares did you have that woke you up?** Record the number of nightmares that caused you to wake up from your sleep last night.
11. **How would you rate the overall severity of your nightmares?** What was the overall severity of the nightmares you experienced last night on a scale on 0 to 4, with 4 being the most severe. If you did not experience any nightmares last night write NA.

### ITEMS IN BOX ARE ONLY TO BE COMPLETED WHEN ASSIGNED BY THE THERAPIST

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>12. <b>Relaxation practice SUDs ratings Practice 1:</b> Report your Subjective Units of Distress, or SUDS, directly before and after you practice the relaxation exercise during the day. SUDS range from 0 (meaning no distress/tension) to 100 (meaning the most distress/tension you can imagine).</li><li>13. <b>Relaxation practice SUDs ratings Practice 2:</b> Report your Subjective Units of Distress, or SUDS, directly before and after you practice the relaxation exercise at night before bed on the same 0-100 scale.</li><li>14. <b>How many times did you practice imagining the new dream yesterday and for how many minutes total?</b> Record the number of times you practiced imaging your new dream and the total time of practice yesterday. For example, if you practiced twice for 10 minutes each, add the time up to equal 20 minutes total and record "2 (20 min)."</li></ol> |
|---|
15. **Comments:** If your sleep is affected by some unusual event (such as an illness, an emergency, a dog barking, kids crying or some other disturbance), please make brief notes.

ID/Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ID/Name: \_\_\_\_\_

15. Comments