

SESSION 3: SLEEP AND YOUR THOUGHTS

Purpose of the session:

Learn how thoughts can influence your sleep

MYTHS AND TRUTHS ABOUT SLEEP

MYTH: I need 8 hours of sleep to survive

Truth: Different people need different amounts of sleep. Most people benefit from about 7-8 hours of sleep each night, others more and others less.

MYTH: If I don't get a good night's sleep, then ... (something terrible will happen)

Truth: How many bad nights have you had? How many times has this terrible thing happened? Does it happen 100% of the time?

MYTH: If I am having trouble sleeping, I should try harder to sleep

Truth: Trying harder usually works in reverse - it makes it less likely you will fall asleep because you make yourself more alert and frustrated

MYTH: If I had a bad night of sleep, I should try to catch up (by sleeping in, by spending more time in bed)

Truth: Spending more time in bed rarely provides you with quality sleep and only increases the chances you will sleep poorly the next night. On the other hand, if you get out of bed even when you did not get enough sleep, you will be a little sleep deprived the next night and therefore more likely to fall asleep quickly.

Exercise: Challenging sleep thief thoughts

1. What are some unhelpful thoughts you have about sleep and how can you challenge them?

Sleep thief thought	Alternative thought
Example: <i>“If I can’t get a good night’s sleep my day tomorrow will be shot”</i>	<i>“Even if I don’t sleep well tonight, I can still get up in the morning and do things. And the more active I am tomorrow, the easier it will be to fall asleep tomorrow night.”</i>

Exercise: Scheduled Worry Time

2. Research shows that scheduling “worry time” can help contain worry and anxiety. Pick a set time every day, at least 3 hours before bedtime, when you can worry for 15-30 minutes. During this set time, write down all of the worries that come to mind, and feel free to engage in constructive problem solving if there are any actionable steps you can do to address the worry. If not, move on to the next worry. When a worry pops up right before bedtime or in the middle of the night, tell yourself to DELAY this worry until your set worry time.

Assignment:

1. Adjust your Time in Bed Window, if necessary
2. Continue to complete the sleep log
3. Practice Sleep Guidelines strategies (Refer to Guide to Overcoming Insomnia)
4. Pay attention to thoughts that might be interfering with your sleep and see if you can come up with more helpful alternative thoughts