

LIGHTBULB SESSION 3

COURSE WORKBOOK





SLEEP, NIGHTMARES AND ANGER

RECAP FROM SESSION 2...

- ✓ What is a flashback and how does it maintain PTSD?
- ✓ Why do we experience flashbacks?
- ✓ Looked grounding techniques and strategies to manage flashbacks and bring our attention back to the present moment.
- ✓ Peaceful place relaxation exercise – a grounding technique.

HOMEWORK REVIEW



- Mental strategies: telling yourself you are safe, using a positive coping statement card.
- Physical grounding strategies: use your senses to bring your mind to the present moment including smell and touch objects.
- Emergency soothing bag or box?

TODAY'S PLAN

- ✓ How a trauma can impact our sleep and trigger nightmares - identified unhelpful habits and replace with more helpful techniques to facilitate a better night's sleep.
- ✓ Techniques to manage feelings of anger.

CONTROLLING TRAUMA SYMPTOMS AND LIFESTYLE FACTORS

Caffeine...

- Stimulant that affects the brain and central nervous system
- Can be found in drinks (tea, coffee, fizzy drinks, energy drinks) and in medication (cold/flu tablets)
- Too much (more than 4 cups per day) can leave us feeling nervous, irritable, restless, agitated, shaky, give us headaches, increase our heart rate, speed up breathing etc.....
- **Try to reduce caffeine intake.**



SELF-MEDICATION...

Many people with trauma symptoms use alcohol or drugs (prescribed or recreational) to calm their nerves but this can become dependent.

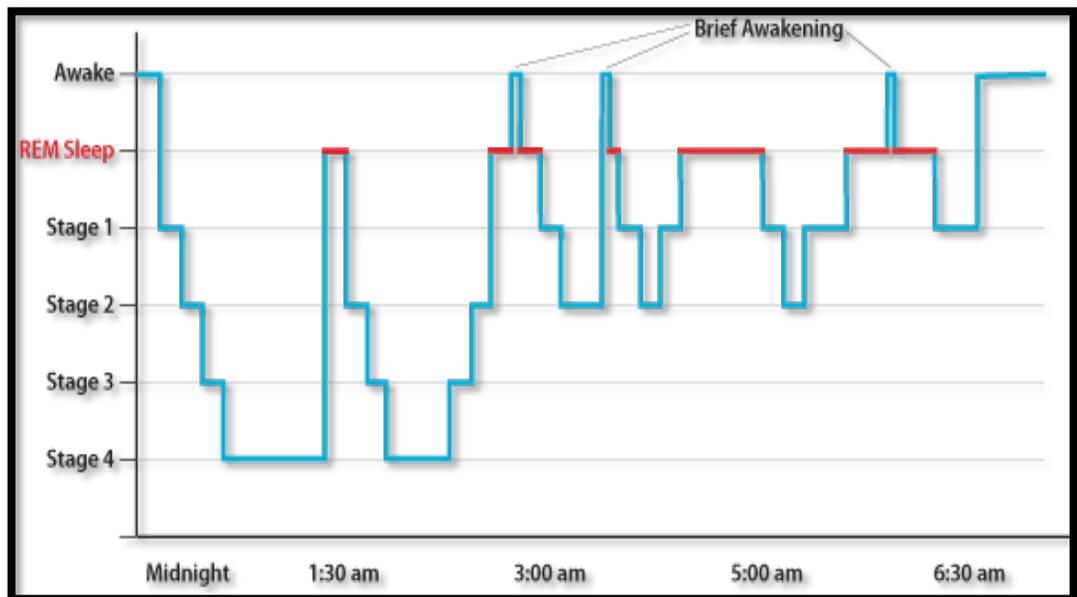
- Symptoms such as nausea, sweating, and shaking may be more to do with alcohol/recreational drugs than a trauma.
- Consuming too much alcohol/recreational drugs will disrupt your sleep and make you more prone to anxiety.
- Try to reduce alcohol/recreational drug intake.





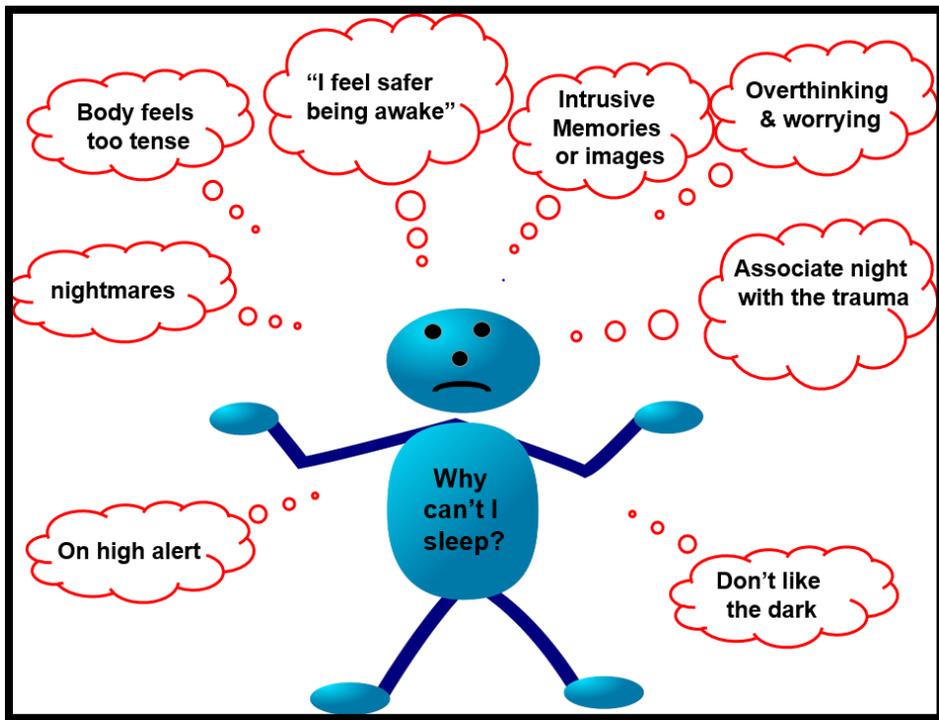
POOR SLEEP ROUTINE

- A trauma can often lead to problems with sleep including difficulties getting to sleep; disrupted sleep; nightmares or waking up feeling frightened.
- A lack of sleep can leave us feeling even more anxious / agitated / irritable / fearful the next day.
- With PTSD, sleep problems can become chronic; therefore, impacting our wellbeing and functioning.





Why do you think you have problems sleeping?





What do you do to get a better nights sleep and cope with nightmares?

UNHELPFUL HABITS

- ✗ Daytime naps
- ✗ Sleep in the morning to catch up
- ✗ Drink coffee to stay alert
- ✗ Exercise in the evening to get tired
- ✗ A night cap



10 HELPFUL HABITS

- ✓ Don't go to bed if you're not sleepy
- ✓ Minimise caffeine & alcohol
- ✓ Have a bedtime 'wind-down' routine
- ✓ No exercise 4-6 hours before bed
- ✓ Bed-time snack
- ✓ Move out the things you do during the day (TV, phone, email, radio)
- ✓ Keep bedroom quiet, dark and cool
- ✓ Set a wake-up time. Weekends, no longer than an hour extra.
- ✓ 15-minute rule





HOW TO COPE WHEN YOU WAKE FROM A NIGHTMARE

Ground yourself!

- Sit up quickly after awaking from your nightmare.
- Sit on the edge of the bed, with your feet on the floor.
- Go and wash your face or hands with water.
- Touch an object that reminds you that you are in the present and not the past.

Distract your attention elsewhere...

- focus on your surroundings. e.g start naming the things you see in your room.

Controlled breathing...

- slow your breathing down.

Reassure yourself!

- Tell yourself you are safe and fully awake. Tell yourself that it was a nightmare and that the event happened in the past and you are safe now.

Try to sleep again!

- If you can't after 15 minutes, do something relaxing until you're tired.



HOW TO MANAGE FEELINGS OF TRAUMA AND ANGER

- Feelings of anger are linked to our natural survival instinct of 'fight & flight'.
- Anger helps us cope with life's stresses by giving us energy to keep going in the face of troubles or blocks.
- Anger is also a common response to events that seem unfair or in which you have been made a victim. This is often seen when traumas have involved violence, exploitation or being betrayed by others.
- Anger and irritability can however create problems in people's personal lives.



Feelings of anger can alter our...

- thoughts – “you can't trust anyone” “others are out to get me”
- body – tense, sweating, shaking, clenched fists, heart beating fast...
- behaviours - impulsive, acting before thinking, self-injury & injury to others

think

What do you do to manage feelings of anger?

STEPS TO MANAGING ANGER

1. Recognise your anger early!



2. Take a timeout!

3. Exercise...

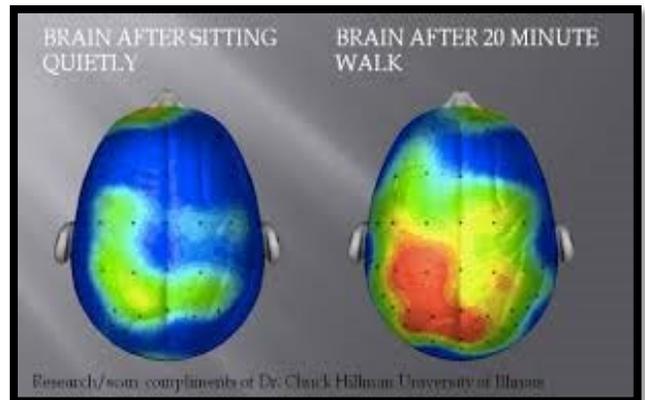
- 30 minutes of moderate exercise each day can make a huge difference to our physical and psychological well-being.

Physical benefits –

- Releases tension
- Controls weight and improves body shape
- Can reduce blood pressure
- Reduces risk of heart disease, cancers and stroke

Bio-psychological benefits –

- Reduces levels of the body's stress hormones – adrenaline and cortisol
- Stimulates the production of serotonin and endorphins – the body's natural mood elevators



4. Talk...

The benefits of talking about it or writing it down.

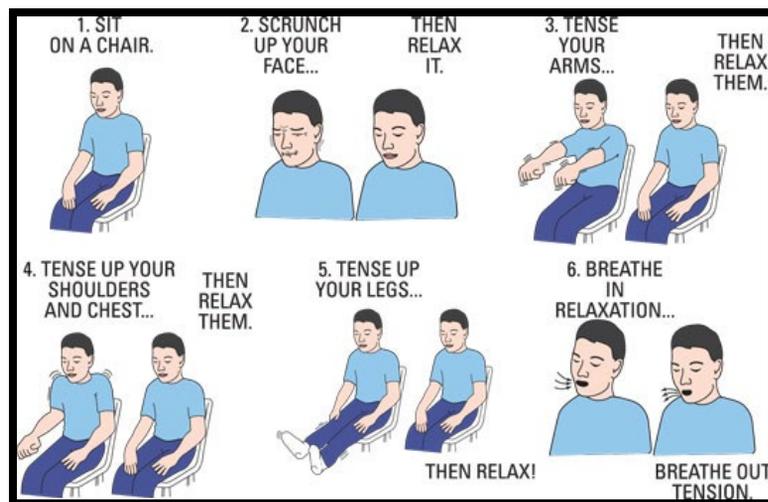


5. Progressive Muscle Relaxation...

When you have anxiety or stress in your life, one of the ways your body responds is with muscle tension. Progressive muscle relaxation is a method that helps relieve that tension.

In progressive muscle relaxation, you tense a group of muscles as you breathe in, and you relax them as you breathe out. You work on your muscle groups in a certain order.

When your body is physically relaxed, you cannot feel anxious. Practicing progressive muscle relaxation for a few weeks will help you get better at this skill, and in time you will be able to use this method to relieve stress.





What have you learned today? Note down 3 key points.

HOMEWORK

- ✓ Start to identify lifestyle factors that are impacting your mood, wellbeing and functioning.
- ✓ Try to reduce caffeine/alcohol/recreational drugs.
- ✓ Try to reduce some of your unhelpful sleeping habits & start introducing some of the helpful sleep techniques.
- ✓ Identify signs and symptoms of anger.
- ✓ Try 30 minutes of exercise over 3 days next week.
- ✓ Practice mindfulness breathing over the next week.



MY NOTES