

by BZA Therapist Geraldine Wetzel, LCPC

Everyone can have a bad night's sleep occasionally. Life stressors and events, such as the death of a loved one, a fight with a spouse or pressure of a job, may also cause sleep disturbances for a short period of time. Some medicines, illnesses, or pain may disrupt one's sleep. Worry about sleep can cause sleep disturbances and one can get in a vicious cycle.

When is it time to worry and get assessed for insomnia. Common symptoms include:

- Unable to fall asleep at night
- Waking up too early or during the night
- Feeling tired, but restless
- Depression or anxiety
- Lack of focus or memory
- Not feeling rested in the morning

If a lack of sleep or lack of a restful sleep are causing problems in one's ability to function, it might be time for an assessment for insomnia or a sleep disorder.

What can be done for those who have insomnia? According to the American College of Physicians the first line of treatment for insomnia is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy-insomnia (CBT-a). CBT-i is a treatment for insomnia without the use of sleeping pills. The cognitive part of CBT-I helps one to acknowledge unhelpful and negative thinking and to learn ways to modify these thoughts. The behavioral part of CBT-i helps one to break bad habits and encourage new ones to help get a good night's sleep.

Some of the following are various techniques used with CBT-i:

Stimulus control therapy: Factors in one's routine that keeps the mind from sleeping.

Sleep hygiene: Looking at one's lifestyle and assessing how it might affect sleep.

Relaxation training: Ways to calm one's mind and body

Remaining passively awake: This is trying not to fall asleep.

A therapist will help to choose the best techniques for the individual.

At BZA we offer short term CBT-i. There are sessions every other week with a therapist trained in CBT-I for six sessions. This can be stand alone treatment or in conjunction with ongoing therapy.