

TRAUMA BRAIN & SLEEP

ALTERATION OF SLEEP ARCHITECTURE

Over the past 25 years, I have been listening to many clients who have been diagnosed with PTSD, and hearing them speak of a major issue that lack of sleep has been for them, without exception. The severity of their PTSD symptoms and the level of their current day-to-day stressors are significant in understanding the frequency and severity of these sleep problems.

Noted issues include:

- i) Extended Sleep latency - difficulty falling asleep.*
- ii) Nightmares (theme: "no matter what I try to do, I can't escape this awful thing that is happening to me.)*
- iii) Night Sweats (also called Night Terrors) - waking in a state without a dream being apparent.*
- iv) Wake after only 2-3 hours of sleep, waking every hour after that.*
- v) Loss of Slow Wave Sleep - Stage 3 and Stage 4 sleep is depleted or non-existent. This means non-restorative sleep.*
- vi) Restless Movement*
- vii) Bruxism - (associated with post trauma conditions) grinding teeth down, requires a splint*
- viii) Best quality sleep happens at Sunrise ... ie during Daylight hours, also in the chair after lunch.*

My hypothesis is that the Unconscious Brain is in control during sleep, and maintains the sense that there is no safety or security while deeply unconscious.

Especially so if it is dark outside, ie: "if some emergency arises, I must be ready to deal with the threat immediately; I won't be able to do that if I can't see what is happening."

After months, years, even decades of this altered sleep architecture, it is no wonder that the person with a trauma brain is thoroughly exhausted.

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