
EXPANSION



CIPSRT | ICRTSP

SLEEP

Toolkit
for Public Safety Personnel

Items in this resource were created and provided by **Dr. Colleen Carney** (Toronto Metropolitan University/Sleep and Depression Laboratory) and adapted by the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT).

Add these cards to the original **Sleep Toolkit for Public Safety Personnel** ring card series for quick, practical tips to support healthy sleep habits.



TIPS FOR USING A SLEEP DIARY





A sleep diary is one of the most useful tools for understanding and addressing sleep problems because it can help identify patterns, habits, and possible causes of disrupted sleep over time.

Tracking your sleep for two weeks before beginning any sleep improvement plan can help you and your healthcare provider identify effective sleep strategies and treatments.





The online Consensus Sleep Diary is a free,
easy to use, and evidence-tested method
of monitoring your sleep.

<https://consensussleepdiary.com/>



TIPS FOR USING A SLEEP DIARY

1. Complete your sleep diary every day, ideally within one hour of getting out of bed in the morning.
2. Track the time it takes you to fall asleep. Ideally this would be 10-30 minutes.
3. Track the time you spent awake in the middle of the night. Ideally this would be under 30 minutes.
4. Track your total time in bed and your sleep efficiency – the percentage of time you spent ASLEEP in your bed. Ideally this would be 85-90 percent.

(Cont.)



TIPS FOR USING A SLEEP DIARY

5. If you forget to fill in the diary within one hour of awakening, leave that day's diary entry blank.
6. Don't rely on fitness trackers for sleep monitoring – research tells us that they are often inaccurate in estimating sleep and unlike sleep diaries, fitness trackers can lead to preoccupation and anxiety about sleep.





TIPS FOR COPING WITH NIGHTMARES





Nightmares are common in those who have been exposed to trauma. There is a well-established relationship between posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), nightmares, and other sleep disruptions.

Because public safety personnel are routinely exposed to potentially psychologically traumatic events as part of their work, it is important to be aware that trauma-related nightmares can occur.



TIPS FOR COPING WITH NIGHTMARES

If you wake from a nightmare, try the following:

1. Get out of bed and don't return until you have settled.
2. Orient yourself to safety in the present moment. Do this by noticing signs around you that remind you that you are safe. For example: "I'm in my bed. I just had a bad dream. The door is locked. My cat is sleeping soundly nearby."

(Cont.)



TIPS FOR COPING WITH NIGHTMARES

3. Avoid alcohol or substances like marijuana that can increase nightmares.
4. If your dreams are related to trauma you might consider trauma-focused treatment with a mental health care professional.

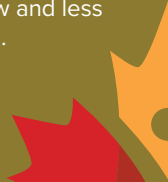


TREATING NIGHTMARES WITH IMAGE REHEARSAL THERAPY

Image rehearsal therapy (IRT) is a form of cognitive behavioural therapy often recommended for individuals who experience chronic nightmares, particularly those associated with trauma or posttraumatic stress disorder.

It can be especially useful when recurring nightmare themes are present.

Using IRT the content of a nightmare can be modified by creating and rehearsing a new and less threatening version of the dream.




TIPS FOR PRACTICING IMAGE REHEARSAL THERAPY

1. Write a description of the nightmare that is troubling you, including as much detail as possible.
2. Rewrite the dream in any way you wish, so that it is no longer a nightmare. You might do this by changing the ending or creating a completely new dream.
3. Once satisfied with your new dream, spend at least 20 minutes imagining it as vividly as possible.

(Cont.)



TIPS FOR PRACTICING IMAGE REHEARSAL THERAPY

4. Continue practicing until you notice improvement in the frequency and intensity of your nightmares.
 5. Rehearse no more than two new dreams per week, and never rehearse nightmares.
 6. If your nightmares are related to trauma it is recommended you practice IRT with the support of a qualified mental health professional.
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TIPS FOR SEEKING CARE





If you are experiencing sleep problems, consultation with your primary care provider is a good place to start. They can assess your symptoms, provide treatment, and refer you to sleep clinicians, mental health professionals, or other specialists if additional support is needed.



TIPS FOR SEEKING CARE

Consider consulting your primary care provider if:

1. Sleep problems are affecting your safety, work performance, daily functioning, or quality of life.
2. You experience excessive sleepiness during the day, and/or insomnia when trying to sleep.
3. You experience frequent awakenings during the night.
4. Your sleep problems are persistent, or chronic, including difficulties related to shift work.


(Cont.)



TIPS FOR SEEKING CARE

5. You have experienced stressful or traumatic events that may be impacting your sleep.
6. You are experiencing frequent nightmares or nighttime panic.
7. Others report that you snore loudly, stop breathing, or gasp during sleep.

Remember, sleep issues are not “just part of the job.” Healthy sleep is possible, even in demanding public safety occupations.



DOWNLOAD THE SLEEP TOOLKIT



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