

Sleep Apnea Awareness Newsletter

SPRING 2009

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Upcoming Events

Sleep Apnea Awareness Meetings

Stoughton, MA
June 2

Please join us on Tuesday, June 2, 2009 from 6:30 -

Welcome!

Welcome to the Sleep Apnea Awareness Spring E-Newsletter! We created this newsletter to provide education about sleep apnea, inform you about the latest treatments, and to share with you our patient experiences. Please feel free to forward this newsletter to family and friends. Enjoy!

The Evolution of Relaxation Therapies

Rick Clerici

Behavioral Sleep Medicine, Sleep HealthCenters



Modern medicine over the past fifty years has increasingly realized and valued the benefits of relaxation and stress management. Studies have shown that relaxation techniques benefit the cardiovascular, immune and digestive systems, along with having a positive effect on anxiety disorders and depression.

Relaxation techniques also increase a person's emotional resilience and overall sense of wellbeing. Many of these findings were quantified by Herbert Benson at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center along with a team of researchers from Harvard Medical School. He and his colleagues spent twenty years studying the effects of many ancient religious practices from prayer and meditation to yoga and visualization. It was Benson who coined the term "the relaxation response".

Benson's team found that the relaxation response was essentially the opposite of the flight or fight response. They also found that people who regularly triggered this relaxation response were able to permanently lower blood pressure, improve sleep patterns, gastrointestinal function and blood flow.

Today we find that the use of biofeedback, hypnosis, meditation, progressive relaxation, yoga and visualization can help people to learn and practice the relaxation response.

In relaxation therapy we develop techniques and exercises that help people to create states of physical and emotional comfort. Some techniques involve helping people to change some of their worried, anxious habits of thinking. Other techniques focus on bringing more awareness into the body and learning how to feel tension and then release that tension from the muscles. Other exercises help to create and reinforce habits of relaxation that eventually alter the way the body handles stress. Many relaxation techniques involve addressing the process of our thinking rather than the content of our thoughts. We can learn to change how we think rather than what we think about.

Some common relaxation techniques are:

Guided relaxation: This technique involves instructing a person in the moment to moment details of releasing tension and creating relaxation. The process is often done with eyes closed and the use of gentle vocal guidance.

8:00 PM
in Conference
Rooms Brenner A
and B at the New
England Sinai
Hospital located at
150 York Street in
Stoughton, MA.

Dr. Alexander C.
White, Medical
Director for Sleep
HealthCenter
affiliated with New
England Sinai
Hospital
will speak.

CPAP equipment
companies will also
be available to
show their latest
equipment and
answer any
questions.

We look forward to
seeing you there!

[Click here for
directions](#)

**Medford, MA
June 9**

Please also join us
on Tuesday, June
9, 2009 from 6:30 -
8:00 PM at the
Medford Public
Library in the
Magoun Room.

Rick Clerici,
Behavioral Sleep
Medicine Specialist
for Sleep
HealthCenters will
be speaking on
["Maximizing Your
CPAP Experience
and Relaxation
Techniques"](#)

Learn simple
relaxation
techniques to help
you breathe
normally during
sleep. Also, receive
clear information
and useful tips to
improve your CPAP

Desensitizing exercises: These exercises help people through gradual exposure to a specific challenge. This might involve having a patient wear a CPAP mask for short periods of time gradually diminishing the experience of difficulty.

Dissociative exercises:

These subtle exercises help people to experience an event from a different point of view. Most people experience situations from either inside their body or outside their body. Imagine yourself dancing. As you imagine this, are you doing so from behind your own eyes or do you see yourself over there dancing? In issues of chronic pain, being able to imagine yourself "over there" can help to dramatically diminish the pain. This particular technique requires some repeat training and reinforcement in order to be effective.

These techniques and others can significantly improve a person's ability to handle life's stresses, feel more relaxed and engage therapies, like CPAP therapy, successfully.

Rick Clerici will be speaking on "Maximizing Your CPAP Experience and Relaxation Techniques" on Tuesday, June 9 at the Medford Public Library in Medford from 6:30PM - 8:00PM

CPAP Counselor's Corner

Don Orway

Manager of Ancillary Services and CPAP Therapist

Being diagnosed with one sleep disorder can be an overwhelming experience for many people but battling two disorders can be even more difficult for both the patient and the treating clinician.

Case Study: Audrey was a patient who presented with both symptoms of insomnia and difficulty adjusting to CPAP therapy. She reported that though her insomnia "seemed to come and go" the sensations that she experienced using the CPAP mask seemed to deepen her insomnia by increasing the time it took her to drift into sleep. When she came in for help she had nearly given up on ever being able to use CPAP. In fact she was seeking help with insomnia only.

In a follow up visit, it was decided to have her go through a series of desensitizing exercises. After some training in relaxation techniques and guided relaxation experiences Audrey felt comfortable enough to address the issue of CPAP therapy. She would start by wearing the nasal pillows for small periods of time without the mask being connected to the CPAP unit. She started wearing it for an hour or so while watching TV and eventually was able to connect it to the CPAP unit and turn the pressure on.

Audrey was able to learn some dissociative exercises that are also commonly used in the treatment of chronic pain. These relaxation-based exercises helped Audrey to achieve a useful level of distance from her facial sensations and relax into the use of her CPAP mask. In more relaxed states, Audrey found the sensations associated with her CPAP mask had become less bothersome and she was finally able to engage CPAP therapy successfully. Over the next month Audrey's insomnia diminished and her use of CPAP increased. Audrey reported that the successful use of CPAP has literally given her back the energy and vitality that she remembered in her youth

It's very common for people in relaxed states of mind to have useful insights and an increased sense of confidence. Feeling more relaxed and hopeful, Audrey was able to identify the importance of sensations in her difficulty with CPAP therapy.

Over the past few years she has continued to be compliant with using her CPAP. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has helped to improve the quality of her life.



experience.

[Click here for directions](#)

What's New in CPAP

In this issue we're featuring two products.

Everest® Integrated CPAP System from [AEIOMed](#)



Enjoy freedom and flexibility with the integrated Everest system in place of conventional, component separated CPAP systems

[READ MORE](#)

Mirage ActivaLT mask from [ResMed](#)

Designed to accommodate every patient and ensure a comfortable, hassle-free night.



[READ MORE](#)

CEO Spotlight



Paul S. Valentine
President and CEO

Sleep HealthCenters has had an exciting quarter. We are thrilled to unveil our newly redesigned websites, [sleephealth.com](#) and [sleepandyou.com](#).

Sleephealth.com provides comprehensive and detailed information for patients and providers, as well as those who may think they are suffering from a sleep disorder. For the CPAP patient, sleephealth.com offers sleep apnea education, support and the opportunity to order CPAP equipment and supplies. Behavioral sleep medicine, dental sleep medicine and other treatment programs are outlined extensively. For the providers, our Referral Info page walks providers through our referral process. The new site also provides details on the Brigham and Women's sleep medicine fellowship program conducted at Sleep HealthCenters, as well as our A-STEP technologist training classes. Our News and Events section includes recent press releases and articles where Sleep HealthCenters and our renowned physicians have been featured.

Sleepandyou.com was created to help raise awareness about sleep, sleep disorders, and issues impacting sleep, providing consumers and patients with information to improve and enhance their health and quality of life. Sleepandyou.com explains the importance of sleep, the effect sleep disorders can have throughout an individual's life and the options available for treatment and care for sleep concerns. It highlights the connection between sleep and other comorbid conditions, such as diabetes, stroke, weight management and cardiovascular disease.

Lastly, Sleep Review magazine will feature Brigham and Women's Comprehensive Academic Sleep Program of Distinction in an article this coming month. After a decade-long partnership with Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital, Sleep HealthCenters' Brighton location helped the BWH Division of Sleep Medicine attain the American Academy of Sleep Medicine's Comprehensive Academic Sleep Program of Distinction award. We are excited to be part of this achievement and take pride in our collaborative relationship with BWH.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sleep HealthCenters is a recognized network of specialized sleep medicine centers, staffed by board-certified sleep specialists. Sleep HealthCenters' comprehensive care services include diagnosis, evaluation and treatment of patients with all types of sleep disorders including obstructive sleep apnea, insomnia, narcolepsy, and restless legs syndrome. Please visit our website at [www.sleephealth.com](#) to learn more about Sleep HealthCenters or contact us at 877-SLEEPHC (877-753-3742) to schedule an appointment.
