Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What can I do to get ready for CBT-I?

A: One of the first tasks in therapy is to set some reasonable goals that will help improve your sleep. It would be helpful to consider what difficulties you would like to see improve and think about how sleep impacts your day-to-day life. Additionally, consider which aspects of your sleep are causing you the most problems. Having a willingness to try new sleep-related behaviors and log your sleep patterns will also help with therapy.

Q: Can I receive CBT-I and take medication for insomnia?

A: Yes, although the goal is to increase the quality and quantity of sleep so that you may not need medication in the long-term. In the meantime, talk to your therapist and prescriber about the specific medications you are taking.

Q: How will I know if CBT-I has been helpful?

A: You will likely notice that you feel less tired, irritable, and have better concentration. Additionally, you may have less interrupted sleep and less worry about sleep. You and your provider may also track how much your insomnia has declined by using an outcome measure, such as the Insomnia Severity Index.

Who We Are

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' Center for Deployment Psychology (CDP) trains military and civilian behavioral health professionals to provide high quality, culturally-sensitive, evidence-based behavioral health services to Service members, Veterans and their families.

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Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia

What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is one of the therapies recommended by the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense for sleep difficulties including trouble falling and staying asleep, or not feeling rested. CBT-I is well researched and has been shown to be very effective with many different types of people, including Service members. This treatment is typically recommended prior to the use of medication for chronic insomnia. CBT-I typically requires approximately 6-8 sessions and has been shown to produce significant long-term sleep improvement. CBT-I sessions are 50 to 60 minutes long when delivered individually and 90 minutes long when delivered in a group setting.

If you decide to participate in CBT-I, you will be asked to:

- Attend all sessions
- Complete a weekly sleep log
- Learn about how and why sleep occurs and your own sleep patterns
- Practice healthy sleep strategies at home
- Provide feedback to your therapist about changes in your sleep and how the therapy is helpful to you

CBT-I is a short-term psychotherapy for treating symptoms of insomnia, which may include:

- Not feeling rested during the day
- Having difficulty falling asleep or awakening often during the night or too early in the morning
- Experiencing increased errors or accidents on-the-job or at home
- Being irritable, depressed or anxious
- Having difficulty paying attention or concentrating throughout the day
- Feeling a loss of energy

What is the Goal of CBT-I?

The overall goal of CBT-I is to help you develop a healthy sleep/wake pattern and helpful beliefs surrounding sleep. CBT-I can help you get better quality sleep by identifying and practicing new sleep routines and applying healthy sleep strategies.

What Will I Be Doing in CBT-I?

Over the course of 6-8 weekly therapy sessions:

- You will work with your therapist to establish specific treatment goals that will help with insomnia.
- You will identify potential problems with current sleep patterns.
- You will be asked to keep weekly sleep logs and find a sleep schedule that is best for your sleep needs.

It will be important for you to use the information learned during the therapy sessions and apply it to your everyday life to help improve your sleeping patterns. These new skills will be helpful after the therapy has ended and will assist you with moving forward in your life.