



Second Summer Edition 2020

NPN



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Common Causes of Sleep Problems During the Pandemic

1. **Loss of some of the structure you had in your pre-COVID life.** Perhaps you no longer need to get up as early, scramble around as much, commute, or handle as many required deadlines or demands as you did before. Requirements placed on us from the outside, by people and our jobs, for example, force us to form and follow a regular pattern or routine. When we lose some of the external demands, we can lose track of our routine. Our regular, healthy habits, like eating, showering, and exercising that we have developed to manage, and cope may fly out the window. **The Feelings Keeping You Awake: Lost, unmoored, uprooted, out of control of yourself.**
2. **Anxiety and fear of the unknown.** Let us face it, we all have some of this. Will you or someone you love get sick? Will you lose someone? Will the economy recover? Will you ever get your job back? Will you survive financially? Depending on where you live, you may be on lockdown or transitioning out or out, but nothing is ever really permanent. The lack of answers and certainty makes it hard to shut your mind down. You may lay awake processing these questions at night. **The Feelings Keeping You Awake: Fear, trepidation, uncertainty, anxiety.**

3. **Losses.** Let us think for a minute about what you have lost. Have you lost income? Social plans? Projects? Have you lost people, the greatest loss of all? Have you lost your job, your prospects, your hopes for your children or yourself? We have all lost something. **The Feelings Keeping You Awake: Grief, loss, longing.**
4. **Reduced stimulation.** Were you busy, running around a lot, pre-COVID? Seeing people, working hard, recreating, doing things, going to the gym, going to the movies, the theater, stores, or friends' houses? All of these things stimulate your brain and body. Back then, there was motion, color, activity, and challenge to your days that you may be missing now. All those things were tiring out your brain and body. You were burning energy all day long. What about now? Your unburned energy may be powering you at night. **The Feelings Keeping You Awake: Restless, antsy, jumpy.**
5. **Lack of human connection.** We know from talking with many people that feelings of disconnection and loneliness are an epidemic of their own right now. So, ironically, if you are feeling alone, you are not alone. This is a feeling that can get under your skin and trouble you deeply from the inside, keeping you awake at night. **The Feelings Keeping You Awake: Alone, disconnected, lost, at sea, vulnerable.**

So, What Can You Do?

1. Your feelings are keeping you from sleeping, but they are also an amazing pipeline to the solution!
2. When you are lying in bed in the dark, there is nothing external stimulating you. So, it is at this particular time that any feelings you have been ignoring will take the opportunity to come to the surface and try to make your brain acknowledge and process them.
3. So, not surprisingly, the answer is to acknowledge and process them. But not at night, during the day!
4. If you were emotionally ignored as a child, then you are probably emotionally ignoring yourself today. It is time to stop.
5. Your body is trying to communicate with your brain at night when you are the most available to hear it (your feelings are the messages). You can make a conscious effort to listen and process them during the day. This will free your brain and body up to get much-needed sleep at night.

How to Process Your Feelings During the Day

1. **Take some time every day to sit quietly and focus your attention inward.** Tune into the sensations in your body and pay attention to how and what you are feeling.
2. **See if you can sit for a few minutes, eyes closed, and feel what you feel.** Sitting with feelings instead of escaping them is a major emotion skill and you are doing it!
3. **Consider the feeling you are having.** Why are you having it? What does it mean? What is your body trying to tell you? Perhaps that you need to provide yourself with structure, make more effort to connect with people, get some exercise, talk to a friend, or grieve?
4. **Feel nothing repeatedly when you try this?** This is a sign that your feelings may be walled-off and suppressed (a natural result of Childhood Emotional Neglect or CEN). Do not worry, you can still get in touch with the feelings that are keeping you awake and process them. You can break down the wall that is blocking you from your feelings and start learning how to use them.

Paranoia in paradise

It was supposed to be a one-way trip. I had bought a one-way ticket. I did not know whether I was going to die or relocate but something in my life had to change and I knew that it was important to do this on my own.

Three facts about me:

1. I am a voice-hearer, although mostly a music-hearer at the moment
2. I used to take a cocktail of drugs for insomnia, psychosis, and anxiety
3. I am a yoga teacher, specialising in yoga for trauma-recovery and spiritual awakening

I had been fighting suicidal thoughts for months. Years, actually, if you count the first times they came up, at the tender age of 12. But at 22 the traumas I had encountered meant I really did start to look at my health. I went to the doctors. I was tested for schizoaffective bipolar disorder (apparently there is a blood test for that?) and I was prescribed medication and therapy. I held down a full-time job, a debauched social life that left no time for thought and spent any time leftover a hollow shell completely tormented by the voices that I was constantly plagued by.

Medication not working for me (self or otherwise), I dipped my toe in, just before my 23rd birthday, to the world of meditation. It wasn't anything fancy – an app I downloaded that had simple Zen contemplations. Things like “a jug fills one drop of water at a time.” Nothing much came of it – and I didn't use it often. I still preferred to douse my pain in too much alcohol and whatever mixture of prescribed meds and other I could reasonably imbibe without too much destruction.

But spiritual practice has a habit of creeping up on you. A year later, I remember skiving off work to head into a meditation shop in Covent Garden, amidst the raves and lock ins something was changing. I was still very much tormented by my situation, but some seeds had been planted in me.

My voices stopped *only* tormenting me and I started to receive useful information for my self-care. They admonished me against smoking, told me that they didn't want to see me die from cancer. I would not stop for another few years, with a blip every now and again.

After an assault and being messed around by the mental health center with my appointments, I stopped seeing any psychologists, psychiatrists and took my GPs advice, which was to go to a yoga class.

That was over 7 years ago. Yoga was something that completely took over my life. And I let it. It led me to a teacher training in Bali in 2016, where I qualified to teach and felt ready to take on the world, armed with yoga as my shield and sword.

These intensive yoga trainings are not for the faint of heart – you have to be super fit and healthy to be able to participate and they recommend that you do not have severe mental health problems (ahem) and that you cannot take medication (thankfully I didn't!) But the solo trip to Bali gave me confidence. It wasn't without its difficulties and I didn't want to leave the sunny, easy, accessible life that the island offered – when the alternative was a 9-5 with people I had almost nothing in common. I quit my job halfway through my training, but still returned to the UK.

Six months later I took a trip that was supposed to be one way. Yoga illuminated my problems. My practice created space for me to delve into them. But it was, and still is, the heaviest work. I started in Cambodia, left for Thailand, stopped in Malaysia, was diverted to Sri Lanka, hopped over to India and then landed back in Bali – trauma, theft, paranoia and awakening spiraling and whirling me through south east Asia like some kind of woman-shaped hurricane.

If you look through my photos, you'll see a hundred yoga poses on a beautiful beach somewhere tropical. But the struggle! It was painful. Healing like this is as painful as re-setting a badly broken bone. The sweat, tears, blood and drama that propelled me through my journey, prevented me from connecting with people deeply, or superficially – or in any way. It was like I'd changed the setting repeatedly to face the same problems.

Which, by the way, is what yoga is for. To give a container to the challenges we face. It takes many forms – not everyone needs to take the exact journey I did, and I don't recommend it unless you're extremely hardy because it's not possible for everyone. People are also terrified of travelling such a distance alone. But what I learned was:

- I was independent
- I could look after myself cross-continent for nearly 18 months
- I had inner resources I didn't know I had

This trip was the biggest investment I had put into myself and it cost all my money, all my time, all my heart and everything I held dear to me. Three years after the start of it, I can say I am completely changed and that my life looks nothing like I thought it was EVER

going to look like, but I had some incredible experiences. I grew confident to drive a scooter, dive with manta rays, study with master's monks and my highest teacher, my own Self.

The people I met along the way taught me a lot. I went out with the idea that I had to share my yoga and help people at every opportunity, and after this trip began to integrate a couple of years later I realised how desperately I needed to take care of myself. I went out still with the belief that I was sick or that there was something inherently wrong with me. That might be true to some extent – but I've met people who experience every kind of human experience. Paranoia, hearing voices – these are projections for people who have experienced some kind of trauma that takes them so far outside of themselves that they need greater clarity. I realised that the feelings of paranoia that still plague me to this day can often be the same as a hawk viewing a mouse from a neighbouring field – not mine. And I learned that all experiences can be integrated – given time.

Before this journey I still considered myself a schizophrenic. After this journey, I realised that I am empathic beyond what most people can comprehend and that this came with what I have been through. The

suffering comes from a disordered mind and an inability to be able to place things within their proper context. That is why I class myself as a trauma specialist – and from my professional standpoint, this is what I would say:

Any healing is possible, given enough time and space. Yoga – the coming together and yoking of body, mind and spirit is one way to facilitate that process.

But not everything can be achieved in just one lifetime.

For those of you more interested in pursuing yoga as an alternative therapy for trauma recovery, or just wishing to know more information about travelling, you can contact Jaz via her webpage at www.jazminali.com

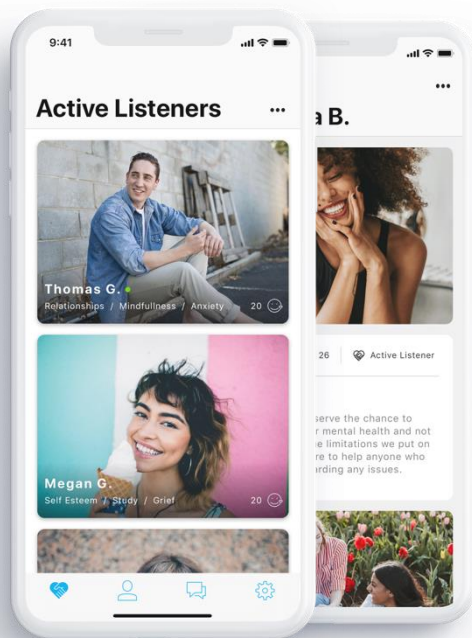
You can also join live, online classes at www.youseekyoga.com and enjoy two free classes with the “One Membership”. Just sign up as a member for the free trial, book your classes and start your practice. You Seek Yoga has a team of teachers, some of whom specialise in trauma-informed yoga and yoga for mental and emotional wellbeing.

VOICE OF HEALTH

ACCESSIBLE PEER SUPPORT

Do you want someone who can listen and understand you?

Voice of Health provides a safe place where you can share with your peers, talk one-on-one with someone that understands you and can help you develop strategies to self-manage your own mental well-being.



Voice of Health's free app allows you to talk with trained Active Listeners, who can empathise, listen and relate to your lived experience. It combines accessibility

to support with the importance of human connection when managing your mental well-being.

Browse through the community of Active Listeners, review each Listener's profile information such as their bio, supporting areas and lived experience, to select the person that you believe can best empathise with you and form a supportive connection. Communicate with Active Listeners inside the app via messaging, voice, or video calling (coming soon).

Voice of Health provides you with a space where your privacy and security are always top of mind in everything they do. You also have the option to chat as anonymously as you would like.

So, who are the Active Listeners?

Active Listeners are there to provide personalised, empathetic and goal-orientated support when you need it. Active Listeners are your peers who have personal lived experience and can empathise with the challenges

you face. They have also completed an Active Listening Training Course and each one has personally met with the Voice of Health team.

They are always looking for new Active Listeners to join their community. If you would like to become an Active Listener you can join through the mobile app or by heading directly to their training course at Voice of Health - Active Listening Training Course

You can download the app

Voice of Health - Peer Support App on the App Store or Google play

info@voiceofhealth.com.au

I AM

I am: Yet what I am no one cares or knows. My friends forsake me like a memory lost.

I am the self-consumer of my woes. They rise and vanish in oblivious host. Like shades in love and death's oblivion lost; and yet I am! and live with shadows lost

Into the nothingness of scorn and noise

Into the living sea of waking dreams. Where there is neither sense of life nor joys.

But the vast shipwreck of my life's esteems; and the dearest that I loved the best-are strange-nay, rather stranger than the rest

I long for scenes where man has never trod; a place where women never smiled or wept

There to abide with my creator. God, and sleep as I in childhood sweetly slept

Untroubling and untroubled where I lie.

The grass below-above the vaulted sky

John Clare

“In the mind is the Target”

a comment in the field of Necropolitics

Karatzafaris B. Lykourgos

Within the fear and suspicions,
with a turbulent mind and frightened eyes,
we melt and plan what to do,
to avoid the certain
danger which threatens us horribly.

And yet we are mistaken, it is not danger in the way
fake were the messages
(or we didn't listen to them, or we didn't feel them well).

A different disaster, which we could not have imagined,
Sudden, rapidly falling on us,
finding us unprepared – no more time – overwhelming us.

Konstantinos Kavafis “Finished”

Research Exploring Poetry and Psychosis

I am looking to speak with people as part of my ongoing research into poetry and psychosis.

I am lecturer in mental health at the University of Nottingham and I am undertaking this research as part of my ongoing PhD. The research is focusing on asking the questions of; can written and spoken poetry support meaning making? Does this process of meaning making help people in their recovery?

I am currently seeking to interview individuals who have lived experience of what might be described as psychosis and who have written/engaged with poetry. In terms of experiences which might be described as psychosis, these might include:

- Seeing things which other people do not see
- Hearing voices
- Developing delusional beliefs or beliefs which other people consider to be bizarre or unusual
- Feeling increasingly paranoid

The interviews are based around asking people to share their stories in relation to poetry - they are not based on asking lots of questions, but rather giving people the

space to share what they want in relation to the topic. The interviews are being conducted either online or by telephone and last approximately 40mins.

If you would like to take part in the research, or if you have any question then please contact me:

mark.pearson@nottingham.ac.uk

Best wishes,

Mark Pearson

Problems during Pandemic

We have noticed that there has been an increase in people experiencing Paranoia, Hearing Voices, and showing signs of Post-Traumatic Stress due to the Covid19 virus and other previous experiences in their lives. We deliver in-house training globally focusing on these subjects to help staff understand what the person could be going through and give them the skills to engage with them to gain a greater understanding of their experiences. Our training brochure can be downloaded here

<http://nationalparanoianetwork.org/NPN-Brochure.pdf>

I hope it will be of interest to you. During the Covid19 virus lock down the Maastricht Interview, Hearing Voices & Paranoia trainings are available online. Please feel free to contact me if you would like any more information

Peter Bullimore (NPN Chair)

enquiries@nationalparanoianetwork.org

**Coming Home: A Hearing Voices Network
for Greater Manchester? A Public Meeting
Time: Jul 13, 2020 14:00 PM**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81454536697?pwd=bTNiOHNGKzJQVis2WGg3RjVyS3k0dz09>

Meeting ID: 814 5453 6697

Password: 653174

**Join our online Hearing Voices & Paranoia Support
Group Meetings on ZOOM**

Every Thursday 3pm -4.30pm Meeting ID 88460268952

Password 375878

Texas USA Meeting Every Saturday

4pm-5.30pm UK Time

Meeting ID 83079149464 No Password Needed