

Understanding the impacts of SLEEP & TRAUMA

HOW ARE SLEEP & TRAUMA RELATED?

Insomnia, nightmares, and obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) impact **90%** of people suffering from PTSD. Sleep disturbances may contribute to the onset, maintenance, and recovery from PTSD following a traumatic event.



ONSET

Poor sleep quality or insomnia prior to experiencing a traumatic event can increase the risk of developing PTSD.

MAINTENANCE

The presence of sleep problems may exacerbate other PTSD symptoms. Sleep disturbances interfere with the brain's ability to process memories and emotions, hinder emotional learning that takes place during treatment for PTSD, and daytime sleepiness may increase levels of anxiety, emotional reactivity, and sensitivity to triggers. There are multiple overlapping brain regions impacted by sleep and PTSD (e.g., amygdala, hippocampus) that are linked to symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, and hyperarousal.



RECOVERY

Overall, sleep problems may slow down the recovery process following a traumatic event. Continued sleep disturbances following PTSD treatment may also increase the risk of PTSD symptom relapse.

FRIDAY FAST FACTS

Be sure to check out the [ISTSS Friday Fast Facts](#) for more tools and resources related to sleep, trauma, and PTSD.

