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Improving Sleep Quality in Human Trafficking Survivors

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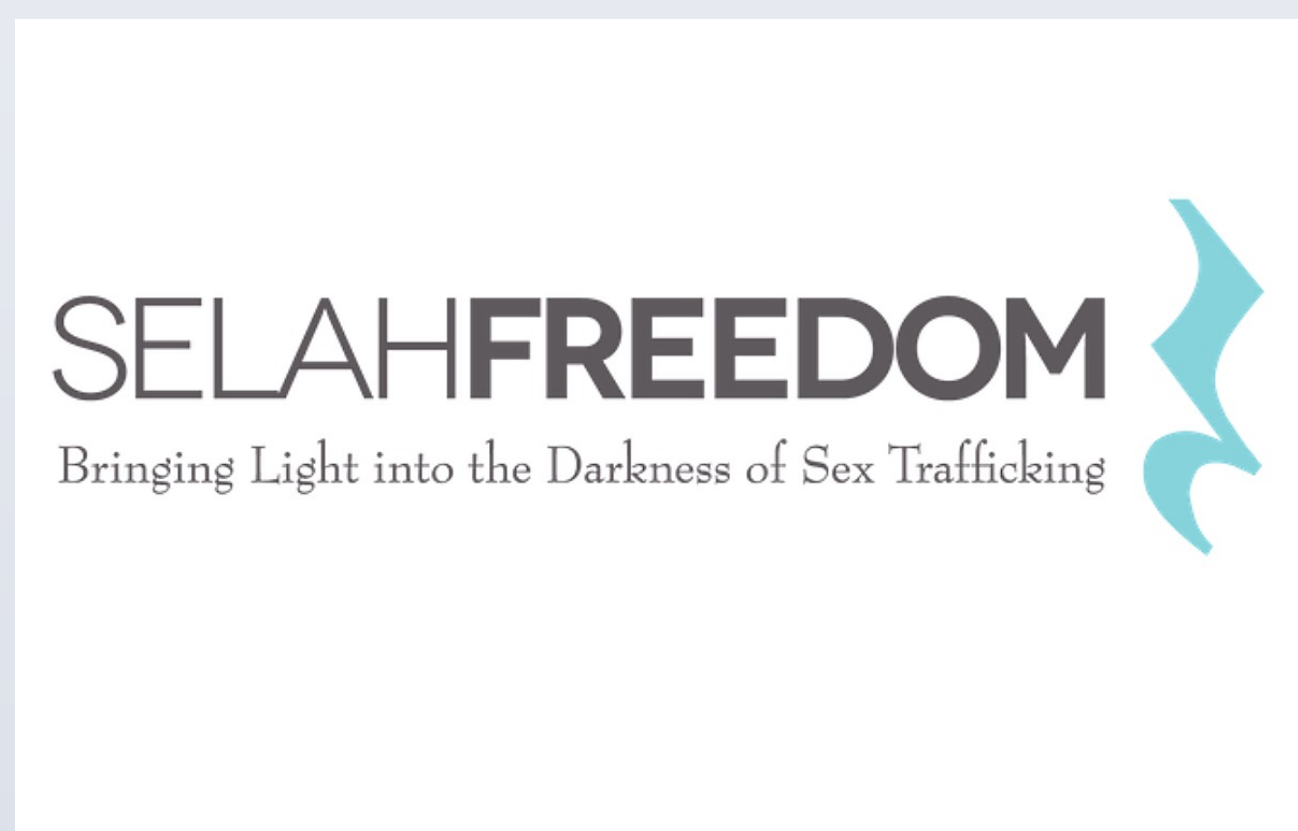
Improving Sleep Quality in Human Trafficking Survivors Program & Policy development

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Selah Freedom – Tampa, Florida

Introduction

Sleep and rest are conceptualized as restorative occupations that are necessary for occupational balance and promoting function and well-being. Traumatic events can lead to adverse effects on a person's functioning including physical, emotional, social, and/or spiritual. Gaining healthy sleeping patterns, by remediating sleep disturbances can promote healing of trauma (Ho & Siu, 2018).



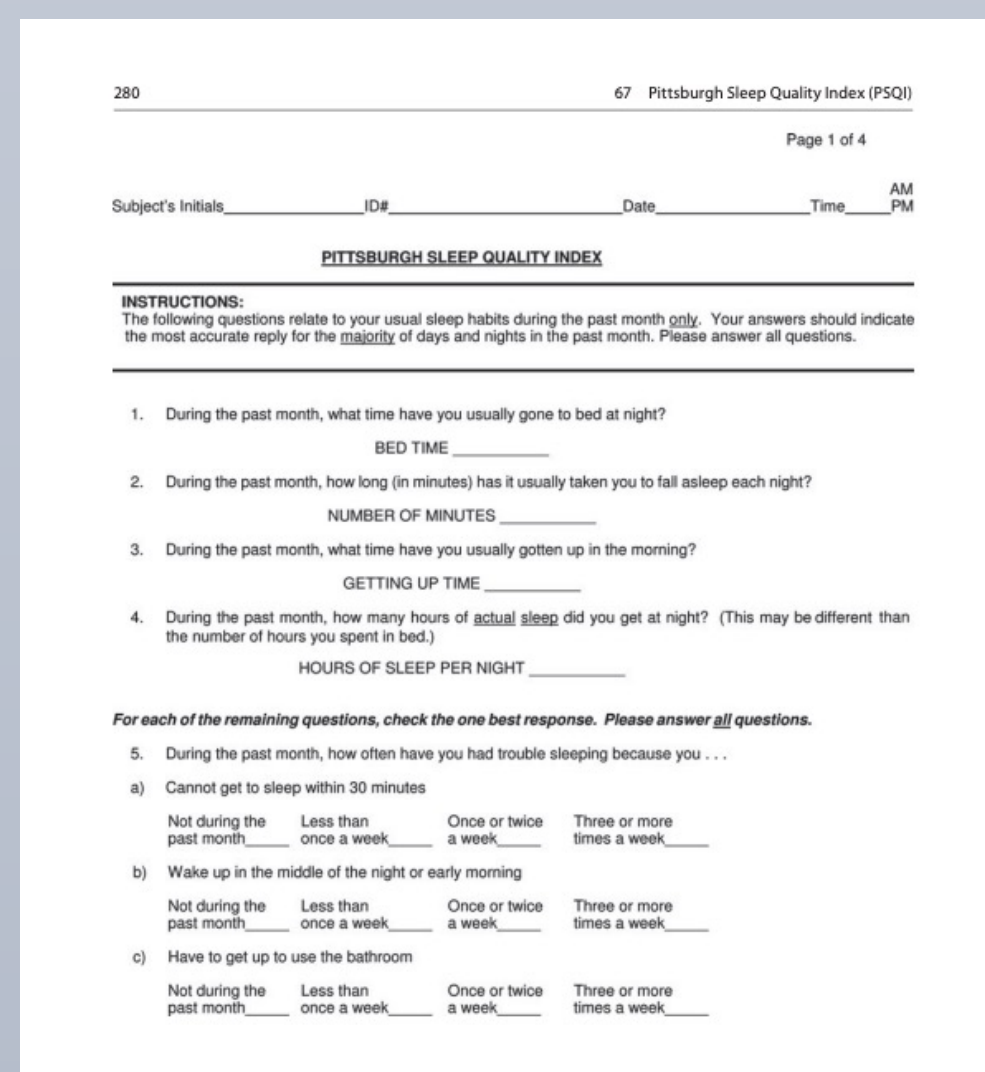
Site Description

Selah Freedom is an anti-human trafficking non-profit organization based in Florida and the Midwest. The mission of Selah to put an end to sex trafficking and freedom to the exploited through their 5 programs;

1. Awareness
2. Prevention
3. Outreach
4. Residential
5. consulting

Summary of Needs Assessment

- Limited research on occupational therapy's role in improving sleep and rest for adults who have experienced trauma
- Administered Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI)
- Common reasons for poor sleep quality:
 - night terrors
 - change of environment
 - anxiety
 - poor habits



Literature Review Summary

There is minimal research and knowledge on the recovery process of those who have experienced trauma from sex trafficking and the role of occupational therapy (Boyanapalli, 2020).

There is no literature presented about Selah Freedom and a curriculum of sleep and rest that is available to be used as an education tool for their existing and future residents of the program as well as for staff of the organization.

"Occupational therapist have the potential to be leaders in the rehabilitation phase for a survivor of trafficking due to the unique approach of using occupations to overcome challenges" (Cerny et al., 2019, p. 288).

TRAUMA RESPONSE IN THE BODY

- Exhaustion
- Anxiety
- Dissociation
- Agitation

Common sleep disturbances

- *Flashbacks & troubling thoughts
- *Nighttime and darkness can, in and of themselves, bring about added anxiety, and restlessness.
- *Nightmares can frighten a survivor back to consciousness.
- *Feelings of distress, leading to concentration and focusing problems during the day.
- *Insomnia: individual has difficulty falling or staying asleep or experiences non-restorative sleep (Roth, 2007).
- *Chronic hyperarousal

Sleep hygiene tips

- Keep a regular bedtime and wake-up time
- Exercise regularly during daylight hours
- Spend some time each day in natural sunlight
- Do some relaxing activities before bedtime: e.g., reading a book, yoga, etc.
- If you nap during the day, limit the nap to only 30 minutes
- Do not toss and turn. If you cannot fall asleep, get up and do a laid-back activity (like reading) in dim light until you start to feel drowsy
- Try Worrying Earlier in the Day. Plan for 15 minutes during the day to process these thoughts. Writing a to-do list or thinking about solutions can be a healthy way to deal with stress and prevent it from interfering with sleep later.

Occupational therapy & sleep/rest

In occupational therapy theories, sleep is conceptualized as a restorative occupation with the goal of rest and recuperation, and good sleep and rest could support the formation of the occupational mix of self-care, work, and leisure during the day. The concepts of occupational balance focus on time use and suggest that the balance between rest/sleep and daytime activity is important in promoting function and well-being (Ho & Siu, 2018).

FAQ

Q: How much sleep do I need?
A: Varies across age groups; adults typically need 7-8 hours.

Q: Why is sleep so important?
A: Sleep is essential to survival. It affects every aspect of the body (brain, heart, mood, immunity, lungs, etc.)

Q: What happens if you don't get enough sleep?
A: Poor sleep habits can lead to sleep deprivation. This can cause chronic health problems down the line such as, obesity, depression, heart & kidney disease.

References

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INFO AND TIPS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF SLEEP/ REST FOR THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED TRAUMA

Capstone Project Description

- Shadowed/ observed programming at assessment phase of Selah Freedom program for 16 weeks (6-8 week blackout phase for survivors).
- Through building relationships with the residents and staff, I was able to identify a need for improving sleep quality among the residents.
- Unable to identify an existing educational curriculum at Selah Freedom on how to address sleep disruption for adults who have experienced trauma.
- Utilized the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) to gather data and create an education plan catered to the resident's identified needs.
- Curated material aimed to educate residents on sleep hygiene and sleep interventions to improve the occupation of sleep using a trauma informed care approach.
- PDF handout, video recording, and brochure handout was provided to the assessment and long-term phases of the Selah Freedom program for future use of new residents.

Learning Objectives Achieved

- Researched sleep interventions and sleep hygiene for individuals who have experienced a traumatic event
- Processed with residents on sleep difficulties
- Created an educational brochure for succinct version of material available to future residents
- Created educational module on improving sleep quality for those with trauma (human trafficking survivors)
- Created PDF handout for a guide to education module
- Educated residents of Selah Freedom assessment house on ways to improve sleep quality/ sleep hygiene

Implications for OT Practice

- Occupational therapy services include the population of survivors of human trafficking, as it is considered a form of trauma (along with incarceration).
- Sleep is considered an essential occupation for an individual's health and well-being.
- Occupational therapy services should be made available to the population of human trafficking survivors in addressing sleep quality and other factors that may be limiting their occupational performance through trauma informed care.



REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Reference list available upon request