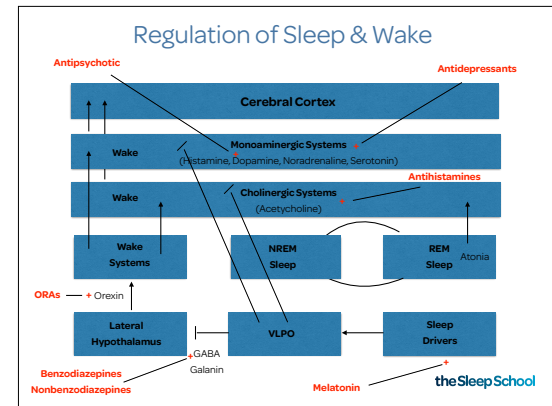
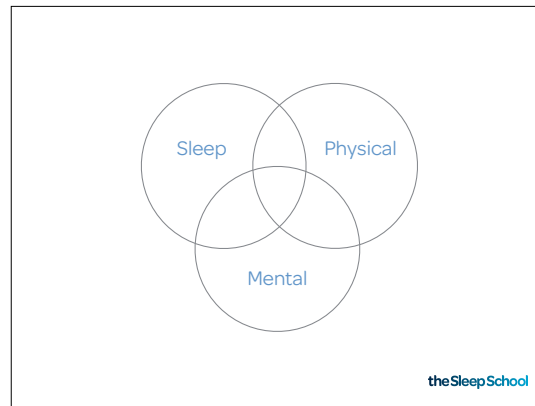
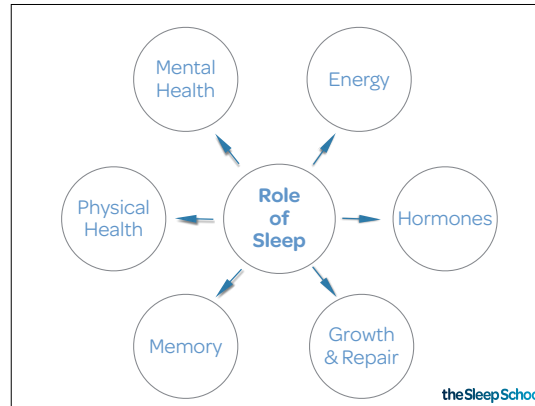


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## How to use ACT for Insomnia

Dr. Guy Meadows (PhD)



## Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

“ACT is a therapeutic approach that uses acceptance and mindfulness processes, and commitment and behaviour change processes, to produce greater psychological flexibility”

Hayes, Wilson, Strosahl, 1999

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## Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Goal

Live a rich, full, meaningful life with less struggle

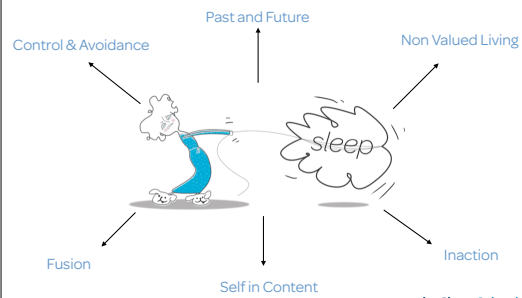
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## Insomnia Tug of War



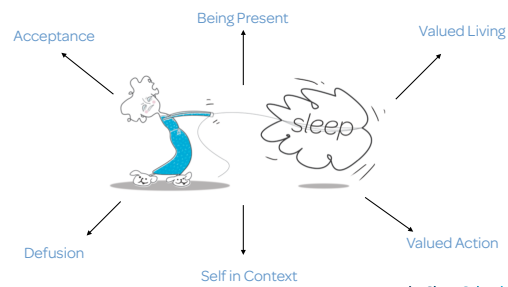
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## Psychological Inflexibility



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## Psychological Flexibility



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## ACT-I Goal

Live a rich, full, meaningful life with less sleep struggle

(Less Struggle = Less Hyper Arousal)  
(Greater Sleep Flexibility)

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## Difference between CBT-I & ACT-I

CBT-I	ACT-I
Symptom Reduction	Symptom Acceptance
Control & Avoidance	Acceptance and Values
Broken	Stuck
Inflexibility	Flexibility
Unworkable	Workable

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## 1. ASSESSMENT

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## Pre Session

- Sleep Diary
- Sleep Questionnaires
  - Insomnia Severity Index (ISI)
  - Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI)
- Acceptance and Action Questionnaire
- Sleep Hygiene Practices Scale

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## During Session

- Case History (Risks, Triggers, Arrivals and Amplifiers)
- Flexible protocol designed to meet client needs
- 1 hour sessions (1 - 8 sessions depending on need)
- ACT Metaphors - tailored

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## Post Session

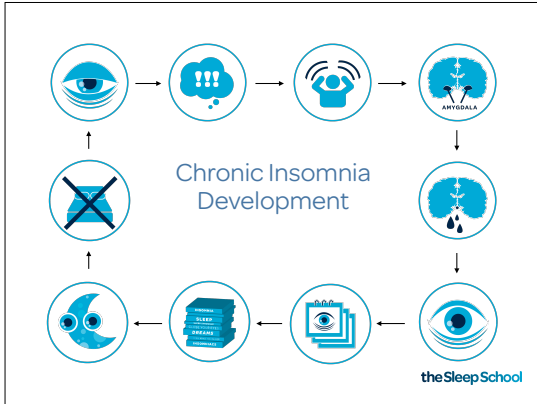
- Homework / information after each session
- Diaries - are they needed
- Follow up assessments (1- 6 months)

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## Vicious Cycle of Insomnia



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2. ACCEPTANCE

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When the solutions become the problem

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### Effectiveness and Cost of Props

- What props do you or your clients rely on to sleep?
- Do they help (short / long term)?
- At what cost?
- If it's not working - perhaps there is another way?
- Acceptance vs Resignation
- Tug of war or quicksand metaphors
- Develop gradual tapering protocols to lessen reliance on props

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### Obstacles to sleeping well



- I will fail
- I can't sleep without pills or props
- My mind is too strong
- Why me
- I'm too tired

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### Acceptance

**Notes**

- Highlights futility of control and so creates a starting point for acceptance
- Promotes 'good sleepers do nothing' concept
- Lessen reliance on props
- Lessens hyper arousal
- Saves valuable energy
- Starts journey towards normal sleep
- Sludge in a glass metaphor

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### 3. MINDFULNESS

### Mindlessness

### Mindfulness Exercises



1. Noticing Senses
2. Noticing Thoughts
3. Describing VS Evaluating
4. Noticing Breath
5. Mindfulness in Everyday Life
6. Noticing at Night

### Practice Guidelines

1. Mindfulness is NOT designed to get you to sleep
2. Mind-wandering is allowed
3. I'm not doing it right thoughts - perfectly normal
4. The time is now
5. Regular practice is helpful - find your routine
6. Things can get worse before they get better

### Mindfulness

#### Notes

- Helpful start to a session
- Helpful Homework
- Cultivates present moment objectivity and ability to let go of struggling at night
- Lessens daytime and night time arousal (Less amygdala activation)
- Promotes quiet wakefulness
- Improved sleep onset and sleep efficiency

### 4. DEFUSION & SELF IN CONTEXT

## The Welcome Response



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## Typical Strategies for Dealing With Unwelcome Thoughts

### Strategies

- Challenging
- Blocking
- Avoiding
- Fighting

### Pros

- Feel like you are in control
- Doing something to fix problem

### Cons

- Increase no. of thoughts
- Increased fear of thoughts
- Glorify neg thoughts
- Increase arousal

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## Welcoming Unwelcome Thoughts

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### My Thoughts List

- Why me?
- Will I sleep tonight?
- If I don't sleep, I won't be able to cope
- How can I fix this?
- Will this ever end?
- What's this doing to my health?
- Should I take another pill?
- What is wrong with me?
- Nothing seems to work

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## Welcoming Unwelcome Thoughts

### Exercises

- Get out of your mind - partner exercise
- Label - 'why', 'sleep', 'coping', 'Pills' etc
- Describe - 'I'm having the thought that...'
- Thank - 'Thank you mind for that thought'
- Image - change colour, shape, perspective
- Welcome - meet and greet

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## Welcoming Unwelcome Emotional Reactions

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## Typical Strategies for Dealing With Unwelcome Emotional Reactions

### Strategies

- Forced Relaxation
- Avoiding
- Fighting

### Pros

- Feel like you are in control
- Doing something to fix problem

### Cons

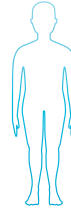
- Increased strength and longevity
- Increased fear of emotional reactions
- Increased arousal level

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## My Emotional Reactions List

### Emotions

Frustrated  
Anxious  
Sad  
Angry  
Depressed  
Helpless  
Hopeless  
Lonely  
Desperate  
Resigned



### Physical Sensations

Raised heart rate  
Palpitations  
Tight chest  
Knot in stomach  
Tense shoulders  
Hot / cold  
Fidgety  
Adrenalised  
Sore eyes  
Headaches

### Urges

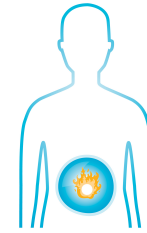
Toss and turn  
Take medication  
Get out of bed  
Read, TV, radio, Ipad, eat  
Change beds  
Relaxation techniques  
Block out thoughts

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## Welcoming Unwelcome Emotional Reactions

### Exercises

- Location
- Strength
- Activity
- Shape
- Colour
- Texture
- Play acting / visualising



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## Defusion & Self in Context

### Notes

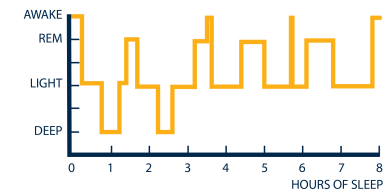
- Untangle from your thoughts, images, memories and stories
- Make space for your emotions, physical sensations and urges
- Thoughts and Emotional Reactions appear louder at night
- Practice leads to less arousal during day and night
- Less Amygdala activation
- Activate welcome response

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## 5. Sleep Timing, Drive and Bedtime Behaviours

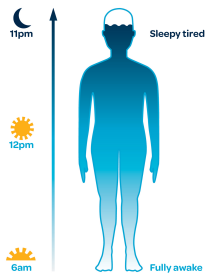
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## What is Normal Sleep?



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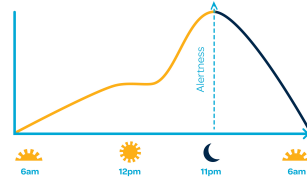
## Sleep Drive



- Build daytime drive (16 - 17hrs)
- Consider - age, family etc
- Sleep restriction
- Daytime napping
- Choose sleep duration

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## Sleep Timing



- Regular timing
- Flexible
- Listen to your body
- Workable
- Get up on time
- Choose sleep timing

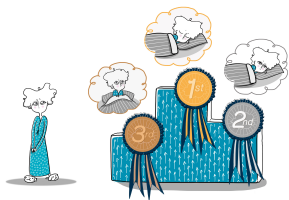
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## The Three Step Wind-down

1. Stop all stimulating activities 30 - 40 minutes before bed
2. Engage in non stimulating activities (darken down)
3. Get into bed, read, chat, lights out and allow sleep to emerge

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## Staying In Bed



### Silver Place

- Quite wakefulness
- Accept discomfort
- Mindful opportunity
- Less struggle
- Restful benefits
- Stepping stone to gold
- Allow flexibility

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## Sleep Hygiene Practices

- **Lifestyle factors:** Caffeine, Alcohol, Exercise, Diet
- **Bedroom Environment:** Light, Noise, Temperature, Comfort
- **Bedroom habits:** Wind down, Night Time Behaviours

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## Sleep Timing Drive and Bedtime Behaviours

### Notes

- Recognise normality of night time waking
- Set sleep duration and timing and allow sleep to expand into space
- Learn to stay in bed with your insomnia
- Promote helpful and workable sleeping habits
- Adapt to individual needs (e.g. long or short sleeper, chronic pain etc)
- Do what normal sleepers do...nothing

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## 6. Values and Committed Action

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### Narrowed Life



What would you be doing in your life if you didn't have to spend all of this energy controlling your sleep?

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### What Do You Want Your Life To Stand For?

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### Where Is Your Bus Heading?

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### Committed Action

- Short, mid, long term valued based goals
- Are my actions helpful?
- Do they move me towards my values?

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### Values and Committed Action

#### Notes

- Live a valued life
- Commit to taking helpful action - small steps everyday
- Happy & content brain is a sleepy brain

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## 7. KEEPING YOUR SLEEP ON TRACK

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## Keeping Sleep On Track

### Notes

- Get to know the sleep sabotage
- Recognise that poor sleep is part of everyday life
- Be mindful of any old or new arrivals
- Meet and greet all who show up
- Complete sleep assessments

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## ACT-I Support Tools



amazon.com.  
audible.com



Available on the  
App Store



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# Thank you

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