**DEALING WITH NIGHT TERRORS DURING ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL**

Alcohol is known to have effects on sleep during dependency, which will also cause sleep disturbances after prolonged use has stopped.

ALCOHOL ALTERS RESTFUL SLEEP

Many people opt for a cocktail before bedtime to relax and unwind. While it’s less likely that one alcoholic beverage occasionally will lead to addiction, only one drink will still impact sleep. For alcohol to interrupt sleep, it does not require addiction to have developed.

Many are under the impression that the drowsy sensation achieved after drinking contributes to being able to shut down. However, it has been proven to have the opposite overall effect. In fact, when under the influence, it actually takes much longer to fall into a deep sleep, despite sedation.

By disrupting the brain’s ability to achieve the necessary function of REM, alcohol hinders one’s ability to feel rested. Poor quality sleep, teamed with the inability to fall into a restful state, creates a whirlwind of sleep issues. With all combined, after an extended amount of time, the result is likely to induce night terrors.

ALCOHOL ADDICTION AND SLEEP CYCLE

For an alcoholic, chemical dependency creates a double-edged sword that can linger much longer than the initial detox. This is due to the interrupted cycle of sleep and the occurrence of insomnia. Those with insomnia are typically unable to fall asleep or stay asleep on a regular basis. So in order to do so, many will turn to the sedating effects of alcohol to help them rest. This only further allows the cycle to continue. Encouraging addiction one night at a time.

However, take away alcohol altogether, and it only becomes more uncomfortable. It’s called a sleep cycle because it’s actually a rotation of the brain between awake and at rest. This is referred to medically as the circadian rhythm.

Once the circadian rhythm is abruptly disturbed, it may be difficult to realign it at first. It can take weeks or even months before the cycle is restored, and at its worst during initial recovery. Worst of all, the interruption can lead to the development of chronic conditions or even permanent sleep issues. Some disturbances are diagnosed as simple snoring or restless legs. More serious conditions like sleep apnea require ongoing treatment to alleviate, if possible.

MANAGING ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS THAT DISTURB SLEEP

When it comes to detox of any substance, the symptoms will likely worsen before they improve. This does take time and is usually very different for each person to experience, especially without help. The association between alcohol withdrawal and night terrors is not exempt. Typically, beginning detox in the initial stages of treatment, the uncomfortable effects of withdrawal include worsening sleep quality.

Though this will eventually subside in most cases, residential addiction treatment offers treatment options to assist. Providing a quiet and safe space, inpatient rehab allows for a more forgiving schedule, which allows for inconsistencies in sleep. In order to retain lessons and behavioral skills throughout the process, regaining healthy sleep habits is considered a major priority.

While in the care of trained professionals during residential treatment, recovering alcoholics work toward developing proper sleep hygiene. Attempting detox and rehab for alcohol is not only a dangerous process to do alone, but can also lack structure. Having an effective program designed for these specific needs during alcohol withdrawal lessens the threat of developing chronic sleep conditions.

NIGHT TERROR SYMPTOMS OCCURRING DURING WITHDRAWAL

Night terrors are defined as intense and unsettling feelings or actions experienced while falling asleep or during sleep. Realistically, a few of these behaviors experienced during alcohol withdrawal may even be downright scary. Some recovering alcoholics confess that they would rather be in the comfort of their own homes during this time. Fortunately, treatment programs, such as partial hospitalization, allow for that private time away from a facility.

Partial hospitalization is designed to provide intensive rehab treatment during daytime hours. Then, when the day’s program is complete, allows for time to retreat more comfortably at home overnight. This is beneficial for many reasons, especially for those who have an obligation to attend to family.

Another benefit of partial hospitalization is being able to adjust to sobriety and new sleep patterns in their own element. Having the support of daily therapy will reinforce sober behaviors, and can ease the stress of alcohol withdrawal night terrors. Some of the symptoms to be prepared for include:

1. Interrupted sleep or waking throughout the night
2. Restlessness or unusual alertness at bedtime
3. Being unable to relax and sleep at bedtime
4. Vivid dreams or nightmares
5. Waking up still tired after a full night’s rest
6. Uncontrollable or racing thoughts that hinder sleepiness
7. The inability to actually achieve falling asleep despite exhaustion
8. Poor temperature regulation such as shivering or sweating
9. Muscle tension that does not coincide with heavy labor
10. Dizziness or lightheadedness
11. Sleepwalking with no memory of events
12. Anxiety associated with thoughts of sleep
13. Sleep paralysis or jolting awake throughout the night
14. Experience aggressive behavior or feelings of malice
15. Excessive snoring or vocalizations, such as shouting, throughout the night

Typically, as the body adjusts to new sleep routines without involving alcohol, new experiences may arise. While partial hospitalization is beneficial in many ways during this time, it is not meant for everyone. This is especially true for those who have altered programs in the process. Working with rehab specialists during treatment will yield the best outcomes for overall healthy sleep routines.

If after some time you are still feeling unwell during the night or are unable to sleep, consult with rehab professionals. Experienced addiction specialists are familiar with alcohol withdrawal and night terrors and may have other options to assist.

ADJUSTING TO DIFFERENT TREATMENT APPROACHES FOR ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL

Because each person is different, their needs throughout rehabilitation may change as they make progress. This may include switching from inpatient to outpatient care. Or even adding therapeutic medication into the program.

Medication-assisted treatment, or MAT, can be very helpful for recovering alcoholics during rehab. Many times, alcohol withdrawal night terrors are brought on by frustrations, temptations, and cravings associated with the disease. In fact, bedtime or even just thoughts of sleep are reported as common triggers post-detox.

Fortunately, specially designed and FDA-approved medications are available to provide some relief from some uncomfortable cravings. Inhibiting the parts of the brain that cause these unwanted urges, allows more stress-free time to unwind. Acamprosate and naltrexone are drugs often issued during this type of therapy and reinforce the lack of effectiveness of alcohol.

By hindering the physical ability to become intoxicated, they serve to reduce the threat and desire to rely on alcohol. In addition, the risk of relapse during difficult times caused by alcohol withdrawal and night terrors is significantly reduced.

TREATING ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL MAY REQUIRE TRIAL AND ERROR

Knowing your options when it comes to different treatment methods is going to be significant when deciding on rehab options. It is important to keep in mind that drug therapy options do not come without risks of their own. Certain medications can have unwanted effects if not used properly. Medication-assisted treatment should be done only under the supervision of a trained professional.

A full evaluation will determine eligibility, taking into consideration factors such as physical and psychological health. Age-specific treatment may also play a part in whether or not drug therapy is appropriate. Alcohol withdrawal and night terrors affect each person in a unique way. While MAT is often incorporated within treatment successfully, it is important to discuss options and requirements during consultation or alteration. Being upfront and honest about treatment expectations is necessary to ensure that drug therapy is the right course of action.

ALCOHOL-INDUCED NIGHT TERRORS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ILLNESS

While insomnia and night terrors are often reported during alcohol withdrawal, it’s equally important to consider underlying conditions as well. Many addicts and alcoholics are found to have been suffering from co-occurring illnesses along with the disease of addiction. When additional underlying psychological or physical illness is diagnosed during addiction care, it is referred to as dual diagnosis.

Insomnia caused by alcoholism is determined by how well the body adjusts when the substance is removed from routine. While it is common to experience physical episodes of nausea or trembling at first, prolonged comfortability is not as common. This is when a dual diagnosis is typically suspected.

Representation of psychological illnesses such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder or PTSD may surface after detox, during addiction treatment. If left untreated, oftentimes undiagnosed mental illness leads to relapse, damaging recovery efforts. In order to ensure that efforts put into recovery and sobriety are not temporarily lost, treating co-occurring disorders is necessary. Fortunately, reputable rehabs are equipped to manage these illnesses during treatment.

NIGHT TERRORS FROM ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL IMPACT LONG-TERM SOBRIETY AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

The disease of addiction certainly has the ability to devastate all aspects of health if left untreated. The effects of physical damage done to the body can be even more pertinent, and require immediate medical attention. Deteriorating effects on the organs caused by lack of sleep and substance abuse can often lead to chronic physical complications.

Some of the physical illnesses derived from alcohol abuse and addiction that can interfere with maintaining sobriety include:

* Hypertension and high blood pressure
* Cardiovascular dysfunction or congestive heart failure
* Diabetes and dangerous blood sugar fluctuations
* Respiratory distress or impaired breathing function
* Cirrhosis of the liver
* Damage to other major organs, such as the pancreas and kidneys
* Glandular interruptions
* Hormonal imbalance
* Cognitive dysfunction and decline
* Damage to the brain or nervous system

Potentially a major hurdle moving forward, rehab treatment centers offer coaching to manage the physical after-effects of alcohol addiction. Trauma therapy is designed to help addicts cope and accept. Many suffering from chronic and debilitating diseases often turn to abuse substances, properly managing distress is part of a healthy recovery.

Developing proper sleep patterns and effectively managing alcohol withdrawal contributes to overall health and wellness. Equipped with a full medical team, rehab centers administer treatment physically, while helping to adjust emotionally.

DURATION OF ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL AND SLEEP DISTURBANCES

While generally, the side effects of alcohol withdrawal night terrors are not permanent, they can be long-lasting for some. Medical detox practices and cognitive behavioral therapy are essential to a proactive approach. Participating in these addiction care sessions at rehab, can lessen the time frame and ease discomfort. Overall, this reinforces the development of good habits along the way.

Essentially, for proper treatment, it is valuable to determine which stage of alcohol withdrawal a person is experiencing. The subgroups associated with making the distinction are:

1. Initial acute withdrawal
2. Post-acute withdrawal

The transition for one to the other varies by individual case and severity of alcohol dependency. The tolerance of each person to symptoms during treatment will determine the next course of necessary action.

Initial Acute Alcohol Withdrawal

Initial acute withdrawal occurs when a person is working through initial detox. During this time, the body works to flush and remove toxins from the body that have accumulated during active addiction.

For the average person, night terrors and poor sleep patterns tend to emerge within the first 8-10 hours. Unfortunately, symptoms often worsen before relief sets in.

During this stage of treatment, medical detox, in the company of a licensed professional is recommended. Hallucinations and physical reactions to alcohol withdrawal are not only scary but can be life-threatening. Supervision during detox allows for constant evaluation, and essential care to be performed and administered.

Post-Acute Withdrawal

Typically, this stage is experienced for a more prolonged period of time after initial alcohol detox. Then, within the next few days after the initial acute withdrawal, symptoms can drag out into several weeks. For many, the intensity may have lessened at this point. However, only specifically in terms of what is deemed potential for the occurrence of a serious medical emergency.

It is now during this stage that cognitive behavioral therapy comes into play. Night terrors from alcohol withdrawal are considered symptoms that will linger. Participating in therapy to develop coping mechanisms and beneficial sleep habits, while reinforcing sober behaviors, are essential to achieving recovery.

While post-acute withdrawal may have the longest duration during rehab treatment, the ability to manage symptoms depends on the individual. It is essential to dedicate the effort into behavioral therapy at this time. This includes having the understanding that alcohol withdrawal night terrors can be a trigger for relapse in itself.

CREATING A PLAN FOR NIGHT TERRORS AFTER ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL TREATMENT

Unfortunately, as the body and mind undergo the necessary changes involved in detox and rehabilitation, some aspects are inevitable. Though some medical management can be done in the case of preventing unwanted side effects, it is most important to learn from the experience.

The best possible way to implement this into your rehab and recovery experience is to become aware of the triggers and urges experienced. This is extremely important when developing an aftercare plan to encourage and reinforce recovery. While relapse is always a threat to a person in recovery from alcoholism, getting out ahead of these complications will add to the ability to maintain sobriety.