

# BETTER SLEEP

## SESSION 5 COURSE WORKBOOK



## Session Five

### PUTTING THE BETTER SLEEP PROGRAMME TOGETHER

**(to help you develop and maintain a strong sleep pattern)**



**A Summary of all the information and advice the Better Sleep Programme has given you already:**

**Before going to bed:**

- Understand your sleep problem and how it developed – think of it as a habit that can be corrected by doing the right things, thinking in helpful ways and sticking with the programme till it is fixed.
- ‘Put the day to rest’ – long before you go to bed. Tie up loose ends in your mind and plan ahead. Write it down. Keep a notebook by your bed in case you think of something at bedtime – and then deal with it the next day.
- Take some light exercise early in the evening - don’t exercise less than two hours before bedtime and don’t try to exhaust yourself. Generally try and keep yourself fit.
- Wind down during the evening. Nothing mentally demanding within 90 minutes of bed-time.
- Do not sleep or nap in the armchair - at any time of day.
- Do not take too much caffeine – and none after 5 or 6 at night.
- Try to cut down on smoking - don’t smoke if you wake up in the middle of the night, or before you go to bed.

- Don't drink alcohol - it will stop you from sleeping properly.
- Gradually reduce your use of sleeping pills.
- Make sure your bed and bedroom are comfortable - not too hot, not too cold, not noisy or too much light and keep the room well-aired.
- Get a comfortable bed and mattress.
- Work out your sleep schedule - work out your threshold time and your waking-up time. Make sure you stick to these times every day, no matter how hard it may be. Make sure your wake-up time is realistic for both weekdays and weekends.
- Plan to follow your schedule 7 days a week - consistency is everything.
- Keep your sleep efficiency high - remember how to calculate it from session 3. Make sure it doesn't fall below 90% when you are adding on extra time in bed, and don't add on more than 15 minutes per week.

**At bedtime:**

- Wait until you're 'sleepy tired' - learn what that means for *you*.
- Wait until your threshold time - don't be tempted to go to bed before that time to try to 'catch up' on sleep from the night before.
- In bed, put out the light and practise relaxation and imagery - keep a CD player beside your bed to play the recording, and have a relaxing imagery story ready to use.
- Give up trying to sleep - keep your eyes open and say to yourself, 'I'll just stay awake for another minute'.
- Remind yourself that sleep will come naturally. Repeat the last two steps as required.
- Do not read, watch TV etc in bed - keep your bed for sleeping.
- Get up at your rising time - 7 days a week.



### **When you can't sleep:**

- If you don't fall over to sleep in about 15-20 minutes, go into another room.
- Do something relaxing and don't worry about tomorrow. Prepare for this - keep the heating on low, leave a milky drink in a flask.
- Try not to get upset or frustrated - use your relaxation tape.
- Challenge intrusive or inaccurate thoughts - remind yourself that other people will not be sleeping at this time, that you can cope with a sleepless night.
- Go back to bed when you're 'sleepy tired'. Keep the light out and relax.
- Try to block out unwanted thoughts by repeating the word 'the' every 2 seconds. Keep this up for 5 minutes at a time.
- If you still don't sleep repeat the last 6 steps – as many times as necessary till you finally sleep
- Repeat all these steps if you wake during the night and don't fall asleep again in 15-20 minutes.

### **Making changes, sticking with them and, finally, overcoming your sleep problem:**

Don't give up! You have probably made some of these changes already and will hopefully have seen some improvement in your sleep as a result. Well done for making these changes and sticking with them!

You have probably had insomnia for a long time now and it is unlikely to resolve quickly. It can take some time to re-establish a good, regular sleep pattern – so don't lose heart. Success will come if you persevere . . . seven nights a week!

We know that everyone will find some parts of the programme hard to do. This may be for several reasons:

1. Some of the changes are not relevant to you – perhaps you never drank coffee or dozed in front of the TV anyway. Or perhaps you've never had difficulty falling asleep. If this is the reason, then it doesn't matter if you don't make those changes.

2. Perhaps you can't get the hang of some of the things you have been asked to do. Some people, for example, find it harder to do the relaxation or imagery exercises than others, or find it really difficult to give up trying to get to sleep. This doesn't mean that you will never be able to do it – just keep trying and you **will** get there eventually!
3. It may be hard to keep yourself motivated to keep going with some of the difficult changes. Nobody wants to get out of bed after 15 or 20 minutes, perhaps several times in the night, and we all like having a nice lie-in at weekends. And it is hard to keep challenging negative and pessimistic thoughts when they keep on coming. But if we persevere and keep reminding ourselves that it is important for us to deal with our sleep problem, we **will** get there eventually!

If you are stuck with a particular area, please ask for advice. If you don't have time to ask during or after the session, then please feel free to phone and ask for help (details at the end of this information sheet).

And remember the cycle of change we discussed at the end of session 3 – if you do relapse and, say, give up trying because it just seems too hard, you are not back at square one. You **will never** be back at square one because you have already thought about changing your sleep problem, decided to change, prepared to change and actually made those changes. You now not only have all the knowledge you need to restore a good sleep pattern, but you have already put those changes into practice and the next time you try, you **will** do better than before! So, don't lose heart – just keep trying and you **will** get there.

If you have been taking sleep medication regularly and have been reducing this, continue with the reduction schedule as discussed with your GP. Five out of six people who complete this programme manage to stay off sleeping pills.

Make use of your Better Sleep Programme materials – these notes and your worksheets and diaries. These will remind you of what to do, why to do it and how to do it. Add in any useful information you come across and any observations you make about what affects your sleep. It is helpful to continue to use the sleep diaries until your sleep is how you want it. These help you to notice small improvements – which can be very motivating, and help you stick with it.

## A Last Word . . .

We hope that you have found this programme interesting and helpful. After some time, you are likely to find that your sleep pattern has become more regular and your sleep more enjoyable and satisfying. You may find that you no longer need to use the techniques and that your sleep can look after itself. If, however, you find it begins to slide and you notice that your sleep is become less reliable – then get out these notes and use whichever techniques you need to knock it back into shape again!

Do not be discouraged if you have not yet noticed much improvement in your sleep – these things can take time and it is not unusual for someone who has had a sleep problem for many years to take a while to see any great improvement. Any little changes that you may have noticed are steps in the right direction, and these little changes can build and become permanent regular changes. So, stick to the programme . . . and one day you too can develop a good regular sleep pattern.



**Good luck and sleep well!**