

APPENDIX D: NIGHTMARE PROTOCOL

Nightmares can be a common problem for people who have experienced traumatic events. They can feel like they are a re-experiencing of the actual events and are very distressing. The following is a protocol that can help you manage nightmares, both before they happen and afterwards. Read this protocol through before going to sleep, and keep a copy of it handy so you can read and follow it after you wake up from a nightmare.

- Today I have been feeling really scared of _____.
- So, I might have a nightmare and wake up feeling _____. (e.g. scared, sick, angry, sad, etc.)
- If that happens, I will tell myself that I had the nightmare because I am remembering _____. (e.g. 'the bad thing that happened', 'the bad person', 'all that awful stuff', etc).
- I will then turn on the light and look around my room and name 5 things that I see in the room.
- And I will then tell myself that I just had a nightmare and that _____ is not happening to me now or any more.
- If necessary, I will get up from bed and do something for 10 minutes or more (e.g. have a glass of water; look at, name, and touch 5 objects; listen to some calming music; talk to somebody) that will help remind me where and when I am, and that what I am remembering is not happening right now.
- When I am sufficiently calm I will return to bed.
- I will repeat this protocol every time I have a nightmare.