



When Sleep Can't Come

Our autonomic nervous system can be overstimulated by trauma. That means that your arousal levels are chronically high, so they trigger and have serious impact to one's body. And the body needs soothing and care, otherwise the body don't have the reserve of enough energy to help you to heal. And sleep is an important precursor.

Module	Submodules	Group size	Duration
• Intervention	• PTSD and the Brain	• Individual • Small group	• 1 hour minimum

Keywords

Brain, sleep routine, improved sleep, trauma and sleep.

Aims

To recognize the constant excitement and sleep problems and consequently design a new bedtime and sleep plan. Reframing.

Participants

The activitiy can be carried out individually or in a small group of 7 to 12 participants.

Description

My ten things to do when I can't sleep.

Before you try this strategy, come up with 10 thingsyou hate to do around your home, e.g. cleaning and defrosting the freezer, cleaning the toilet, balancing a checkbook, or similar. Two hours before going to bed start to prepare yourself – take a warm bath or shower, get into your sleeping clothes, stop all liquids intake, . Now do a realxing activity – read, knit, listen soft music. Don't watch the TV or news. Once you get to bed you have 30 minutes to get to sleep. You may choose to do a relaxation exercise during these thirty minutes. If you are not asleep in 30 minutes, you have to get up and do the first thingon your list.

Make your list NOW. This are often ten things that you hate to do the most. They must be things to do inside of your home and will not woke up others who are sleeping.

So, the number one of the ten things to do list must be the one you »hate« the most you will always start with this one when you can't sleep. Continue doing the things on your list until you go to sleep ad stay sleep. Each night you can't sleep begin again at the top of the list. Even if you have cleaned your refrigerator every night of five nights, on a six night you are to clean it again.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
- 8: _____
9. _____
10. _____

Material

paper and pen, poster, color pens

Method

internalization, experiential learning

Advice for Facilitators

Source (APA)

Adapted from: Williams, M.B.; Poijula, S. (2016). *The PTSD Workbook, Third Edition*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

Handouts

Contributor

WIN (Wolfgang Eisenreich).



CC - Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>

When Sleep Can't Come. Retrieved Sunday January 11, 2026, from :
<https://onlinematerial.posttraumatic-integration.eu/courses/PTIP125/>

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein

<https://posttraumatic-integration.eu/>