

# A Novel Approach to Treating and Measuring Posttraumatic Nightmares

A novel approach to treating and measuring posttraumatic nightmares is a research study led by Dr. Maegan Willing in collaboration with the Defense Intrepid Network.

## PROJECT GOAL

This project will develop and pilot a novel treatment integrating Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Nightmares with art therapy (CBT-N+AT) to improve nightmare symptoms and quality of life.

## BACKGROUND

Current nightmare treatments are often inadequate. CBT-N+AT is a promising treatment that helps patients better visualize the nightmare rescription.

## PROJECT DESIGN

The *Dream Beliefs Study* will prepare for the development of the CBT-N+AT manual. Additionally, *Dream Beliefs* will evaluate the psychometric properties of two new measures of disturbing dreams. The CBT-N+AT manual will be developed and evaluated iteratively from feedback from patients, art therapists, clinical psychologists, and subject matter experts. Following a feasibility and acceptability pilot study, the manual will be finalized for large-scale study.

### Dream Beliefs Study

#### 2 Quantitative surveys (N = 550)

- Effect of dream beliefs on nightmare distress
- Validating new scales:
  - Dream Emotion Scale
  - Bad Dreams & Nightmares Scale

#### Qualitative Survey (n = 50)

- Narrative examination of dream beliefs and treatment considerations.

#### Focus Group

- Discussion of incorporating dream beliefs into treatment.

### Manual Development

Develop preliminary manual

Expert review & revisions

Pilot manual (n = 3)

Revise and develop therapist training

Acceptability & Feasibility Testing (n = 15)

Finalize for large scale study

## CURRENT STATUS

The *Dream Beliefs Study* is anticipated to begin this quarter. Manual development is underway by the lead study art therapist.

## FUNDING

CBT-N+AT is funded intramurally by the Uniformed Services University (\$995,984). The project will be conducted from September 2024 through September 2027.