The Better Sleep Workshop Series

Session 3

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Welcome Back!

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Recap of Session 2

- Sleep hygiene and routines
- Stimulus control strategies
- Brain dump exercise
- Progressive muscle relaxation exercise

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For this session you will need...

- Pen and paper or notebook
- Optional coloured pencils for bilateral drawing exercise

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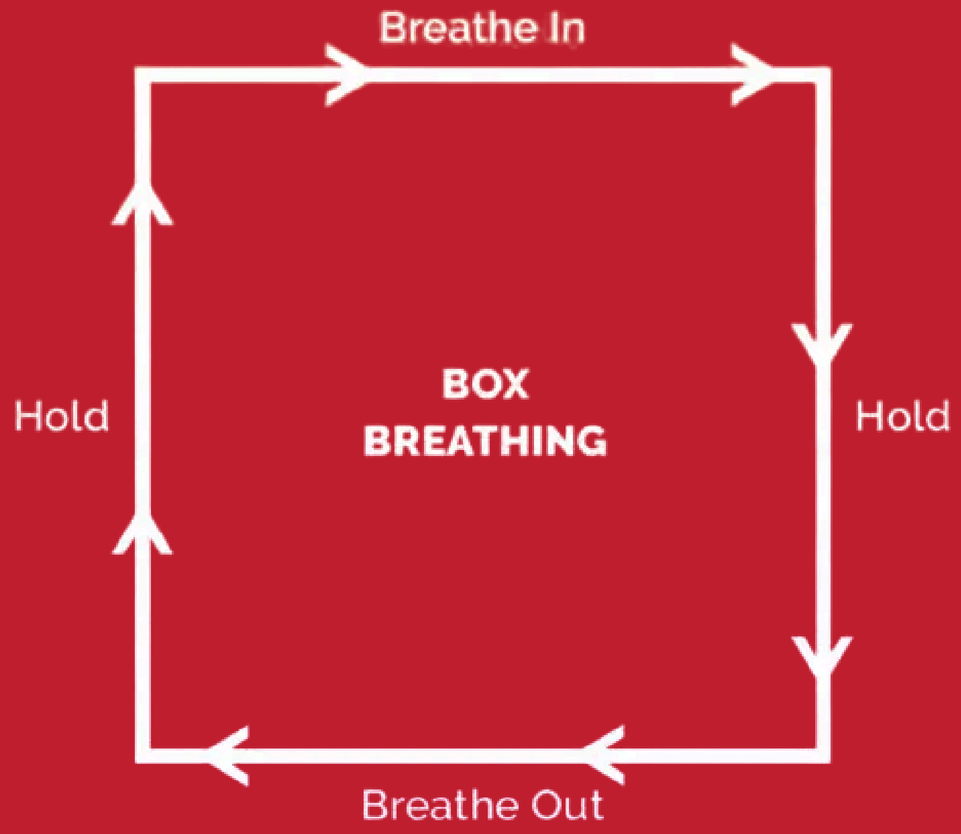
A Brief Practice

- “Boxed Breathing” grounding exercise
- Cameras on/off
- Eyes open or closed



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Reflection

What patterns did you notice this week? Which strategies did you try? What worked well, what was callenging?

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Common Sleep Challenges

- Stress related awakenings
- Sleep procrastination
- Nighttime rumination
- Circadian misalignment

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Sleep Anxiety & Hyperarousal

- How worry and expectation affect sleep onset
- Brain/body remain alert even when tired

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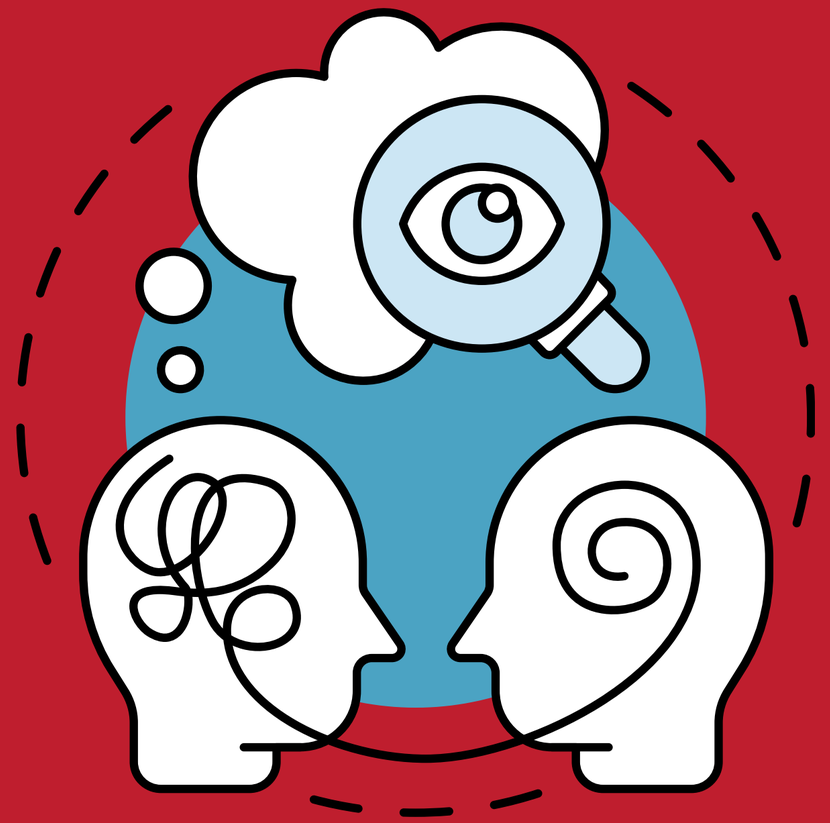
Cognitive Patterns Affecting Sleep

- Negative self talk
  - “I’ll never get sleep”
- Catastrophizing
  - “What-if” thinking
- Over-monitoring sleep
  - Checking clocks, analyzing sleep
- All or nothing thinking



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Cognitive Stategies for Sleep

- Label thoughts as “just thoughts”
- Gentle reframing
- Journaling or externalizing thoughts
- Mindfulness: notice thoughts without acting

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Helpful Meditation & Relaxation Practices

- Progressive muscle relaxation ✓
- Breath-focused mindfulness ✓
- Visualization exercises ✓
- Body scan

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A Brief Practice

- Cameras on/off
- Eyes open or closed
- Sit comfortably or lie down
- Follow along at your own pace

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Reflection

Take a moment to notice how your body feels
now compared to before the practice.
What sensations, tension, or areas of relaxation
did you become aware of?
Did anything shift in your thoughts or emotions
while scanning your body?

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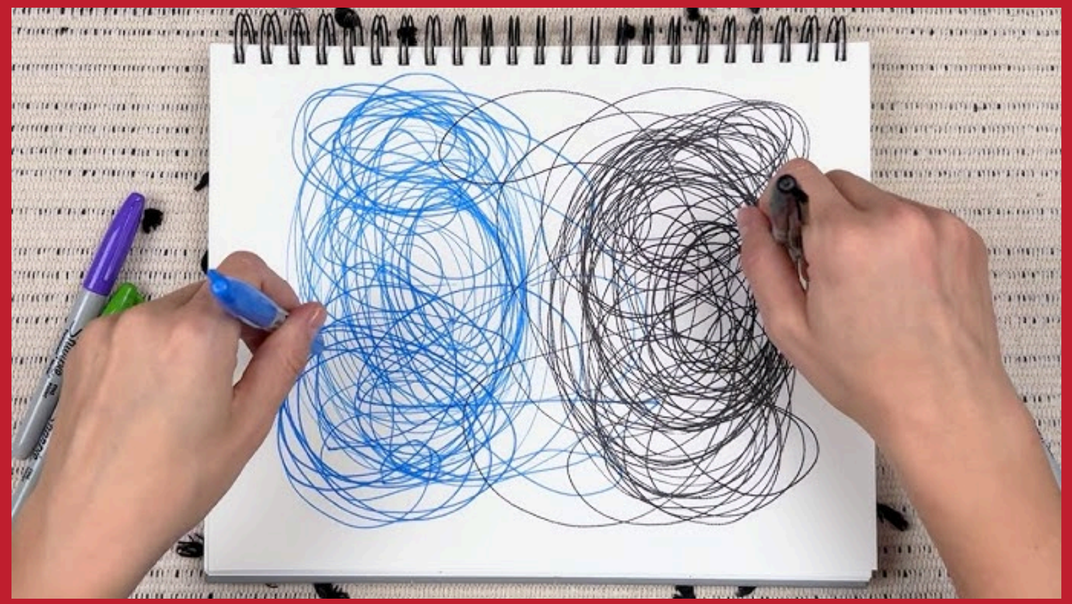
Bilateral Drawing Exercise

- Draw simultaneously with both hands
- Simple shapes or lines
- Focus on process, not the outcome
- Notice sensations, rhythm, and body awareness



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Reflection

How did it feel to draw with both hands?

Did you notice tension, release or calmness?

Did thoughts or emotions come up while drawing?

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Developing a Personal Sleep Toolkit

- Pick and combine practises that feel most helpful to you
- Experiment, mix, and adjust over time

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Your Personal Sleep Tookit

Behavioural Strategies	Cognitive Strategies
Relaxation/Mind-Body Practices	Environmental & Lifestyle Supports

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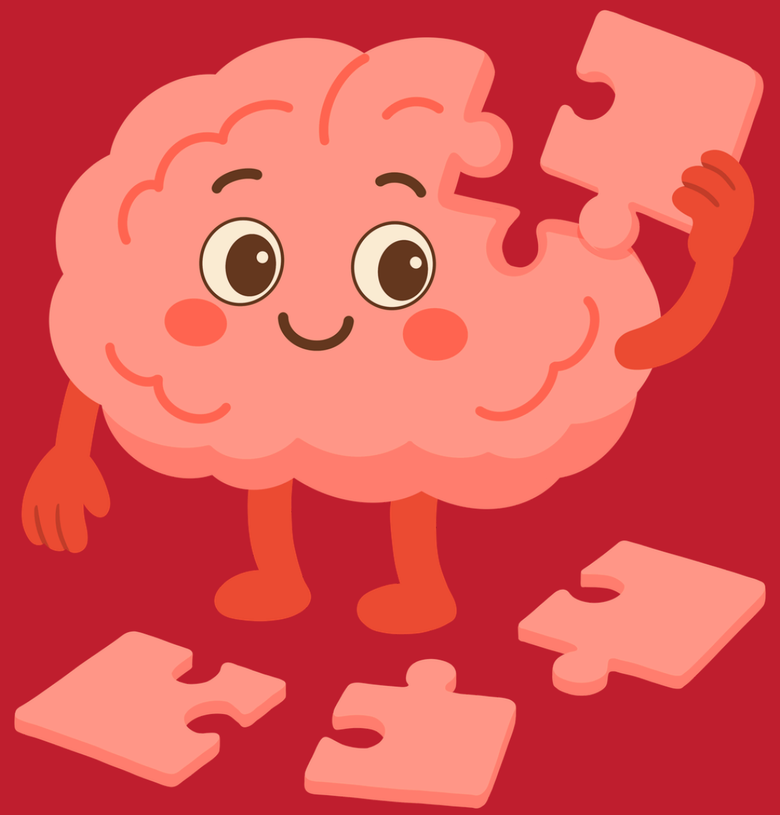
Behavioural Strategies

- Consistent wake-up and bedtimes
- Wind-down window/evening routine
- Stimulus control (bed=sleep only)
- Limiting naps or timing them strategically
- Reducing screen exposure before bed



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Cognitive Strategies

- Brain dump exercise
- Gentle though labeling
  - ie. “Just a thought”
- Cognitive reframing
  - ie. “I might take longer to fall asleep tonight, and that’s ok”
- Journaling or reflective writing

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Relaxation Strategies

- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)
- Body scan meditation
- Bilateral drawing exercise
- Breath-focused mindfulness
    - ie. Boxed breathing
- Visualization exercises
    - ie. Floating leaves exercise

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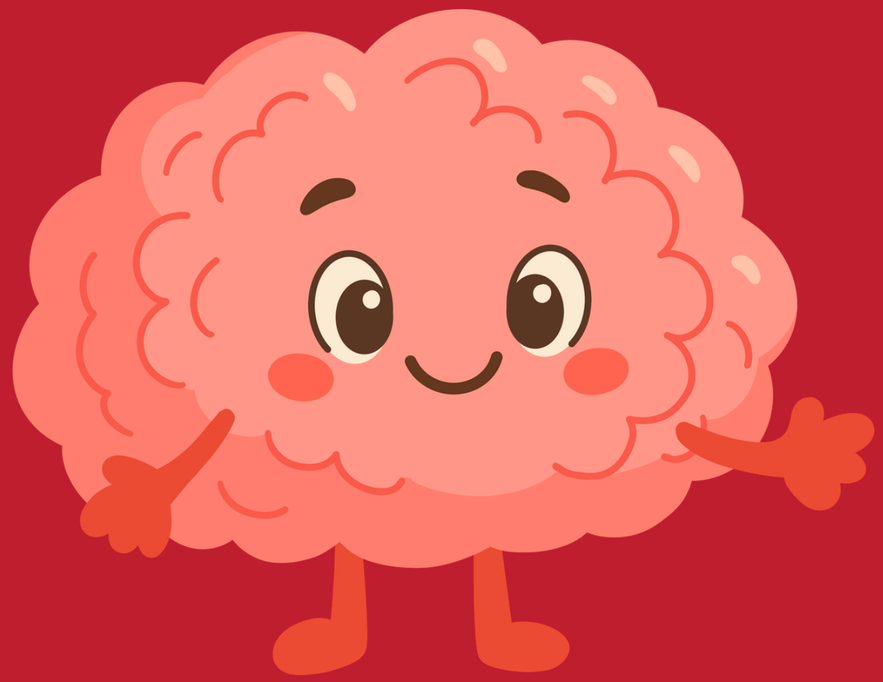
Environmental Strategies

- Comfortable sleeping environment
  - Temperature → cool is usually best
  - Light → blackout curtains, sleep mask
  - Noise → earplugs, white noise, fan
- Limiting caffeine or heavy meals before bed



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Planning for Challenges

- Sleep will naturally fluctuate
  - One poor night does not undue progress
- Use your toolkit strategies when challenges arise
  - Revist exercises as outlined
- Focus on notice-over-fix: observe patterns without judgement

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Carry Forward Task / Next Steps

- Continue with sleep diary
  - Track sleep patterns as needed
- Continue using your personal sleep toolkit
- Try one relaxation or meditation practice nightly

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Reflection

Reflect on your progress over the three sessions.

What strategies have you found most helpful?

What will you continue to practice moving forward?

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Thank you!

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