

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia

Informational Sheet

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) is a highly effective treatment for insomnia. It has been shown to work as well or better than sleep medications, and the benefits continue long after treatment ends. CBT-I is increasingly being offered in primary care settings where 75% of people with insomnia receive treatment. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, CBT-I is the standard treatment for chronic insomnia.

What is Insomnia?

Diagnosis of insomnia requires the presence of difficulties falling asleep, staying asleep, or non-refreshing sleep that are clinically significant and result in daytime consequences, such as:

- distress about poor sleep,
- feeling tired,
- having low energy,
- feeling more easily irritated,
- having trouble with attention, concentration, memory, relationships, or school/work performance.

What is Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment for Insomnia (CBT-I)?

CBT-I is a non-medication treatment of insomnia that is based on scientific research about sleep. The goals of CBT-I are to help you fall asleep, stay asleep, and improve your daytime functioning as a result of better sleep at night.

- The *behavioral* aspects of the treatment consist of two well-developed and empirically supported treatment components aimed at improving the quality and quantity of sleep called sleep efficiency training and stimulus control therapy.
- The *cognitive* component of the treatment focuses on modifying sleep-related cognitions, such as thoughts that increase cognitive arousal and beliefs that interfere with adherence to the insomnia treatment. Mindfulness training may also be used to help you face your problems one moment at a time by focusing on the present, on purpose, without judgment.

What does treatment involve?

You will meet with sleep specialist for an initial assessment regarding your sleep difficulties. Treatment involves 3-6 sessions to learn ways to improve your sleep problem. Extra sessions may be needed, and in some cases your insomnia may get better in fewer than 6 sessions. You will be asked to monitor your sleep using a simple sleep diary each morning. You don't need to stop other mental health therapies or sleep medications while you are in treatment. **DO NOT** abruptly stop any medications without talking to your prescribing provider as this could initially make your sleep worse.

Will CBT-I work for me?

CBT-I has been shown to be effective in treating insomnia across many patient populations, including those with comorbid mental health problems (i.e., depression, post-traumatic stress disorder), chronic pain, cancer, mild traumatic brain injury,. The benefits of CBT-I extend beyond sleep, and include improved mood, reduced irritability, and overall quality of life. Although it is unrealistic to expect that a bad night of sleep will never happen again, the skills will learn in CBT-I will help reduce the likelihood of experiencing insomnia in the future.

Referral

Please ask your physician for a referral to Integrated Sleep & Wellness.

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