



**Northern Illinois Critical Incident Stress Management Team**  
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## Sleep Problems Handout

### COMMON PROBLEM AREAS

Check areas that apply to you and then consider possible solutions offered below each section:

#### A) Difficulty getting to sleep:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can't stop thinking     | <input type="checkbox"/> Can't get comfortable           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not wanting to be alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Anticipating troublesome dreams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much to "do"        | <input type="checkbox"/> Uncomfortable with the dark     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____            |  |

- ◆ Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, colas, chocolate)
- ◆ Do some gentle stretching exercises before retiring
- ◆ Finish arguments before you try to go to sleep
- ◆ Avoid numerous catnaps in the afternoon or evening
- ◆ Try a relaxation or deep breathing exercise
- ◆ Make a list of what's on your mind
- ◆ Have a glass of warm milk before bed
- ◆ Write in a daily journal or diary
- ◆ Pray - Meditate
- ◆ Listen to relaxing music

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#### B) Problems waking up in the night:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Light sleeper; awakened by noises        | <input type="checkbox"/> Awakened by disturbing dreams |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restless sleep that finally wakes you up |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                             |  |

- ◆ Get up and have a snack and a glass of milk
- ◆ Keep a notebook to emotionally vent by your bed
- ◆ Imagine your thoughts rolling off the top of your head, down your side, & away from your body
- ◆ Picture yourself sitting under a warm shower or waterfall; let your cares wash away for a while
- ◆ Stay awake for 1 hour - enjoy the peace

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#### C) Disturbing dreams:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Repetition of upsetting similar dream                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Dreams about people who have died   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New dreams hard to share with others                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Dreams about a trauma from the past |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dreams that involve danger to self                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Dreams involve danger to loved ones |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dreams that wake you up because of your "urge" to shout |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |  |

- ◆ When awakened by a disturbing or thought-provoking dream, write it down
- ◆ Turn the light on, look around, & get up in order to "shake" the intense feelings of the dream
- ◆ Picture your own ending to the dream
- ◆ If you try to "finish" a dream concentrate on it before you go back to sleep to help set the stage
- ◆ During the day think about what your dreams might mean to you
- ◆ If you dream about loved ones no longer living, try to see your dream as a visit with that person
- ◆ When awake, remind self that you do have power & control over what happens in your dream
- ◆ With repetitive dreams, notice differences each time. Try to picture what might finish the dream

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#### D) Waking up too early:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have not had sufficient sleep            | <input type="checkbox"/> Can't get back to sleep once sun is up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feel exhausted even if you slept through | <input type="checkbox"/> Tired by 10am if you get up at 5am     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                             |   |

- ◆ Go to bed later so you can sleep later
- ◆ Put darker curtains/shades over your windows
- ◆ Use a fan or form of gentle sound to drown out the noise
- ◆ Get up and enjoy the day until you feel the need for a catnap