

## BEHAVIOURAL SLEEP MEDICINE PROGRAM (BSMP)

### INTRODUCTION

Behavioural Sleep Medicine (BSM) is a non-drug, evidence based, individualized, and patient-centred program which addresses the most impactful behavioural, psychological, and physiological factors that interfere with sleep. Our thought patterns and emotions can play a significant role in health and disease. BSM recognizes that what people believe about their bodies and their illnesses may be important for healing and that how we live our lives, what we think, and what we do may all influence our health in important ways. BSM interventions may also be used in conjunction with sleep medications prescribed by your physician. Our Behavioural Sleep Medicine Specialists (BSMS) collaborate with our sleep team to provide an interdisciplinary approach to the diagnosis, management, and treatment of the following sleep problems for adolescents and adults:

- Insomnia
- Difficulty tolerating CPAP treatment for sleep apnea
- Recurrent nightmares
- Shift Work
- Circadian Rhythm Disorders
- Psychological dependency on sleep medications

Our program consists of two to six, 30-minute sessions with a BSMS over a period of one to six months and it is **covered by Alberta Health and Wellness, at no cost to the patient**. This helps to ensure you attain success and confidence in managing your sleep, so you can focus on living a full life and enjoy restful sleep. **Please note that we require 48 hours' notice to cancel or reschedule any appointments to avoid being charged a no-show or late cancellation fee of \$75.**

### BSM PROGRAM COMPONENTS

#### Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I)

CBT-I is the most effective first-line treatment for chronic insomnia. It is also helpful for nightmares and difficulty tolerating CPAP therapy. CBT-I is an excellent alternative for patients who wish to treat their trouble sleeping at night without sleep medication, and for those who wish to taper off or reduce their sleep medication. The most effective treatment approach may combine several of the following methods:

- **Stimulus Control therapy**  
We use specific techniques to reduce the arousal that stops you from having a deep and restful sleep.
- **Sleep Restriction**  
We develop individualized strategies to improve the quality of your sleep and then increase the amount of good quality sleep that you can achieve. Sleep Restriction Therapy is also beneficial for patients tapering off sleeping pills.
- **Sleep Hygiene**  
We will coach you to develop and implement lifestyle changes that create a stable sleep routine using nutrition, physical activity, natural light exposure and other lifestyle and behavioural strategies.
- **Relaxation Training**  
We have a range of proven methods for helping people relax and gain the health benefits of relaxation even in the most stressful of situations.
- **Cognitive Control and Psychotherapy**  
We provide you with effective methods of taking control of your worries to reduce the effect of anxiety on your sleep, rest and recovery.

## Mindfulness

This practice helps you reduce anxiety, increase body awareness, and to live more fully in the present moment.

## Imagery Rehearsal Therapy for Nightmares (IRT-N)

The fears and negative emotions associated with nightly occurrences of bad dreams are treated by a technique called Imagery Rehearsal Therapy (IRT-N). This process helps identify, confront, and gain control over the content of the nightmare. Children, teenagers, adults and older individuals can benefit from this technique.

## Chronotherapy, Circadian Rhythm Entrainment and Bright Light Therapy

Chronotherapy considers your internal biological clock (your body's natural rhythms and cycles) and aims to align bedtime, rise time and routines with this clock when possible, which may involve properly timed exposure to bright light. Light exposure is the strongest environmental cue to our master clock which affects our "other body clocks" that control body temperature, alertness, appetite, digestion, mood, sleep, and hormones. Light therapy can be used to help regulate and synchronize our body clocks.

## Sleep Medication Tapering/Reduction

Sleeping pills are effective for acute/short-term insomnia and can produce quick relief. The benefits last for several nights up to a few weeks. There is little evidence of lasting benefits after stopping or with nightly and long-term use. All sleep medications carry a risk of dependence. Their role is to help with cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia (CBT-I), the 1<sup>st</sup> line treatment for insomnia, which has lasting benefits and is more effective than sleeping pills for chronic insomnia. We provide a step by step, individualized approach for tapering off or reducing sleep medications when appropriate.

