

Sleep, Nightmares & Feeling Safe at Night

A trauma-informed night-time planning resource for sleep difficulties, nightmares and waking in high alert.

Why nights can feel difficult

Trauma can affect sleep through nightmares, intrusive memories, alertness to sounds, fear of losing control, or waking with the body already activated.

My night-time pattern

What tends to happen before bed?

What makes sleep feel less safe or more difficult?

What do I notice when I wake from a nightmare?

Are there times, sounds or sensations that make nights harder?

Making the room feel more present-day

What lighting feels right?

What neutral or comforting objects help orient me?

Would a clock, familiar scent, water, grounding object or soft sound help?

What can I remove or change if it acts as a reminder?

If I wake distressed

Orient to the date, room and present moment.

Put my feet on the floor or feel the bed supporting me.

Use slow breathing only if it feels comfortable.

Name what I can see, hear and touch.

My next support step if I cannot settle is...

Gentle safety note: This resource is for reflection and stabilisation, not for forcing yourself to revisit traumatic memories. If you feel unable to keep yourself safe or are in a mental health emergency, seek urgent professional help.