

Sleeping to CHANGEpain – Reflecting on the fear of not sleeping

Most people with difficulties sleeping develop a fear of *not* sleeping. Addressing this fear is an important part of improving sleep for two key reasons. First, the fear of not sleeping contributes significantly to sleep issues, and second, the fear of not sleeping deters people from using a very effective tool for improving sleep – sleep restriction.

This reflection can be done on this worksheet or in a journal. If you don't want to write things down, tell someone your reflections. At the very least, acknowledge these things out loud to yourself. Don't keep these things in your head.

Two common emotion-related catchphrases capture the work that is being done here: 'name it to tame it' and 'feel it to heal it.' Additionally, research has found that writing about our feelings is an effective tool for working through them.

Go through this exercise whenever you are feeling fearful of not sleeping.

I am feeling fearful of not sleeping. These are the thoughts running through my head at this time.

(e.g. When I don't get enough sleep, I don't have enough energy to do anything and I end up wasting my days.)

I am feeling fearful of not sleeping. These are the sensations I'm experiencing in my body when I feel this fear.

(e.g. tension through my chest, shallow breathing)

When I am feeling this fear of not sleeping, these are actions I can take and thoughts I can think to reduce my feelings of fear. (e.g. breathing exercises, 'I am safe in this moment')