



Session 3

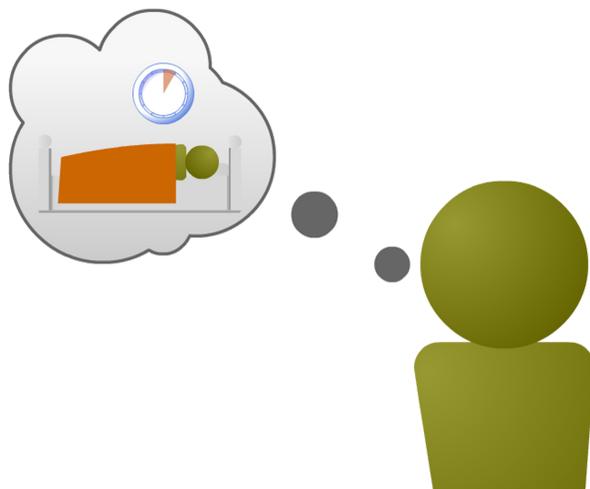
# Cognitive Restructuring

## Lesson 1: Introducing Cognitive Restructuring

### *Negative Thoughts about Insomnia*

In this session we're going to talk about a technique called "Cognitive Restructuring." Cognitive Restructuring is based on the idea that a major problem with insomnia is the worry that it will affect you the next day. Negative thoughts about sleep make insomnia worse. This happens because anxiety or frustration set off the stress response. The stress response strengthens the wakefulness system, weakens the sleep system, and makes it harder to sleep. Here are some examples of negative sleep thoughts that are very common:

- I must get 8 hours of sleep.
- I will not be able to function tomorrow.
- My insomnia is going to cause health problems.
- I did not sleep at all last night.
- I cannot fall asleep without a sleeping pill.



### *Noticing, Changing Negative Thoughts*

As you will learn in this session, negative sleep thoughts are usually inaccurate and exaggerated. They only make your insomnia worse.

You can overcome your insomnia by learning to notice and change your negative sleep thoughts with Cognitive Restructuring. Cognitive Restructuring means replacing negative thinking with helpful, more accurate thinking.

The goal of Cognitive Restructuring is simple yet powerful: by noticing and changing your negative sleep thoughts to more accurate, positive thoughts, you will reduce worry and other emotions that start the stress response and disturb your sleep. The more you practice changing your negative sleep thoughts, the better you will sleep.

Keep in mind that Cognitive Restructuring is not the same as pretending you don't have insomnia or simply using the power of positive thinking. It means learning to think about insomnia more correctly.

### *Scientific Findings: Sleep & Insomnia*

To recognize and replace your negative sleep thoughts with more accurate, positive thoughts about sleep, you should first become familiar with some important scientific findings about:

- Sleep duration, health, and daytime functioning
- The effects of sleep loss on daytime performance
- How much sleep you think you are getting

## Lesson 2: Sleep Duration, Health, & Daytime Performance

### *The Eight Hour Sleep Myth*

Let's begin with sleep duration, health, and daytime functioning.

Although many people think that that we need at least 8 hours of sleep to stay healthy, recent studies show that people who sleep 7 hours per night live longer than people who sleep 8. Furthermore, sleeping 5 hours per night is associated with longer life expectancy than sleeping 9 hours per night.

Similarly, many of us do not need 8 hours of sleep to function effectively during the day:

- The amount of sleep that we need to feel alert during the day varies from person to person.
- The majority of adults sleep less than 8 hours per night and report feeling rested during the day
- Many good sleepers cannot sleep 8 hours even if they try.

These findings mean that you should not worry about getting 8 hours of sleep.

### *Sleep Loss and Daytime Performance*

What about the effects of sleep loss on daytime performance? Research shows that not getting enough sleep can make it harder to do your normal daily tasks. However, the effects of sleep loss also depend upon how much sleep is lost and how often it happens. Research also shows that:

- Everyone is different. Some people are affected a lot by sleep loss, while others may be affected very little.
- Some of the effects of sleep loss may actually be due to the effects of stress that led to the sleep loss. In fact, stress has been shown to have much greater effects on our functioning than sleep loss.
- Sleep loss does not affect people with insomnia as much as normal sleepers

This means that sleep loss will not always affect your daytime functioning.

## Lesson 3: Sleep Loss & Core Sleep

### Core Sleep

Now let's explore the concept of core sleep. Research also suggests that many individuals can maintain performance for extended periods of time on about 5½ hours of sleep, or what some sleep researchers call "Core Sleep":

People who need to maintain performance under challenging circumstances - such as rescue workers, armed services personnel, and doctors - can maintain their performance with 5 to 6 hours of sleep.

Studies on insomnia patients show that they average just under 6 hours of sleep yet do not have poorer daytime performance or alertness than good sleepers.

The reason core sleep can maintain performance is that it contains 100 percent of our Deep Sleep (the most important stage of sleep) and 50 percent of our Dream Sleep (the second most important stage of sleep).

We don't have to obtain core sleep continuously (that is, we can sleep for 2 hours, be awake for an hour, and then sleep 3½ more hours). Also, your brain is "programmed" to get core sleep (that is, it will do its best to obtain core sleep).

This is not to say that we only need core sleep, since most people need additional sleep to feel their best. It does mean that your performance will usually not suffer as much if you get the core sleep that you need.

## Lesson 4: Perceived vs. Actual Sleep Duration

### *More Sleep Than You Think*

Next, let's talk about the difference between perceived and actual sleep duration.

Research shows that people with insomnia are getting more sleep than they think -

- They overestimate how long it takes to fall asleep and how long they are awake during the night.
- They underestimate how much sleep they get.

This misperception of sleep is because they see stage 2 sleep as being awake; and the fact that under the stressful circumstances of lying awake, perception of time seems longer than actual clock time.

This means that, by noticing that you are probably getting more sleep than you think, you will reduce negative sleep thoughts and sleep better.

### *Insomnia and Daytime Mood*

Finally, let's take a look at the relationship between insomnia and daytime mood.

You may notice that the biggest effect of insomnia is on your mood the following day. You may feel irritable, worried, tired, or a little depressed. This is important to know when you consider changing your thinking about insomnia.

In most cases, it is only your mood that may be affected for the day after a bad night's sleep.

It is not just how much sleep you lose that affects your daytime mood but also your negative thoughts about your sleep loss. If you can reduce negative thoughts about your insomnia, you will also reduce the effect of insomnia on your daytime mood and functioning. If you wake up and begin your day with a negative sleep thought such as "The day is going to be miserable because I did not sleep well.", it is the combination of sleep loss and negative mood from this thought that affects your daytime functioning.

You can prove this to yourself by noticing that sleep loss due to positive events (such as parties, vacation, etc.) does not have as much of a negative impact on daytime functioning.

## Lesson 5: The 10 Most Common Negative Sleep Thoughts

### *Practicing Cognitive Restructuring*

We've spent some time learning about the scientific findings concerning sleep and insomnia. Now you are ready to practice cognitive restructuring each day to reduce your negative sleep thoughts and improve your sleep and your daytime mood.

To begin, identify your most frequent negative sleep thoughts using the checklist we'll show you in a moment.

For each negative sleep thought that you check, you will be given positive sleep thoughts that you can use to replace those negative sleep thoughts

The positive sleep thoughts are based on the research you just learned about sleep, health, and performance; and, on the information you learned in Session 1 concerning basic facts about sleep.

You will begin to use these positive sleep thoughts each day to replace your negative sleep thoughts. Review them regularly. It may also be helpful to write them down and keep them by your bed to look at night or when you wake up in the morning.

### *Your Negative Sleep Thoughts*

Now, choose the negative sleep thoughts from the following list that are similar to those you experience most often.

#### *10 Common Negative Sleep Thoughts*

- I will never fall asleep.
- I woke up in the middle of the night/early morning and feel wide awake. This means I will not be able to fall back to sleep.
- I will not be able to function tomorrow.
- I have to get 8 hours of sleep.
- My insomnia is going to cause health problems.
- I did not sleep at all last night.
- I cannot fall asleep without a sleeping pill.
- I feel terrible today because of my insomnia.
- I will never learn to sleep better.
- What is wrong with me? I must have a mental health problem.

## Positive Sleep Thoughts to Replace Negative Sleep Thoughts

Instructions: Use the positive sleep thoughts (in blue) to replace your negative thoughts (in orange). Keep this sheet somewhere you will see it often, such as your nightstand or dresser.

I will never fall asleep

- I am more likely to fall asleep when my body heat falls during the night.
- My brain wants to get core sleep.

My insomnia will cause health problems.

- I can still be healthy even if I have insomnia.

I woke up in the middle of the night or early morning and feel wide awake. This means I will not be able to fall back to sleep.

- It is normal to feel alert if I wake up at the beginning or end of a dream. I will be sleepy soon.
- If I wake up after about 5½ hours of sleep, I have gotten my core sleep. I will be OK if I do not fall back to sleep.

I can't fall asleep without a sleeping pill.

- As I learn these CBT techniques, I will fall asleep more easily on my own.
- I am better off without sleeping pills.
- Sleeping pills are not the best way for me to get good sleep.
- It will become easier to fall asleep without a sleeping pill the more I try it.

I will not be able to function tomorrow.

- Sleep loss doesn't always affect my daytime functioning.
- In most cases, the worst thing that may happen if I don't sleep well is that I may not be in the best mood during the day.
- I can handle sleep loss, especially if it is only happening a few nights per week.
- My performance will not suffer significantly if I get my core sleep.
- My functioning will improve during the day as my body temperature rises.

I feel awful today because I didn't sleep well.

- If I minimize my negative sleep thoughts, I will improve my daytime functioning.
- I can feel good today even if I did not get good sleep.

I will never learn to sleep better.

- My sleep will get better as I learn these new techniques.
- These techniques work for most people with insomnia, they will work for me.

I must get eight hours of sleep.

- I don't have to worry about getting 8 hours of sleep.

What is wrong with me? I must have a mental health problem.

- I may have extra stress in my life that is making me not sleep as well.
- Insomnia is very common. It affects over half of adults and is usually caused by my sleep behaviors, not mental health problems.

## Lesson 6: Sleeping Pills

### *Putting Sleeping Pills to Rest*

If you are taking sleeping pills and you want to reduce the amount you take, you can begin sleep medicine reduction techniques along with the cognitive restructuring techniques this week.

A recent study shows that 85 percent of people who regularly used sleeping pills were able to stop using them after using these techniques. Two important elements aid the success of these sleep medicine reduction techniques:

- You can reduce sleeping pill use at your own pace.
- The techniques allow you to gradually decrease sleep medicine rather than stopping cold turkey, which can backfire and cause increased anxiety and insomnia.

### *Sleep Medicine Reduction Techniques*

If you have been using sleeping pills most nights, you may have withdrawal symptoms or make your insomnia worse if you stop using sleeping pills too quickly. The tips below will help you stop your pills gradually so you are unlikely to have problems. Be sure to talk with your doctor before you follow these medicine reduction tips.

Here are the steps to freedom from sleep medicine:

First, use your weekly Sleep Diary to figure out the number of nights you use sleeping pills during the week, and the number of pills on those nights.

Then, look at your schedule this week, and choose 2 nights when think you'll have the least pressure on the following day. Make sure the nights you choose are not 2 nights in a row. On those nights, take half the

number of pills you usually take. If you are only taking one pill, cut the pill in half .

Use positive sleep thoughts such as "If I do not sleep as well when I reduce my medicine, I can still function well the next day."

Once you are sleeping better on the two reduced pill nights (this may happen immediately or may take a week or two), you will feel more confident about reducing sleep medicine and can then:

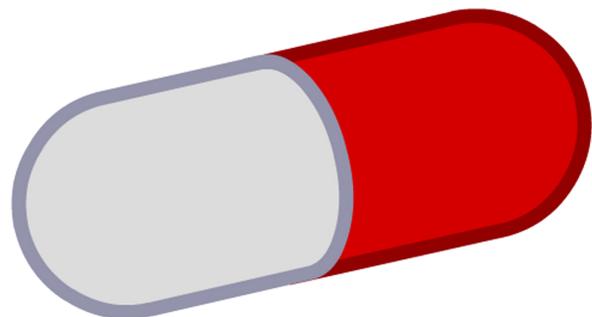
Reduce the number of pills by half on two more nights during the week.

Space these four medicine reduction nights apart (that is, every other night).

Continue in this way until you have reduced the number of pills you take by half on all of the nights that you usually take sleep medicine. Avoid going back to the original dose.

Once you have reduced the number of pills you take by one-half, begin to go medicine-free in the same gradual fashion:

- no pills two nights a week
- then no pills two more nights
- then no pills every night until you are medicine free



## Lesson 7: Goals for Week 3

### *Your Goals this Week*

Now that you've completed session three, your new goals this week in addition to your prior week goals are to:

- Begin using your positive sleep thoughts to replace your negative sleep thoughts.
- Work on your sleep medicine reduction goal.

Remember to do the following this week:

- Complete your sleep diary.



COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

**Key Concepts and Goals: Week 3**

**Key Concepts**

You do not have to worry about getting 8 hours of sleep to stay healthy

You do not have to worry about getting 8 hours of sleep to function effectively during the day

Sleep loss does not always have adverse consequences on daytime functioning

In most cases, your performance will not suffer significantly if you obtain core sleep

You are probably getting more sleep than you realize

In most cases, the worst thing that will happen after a poor night's sleep is that your mood may be impaired for the day

It is not just how much sleep you lose but also your negative sleep thoughts that affect how you function during the day

**Goals**

Complete the sleep diary each morning

Use the bedroom primarily for sleep

Limit time in bed before lights out and after waking up to 30 minutes

Follow the "½ hour-½ hour" rule

Get out of bed within 30 minutes of your arising time goal

Arising time goal:

\_\_\_\_\_

Limit the time you allow for sleep (lights out to out of bed) to one hour more than your average sleep duration

\_\_\_\_\_ + 1 hour = \_\_\_\_\_

Avg Sleep Duration

Time Allowed for Sleep

Do not go to bed before your earliest allowable bedtime goal

\_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Arising Time Goal

Time Allowed for Sleep

Earliest Bedtime

**Work on medication reduction goal**

**Use positive sleep thoughts to replace negative sleep thoughts**