HOW TO IMPROVE SLEEP HABITS...

After scary things happen kids can have a hard time sleeping. This can last for a few days and sometimes longer.

WHEN YOU ARE SCARED AND CAN’T SLEEP, TRY TO:

• REMIND YOURSELF ABOUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR SCARY THOUGHTS AND REAL DANGERS that might happen to you in your bedroom.

• TAKE SLOW FOCUSED BREATHS AND LET THEM OUT SLOWLY. Listen to your breathing and try to make it as even as possible, as you did in the session with the clinician.

• PICK AN IMAGE OF A FAVORITE PLACE OR ACTIVITY (going to the beach, walking in the park, playing a sport, etc.) and try to think about this picture in your mind as you breath slowly.

IF THE SCARED FEELINGS CONTINUE AND PREVENT YOU FROM SLEEPING, TELL YOUR PARENTS OR THE ADULTS YOU LIVE WITH.

• THEY WILL HELP YOU CALM DOWN. They may help you do the breathing exercises or rub your back to make you feel more comfortable. They will ask you if you can put words to the scary ideas and feelings that you have had—finding words can often be a way of being in better control of strong feelings.

• When your parents know what you are scared of, THEY CAN HELP YOU FEEL SAFER. They may then do the breathing exercise with you again.

SOME KIDS AND FAMILIES THINK THAT THE ONLY WAY KIDS CAN FEEL SAFE IS TO SLEEP IN THEIR PARENTS’ BED OR IN THEIR ROOM, BUT YOUR PARENTS WILL HELP YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE AND SAFE AGAIN IN YOUR OWN BED.

• They will go back to your room with you.

• If you need some light, they will crack the door to your bedroom to let some light in or give you a night light (but they won’t turn the lights on in your room because this will make it harder to get back to sleep).

• If you want, they will sit by your bed for a few minutes, as you get comfortable again. They will not stay for very long, because they know that in real life your room is safe and that you are safe in it.

Revised 3/11/11