

Differentiating

..... Between

Bad Dreams

Idiopathic Nightmares

Post Traumatic Nightmares



Fully oriented upon wake-up

Oriented upon awakening

Awaken disoriented

Distress resolves quickly

Full recall of content

Content often trauma related

Emotionally calm/neutral

Emotionally distressed

Emotionally terrified

Easy to fall back asleep

Difficulty returning to sleep

Very difficult returning to sleep

Rarely include body movements or speech

May/may not cause movement or talking

Usually include thrashing movements & vocalization

Occur later in sleep period

May occur later in sleep cycle

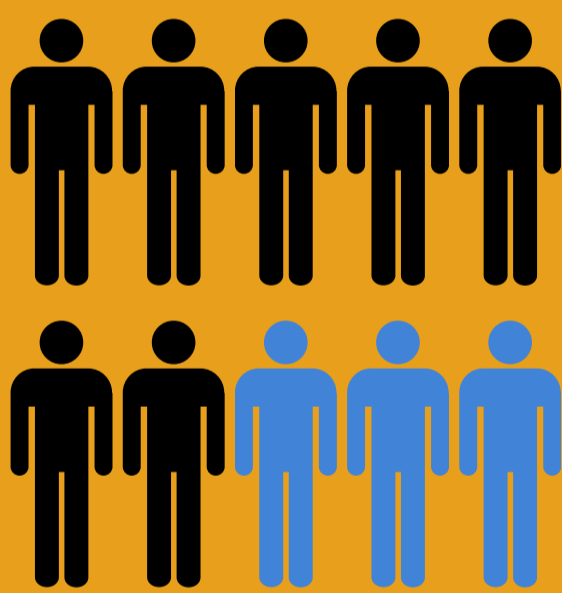
Occur earlier in sleep cycle

How Do They Compare?

Pruiksma et al. (2016): Sample of 108 Soldiers (AD & OIF/OEF)

Nightmares Before PTSD Treatment

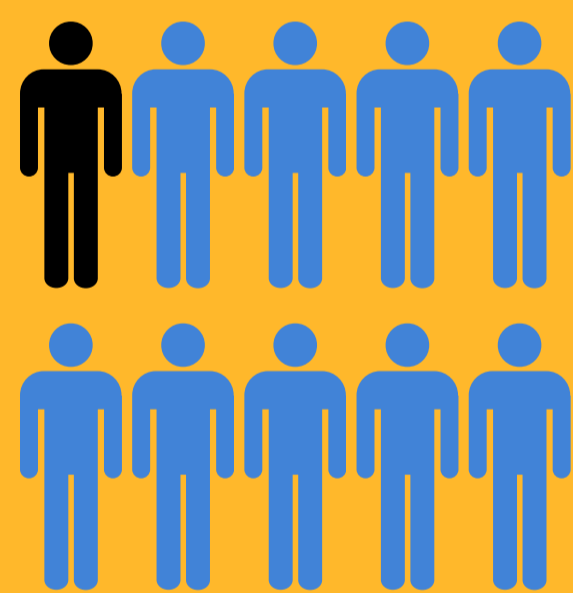
69%



vs.

Nightmares After Successful PTSD Treatment

13%



Clinical Note:

While many service members with PTSD experience nightmares, specific criteria must be met for a **comorbid** Nightmare Disorder diagnosis.

Resource Links:

Please click on any of these links for additional information.

[CDP Webinar: Sleep & PTSD](#)

[American Academy of Sleep Medicine Nightmare Practice Guidelines](#)

Consortium for Health & Military Performance Blogs

[Sleep & PTSD: A Double Whammy](#)

[Treatments for Insomnia & PTSD](#)

[Prioritizing Insomnia & PTSD Treatment](#)

Reference

- Pruiksma, K. E. et al. (2016). Residual sleep disturbances following PTSD treatment in active duty military personnel. *Psychological Trauma*, 8(6): 697-701. doi: [10.1037/tra0000150](https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000150)