Sleep Problems Handout

**COMMON PROBLEM AREAS**

Check areas that apply to you and then consider possible solutions offered below each section:

A) **Difficulty getting to sleep:**
- Can’t stop thinking __ Can’t get comfortable
- Not wanting to be alone __ Anticipating troublesome dreams
- Too much to “do” __ Uncomfortable with the dark
- Other: _______________________

- Avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, colas, chocolate)
- Make a list of what’s on your mind
- Do some gentle stretching exercises before retiring
- Have a glass of warm milk before bed
- Finish arguments before you try to go to sleep
- Write in a daily journal or diary
- Avoid numerous catnaps in the afternoon or evening
- Pray - Meditate
- Try a relaxation or deep breathing exercise
- Listen to relaxing music

B) **Problems waking up in the night:**
- Light sleeper; awakened by noises __ Awakened by disturbing dreams
- Restless sleep that finally wakes you up __ Other: _______________________

- Get up and have a snack and a glass of milk
- Keep a notebook to emotionally vent by your bed
- Imagine your thoughts rolling off the top of your head, down your side, & away from your body
- Picture yourself sitting under a warm shower or waterfall; let your cares wash away for a while
- Stay awake for 1 hour - enjoy the peace

C) **Disturbing dreams:**
- Repetition of upsetting similar dream __ Dreams about people who have died
- New dreams hard to share with others __ Dreams about a trauma from the past
- Dreams that involve danger to self __ Dreams involve danger to loved ones
- Dreams that wake you up because of your “urge” to shout __ Other: _______________________

- When awakened by a disturbing or thought-provoking dream, write it down
- Turn the light on, look around, & get up in order to “shake” the intense feelings of the dream
- Picture your own ending to the dream
- If you try to “finish” a dream concentrate on it before you go back to sleep to help set the stage
- During the day think about what your dreams might mean to you
- If you dream about loved ones no longer living, try to see your dream as a visit with that person
- When awake, remind self that you do have power & control over what happens in your dream
- With repetitive dreams, notice differences each time. Try to picture what might finish the dream

D) **Waking up too early:**
- Have not had sufficient sleep __ Can’t get back to sleep once sun is up
- Feel exhausted even if you slept through __ Tired by 10am if you get up at 5am
- Other: _______________________

- Go to bed later so you can sleep later
- Put darker curtains/shades over your windows
- Use a fan or form of gentle sound to drown out the noise
- Get up and enjoy the day until you feel the need for a catnap