

Sleep – A Vital Component in Mental Wellbeing

Melissa Shields, NCC, LPC-S

Who Am I?

- Master's in Counseling Psychology from USM in 2012
- LPC since 2014
- LPC-S since 2018
- 2.5 years of experience in community mental health
- 4 years of experience in a residential psychiatric treatment facility
- 4.5 years of experience in Pediatric Psychology at Children's of MS
- Director of Canopy's Behavioral Health Clinics since 2023
- Division Director of Canopy's Behavioral Health Solutions since 2024

Pediatric Psychology

- Multidisciplinary Headache Clinic with Pediatric Neurology at UMMC



Who Am I?

The mom of three wild boys (ages 11, 8, 4)







Objectives

- Discuss the basics and importance of sleep and how it affects both physical and mental health.
- Understand the overlap of behaviors and symptoms between mental health diagnoses and poor sleep.
- Describe how to incorporate sleep into your therapeutic work with youth and families.

How many hours of sleep do YOU get per night on average?

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How many hours of sleep a night do you think the average adult needs?

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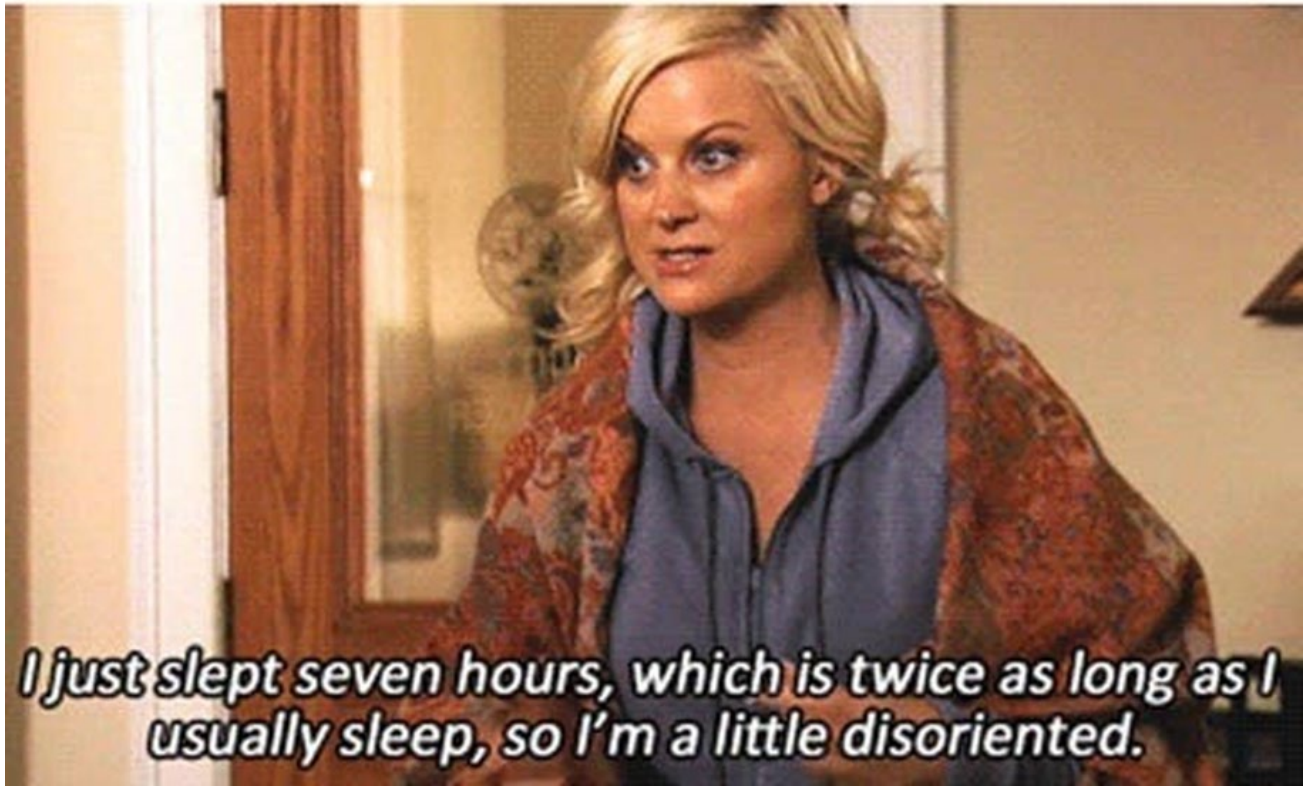
Sleep Stats

- Experts recommend between 7 and 9 hours of sleep per night for adults.
- In the CDC's self-report Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 38.6% of adults in MS report getting less than 7 hours of sleep per night.
- Almost 40% of adults report unintentionally falling asleep during the day at least once a month.

(NIH, 2022; CDC, 2022)

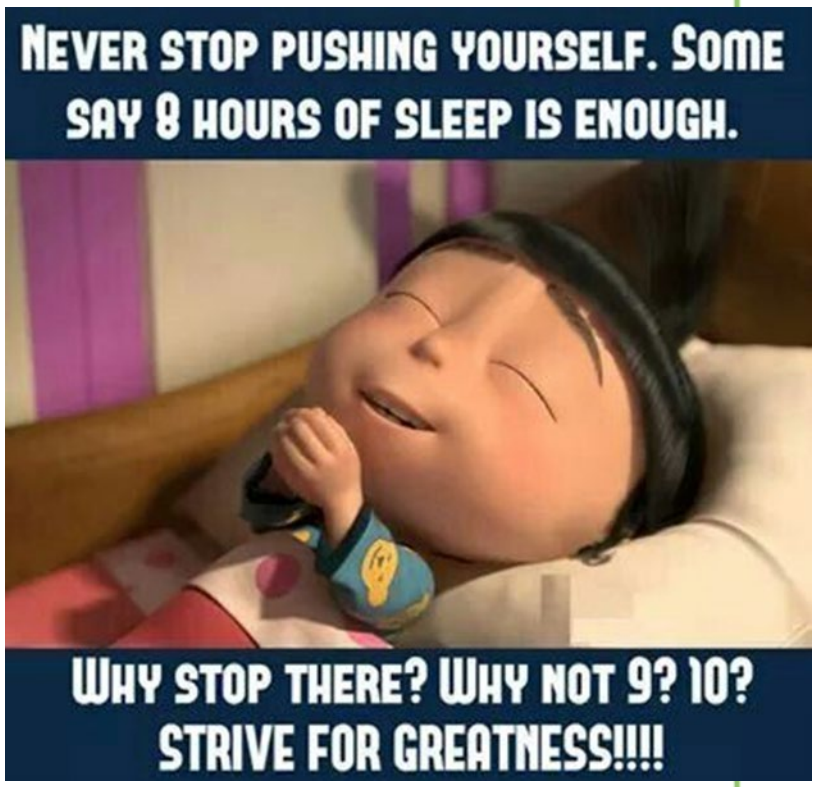
When you're on break or a long weekend and finally get a full night of sleep



How much sleep should kids get?

- Ages 2-5 years old – 10-13 hours per day
- Ages 6-12 years old – 9-12 hours per day
- Ages 13-18 years old – 8-10 hours per day

*Naps are considered appropriate for children under age 7



Youth Sleep Stats

- In the 2020-2021 caregiver-report National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), 48.5% of children age 4 months to 14 years in MS get insufficient sleep.
- In the 2021 self-report Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 76.7% of high schoolers in MS reported getting insufficient sleep.
- According to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF), less than 20% of teens report getting at the recommended 8-10 hours of sleep per night.

How Sleep Works

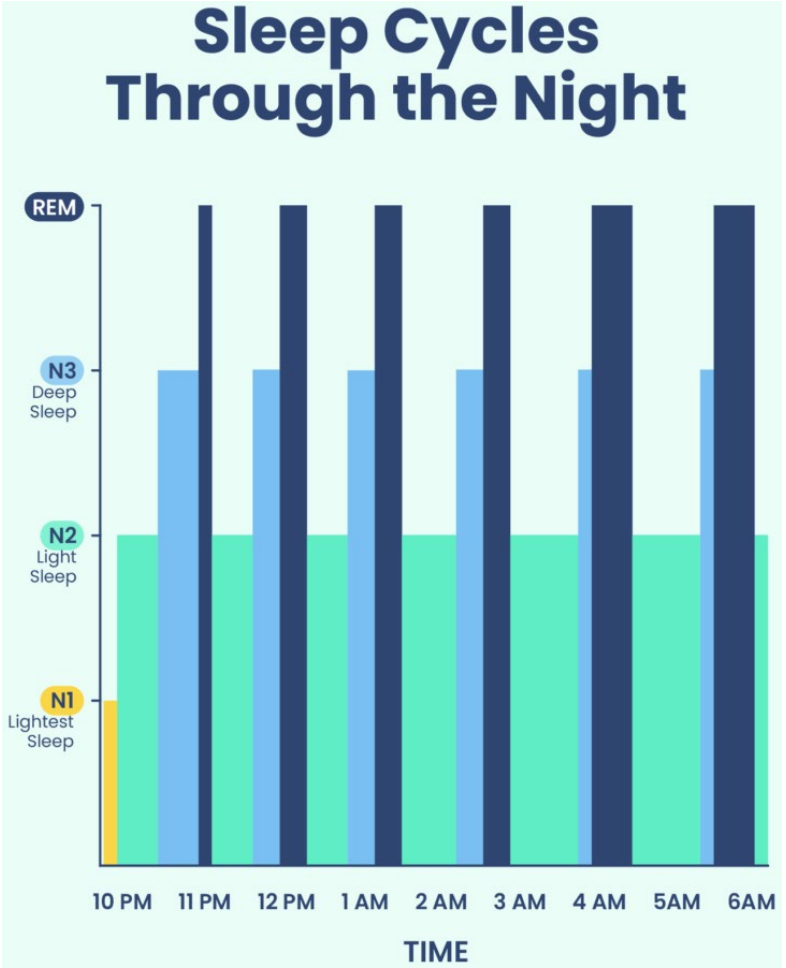
- Our circadian rhythms are 24 hours cycles that are governed by sleep and wake cues, like darkness and light.
  - Melatonin is released when it gets dark and promotes sleep, while cortisol helps to wake you up.
- Two phases of sleep:
  - Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep
  - Non-REM sleep
- These two phases of sleep cycle and start over every 80-100 minutes, resulting in 4-6 cycles per night.

Non-REM Sleep

- Three stages:
  - Stage 1 is the transition between being awake and asleep
  - Stage 2 is when you are fully asleep
  - Stage 3 is deep, slow-wave sleep (this stage occurs more earlier in the night)
    - When the body makes repairs and builds energy for the next day

REM Sleep

- Eyes twitch
- Brain is active
  - Similar to brain activity when awake
- Dreaming occurs during REM sleep
- Happens more later in the night
- Improves mood



How Sleep Works



(Sing & Suni, 2023)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LNdsTrQJCs

Teens and Sleep

- During the teenage years, many teens prefer to stay up later at night and sleep later in the mornings.
- This is due to a shift in their circadian rhythms, which can last until the early 20's.
- Although this is a normal and natural shift that teens' bodies make, it conflicts with societal routines like early school start times.
- Going to bed early and waking up early are both "tough on teens for biological reasons," according to NSF.

What are some reasons youth/families seek mental health services?

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Sleep Deficiency Can Cause:

- Irritability/anger
- Increased social anxiety
- Hyperactivity
- Inattention
- Behavioral problems
- Poor decision making
- Poor problem-solving
- Lower information retention
- Slower reaction time
- Increase in mistake making
- Trouble learning
- Problems coping with change

- Lower grades
- Impulsivity
- Mood swings
- Feelings of sadness or depression
- Lower motivation
- Increase in stress
- Trouble getting along with others
- Poor productivity
- Increased emotional reactivity
- Increased risk taking behaviors



Lost Sleep

- Losing just two hours of sleep a few nights in a row can cause your functioning to suffer.
- Losing just one hour of sleep affects your cardiovascular health, energy, ability to fight infections, response time, and cognitive abilities.
- Sleeping more on the weekends cannot make up for lost sleep during the week and actually disrupts your sleep-wake cycle.

(NIH, 2022; Smith & Robinson, 2024)

The Importance of Sleep

- Improved emotional functioning
- Improved concentration, information retention, and academic performance
- Reduced risk for substance abuse, risky behaviors, and accidents/injury
- Increased creativity
- Supports growth and development in youth
- Better social relationships

Physical Health and Sleep

- Inadequate sleep over time can lead to an increased risk for chronic health conditions, including:
  - Heart disease
  - Diabetes
  - Kidney disease
  - High blood pressure
  - Stroke
  - Obesity (imbalance in hormones that control hunger, decreased ability to respond to insulin, decreased physical activity, increased cravings of fatty, sweet, and salty foods)
- Sleep promotes immune system to prevents colds and other infections

Neither youth nor adults can reach their full potential without adequate sleep.

Assessing for Sleep

- Most people are unaware of how sleep deficiency is affecting them.
- Signs of inadequate sleep:
  - Trouble falling asleep
  - Trouble staying asleep throughout the night
  - Trouble waking up in the mornings or hitting snooze multiple times
  - Feeling sluggish in the afternoons
  - Getting drowsy in meetings, lectures, warm rooms, or after heavy meals, or when driving, watching TV, or reading
  - Feeling the need for naps throughout the day
  - Feeling the need to sleep in on the weekends
  - Feeling tired when after getting enough hours of sleep

Assessing for Sleep

- What time do you go to bed at night?
- What time do you wake up?
- Are those times different on the weekends?
- Do you have trouble falling asleep at night?
  - If so, how long does it take you to fall asleep at night?
- Do you have trouble staying asleep at night?
  - Is it easy to fall back to sleep if you do wake in the night?
- Do you have trouble waking up in the mornings?

Assessing for Sleep

- Do you feel tired during the day?
  - Do you fall asleep in class or other times you don't mean to?
  - Do you take naps after school?
- How often do you have trouble with your sleep and how long have you had trouble with your sleep?

- Do you snore loudly?
  - Do you wake up gasping or feeling out of breath?

Refer to doctor if yes to these questions.

Sleep Diary

- Include:
  - Sleep and wake times, including in the middle of the night and naps during the day
  - Exercise times
  - Caffeine intake times
  - Medication administration times
  - Ratings of how alert and rested you feel in the mornings
  - Ratings of how sleepy or tired you feel at various times during the day and at bedtime

Sleepwell

Sleep Diary

MY SLEEP PRESCRIPTION

Bed Time: _____

Rise Time: _____

DAY OF THE WEEK							
DATE							
Q1 What time did you go to bed?							
Q2 What time did you try to go to sleep?							
Q3 What time did you fall asleep?							
Q4 How many times did you wake up during the night?							
Q5 In total, how long did these awakenings last (minutes)?							
Q6 What time was your final awakening?							
Q7 What time did you get out of bed to start your day?							
Q8 Note anything that interfered with your sleep							

End of week calculations

Easy calculations at **mysleepwell.ca/calculator**

My sleep duration (typical night): _____ **My sleep efficiency** (typical night): _____

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sleep.com

DATE:

Sleep Diary

Fill out this sleep diary every morning to the best of your ability. Over time, you'll be able to track and explore the habits, patterns and routines that affect your sleep.

SLEEP	Got into bed at:		How long it took to fall back asleep:	
	Turned off the lights at:		Woke up for good at:	
	Time it took to fall asleep:		Rate how you felt at wakeup (1 = worst, 10 = best):	
	How many times did you wake up throughout the night?		Got out of bed at:	
	What disrupted your sleep?		Rate your overall sleep quality (1 = worst, 10 = best):	
	Describe your bedtime routine:			

ACTIVITY	How many naps did you take yesterday?		Total nap duration:	
	When was your last nap of the day?		Rate your energy level throughout the day (1 = worst, 10 = best):	
	What did you do for exercise?			
	When did you exercise, and for how long?			

FOOD & DRINK	Number of caffeinated beverages consumed throughout the day:	
	Time of last caffeinated beverage:	
	List any food/drink consumed in the 2-3 hours before bed:	

Sleep Diary: Morning

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Day of the week:						
I went to bed at:						
AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM
I woke up at:						
AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM
Last night, I slept for ___ hours:						
Last night, it took me about ___ minutes to fall asleep:						
I felt that the quality of my sleep was: e.g. very good, good, bad, very bad						
This morning, I feel: e.g. refreshed, tired, groggy, alert						
My sleep was made more difficult by: e.g. temperature, noise, dreams, thoughts, not feeling tired, discomfort						
During the night, I woke up ___ times:						

Sleep Diary: Night

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
I took a nap:						
yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no
I had caffeine:						
# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks
☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening
I exercised for ___ minutes:						
Medications or drugs I used today:						
Throughout the day, I felt drowsy:						
☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often
Overall, my mood today was: e.g. positive, negative, neutral						
In the hour before bed, my activities included: e.g. reading, computer, TV, showering, phone, eating, spending time with partner						



Sleep Hygiene

- Maintain a regular bedtime and wake up time
  - Keep these times consistent within an hour or so, even on the weekends
- Have a bedtime routine
  - Read a book, brush your teeth, take a warm bath, turn on a sound machine, let the dogs out, lock up the house, turn the air down, pray, sing a bedtime song, do a relaxation technique

Bedtime Routines





Sleep Hygiene

- Choose a sleeping space (preferably your bed) and stick to it!
- Avoid any other activities in your bed besides sleep
  - Homework/studying, playing video games, watching TV, looking at smartphone, reading, eating, etc.
  - Do not use the child's bedroom/bed for timeouts or punishment

When you're sleeping on the couch and someone wakes you up and tells you to go to your bed

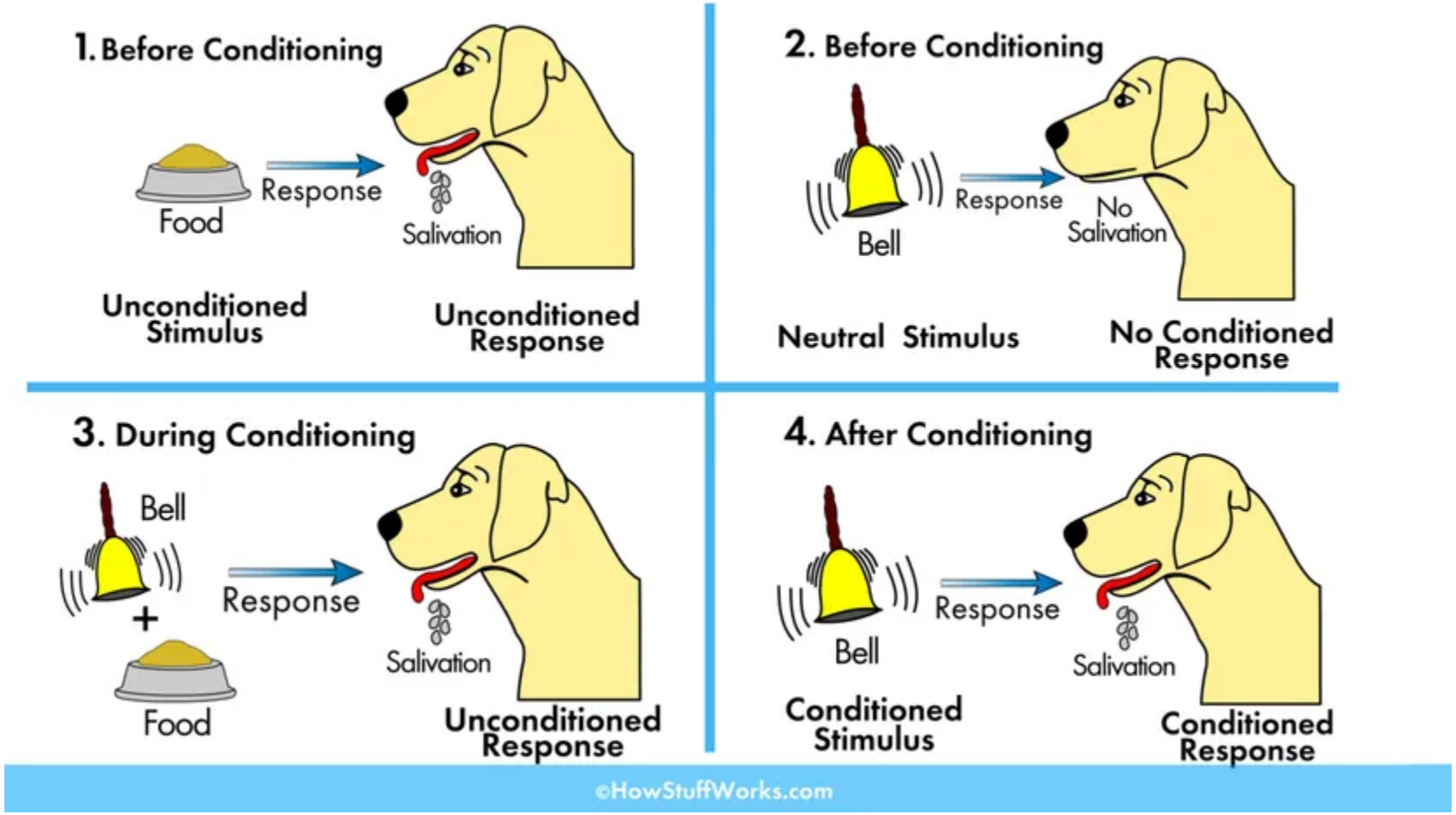


Why do these methods work?

Classical Conditioning



Classical Conditioning



Classical Conditioning







https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBb1CH18Smg


McDonald's
6503
Sweet smooth sips


Wendy's


Chick-fil-A

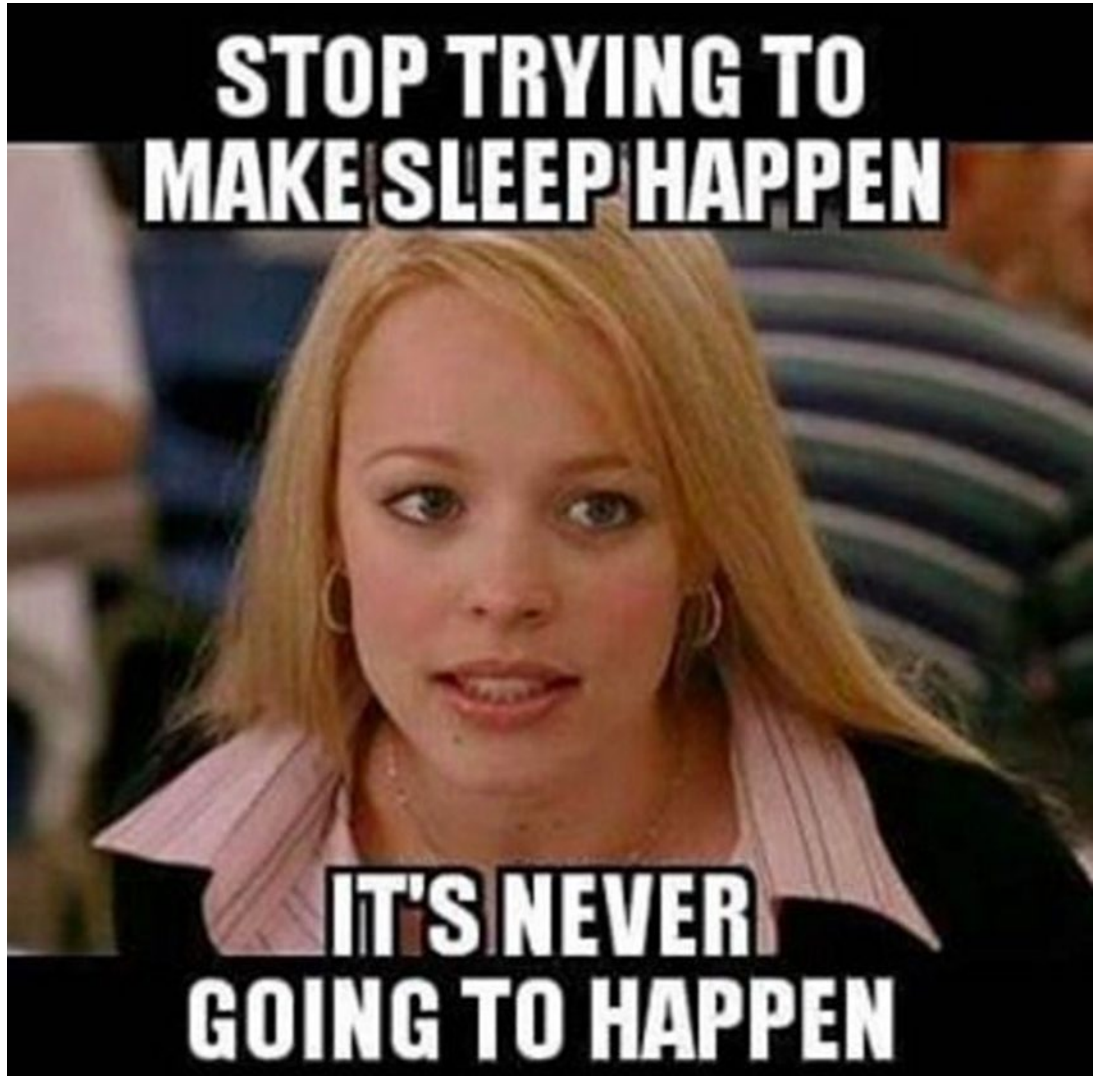

SONIC
America's Drive-In


TACO BELL

Classical Conditioning and Sleep

- Be consistent in the rituals/routines you pair with sleep
- Be conscious in the stimuli (sleep routine) you choose
- Smells are very strong stimuli
  - If you smell lavender every time you're falling asleep, eventually just smelling lavender will make you sleepy.
  - You could use consistent scents from essential oils, bath soap, hand soap, face wash, lotion, etc.

Sleep Hygiene



- Trouble falling asleep can often cause stress and anxiety about sleep leading to more trouble falling asleep.
- If sleep doesn't happen after about 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something relaxing for a little while to trigger feelings and sleepiness and then try again.

Other Sleep Hygiene Tips

- Exercise…but not too close to bedtime.
  - Helps relieve tension and stress
  - Less stress = better sleep
- Refrain from large/heavy meals a few hours before bedtime.
- Intentionally spend time outside daily.
  - This helps maintain circadian rhythms.
- Keep the bedroom quiet, dark, and a cool temperature.
- Schedule enough time for an adequate amount of sleep.
  - You'll be more productive in the long run.

Stress and Anxiety

- Stress and anxiety affect sleep, so working on reducing worry can improve sleep.
  - Teach relaxation techniques (deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, meditation, etc.)

- Keep a notepad and pen beside the bed
  - Stress and anxiety can make it difficult to “shut down your brain.”
  - If a worrying thought comes up while trying to sleep, write it down and postpone worry until the next day.

Artificial Light

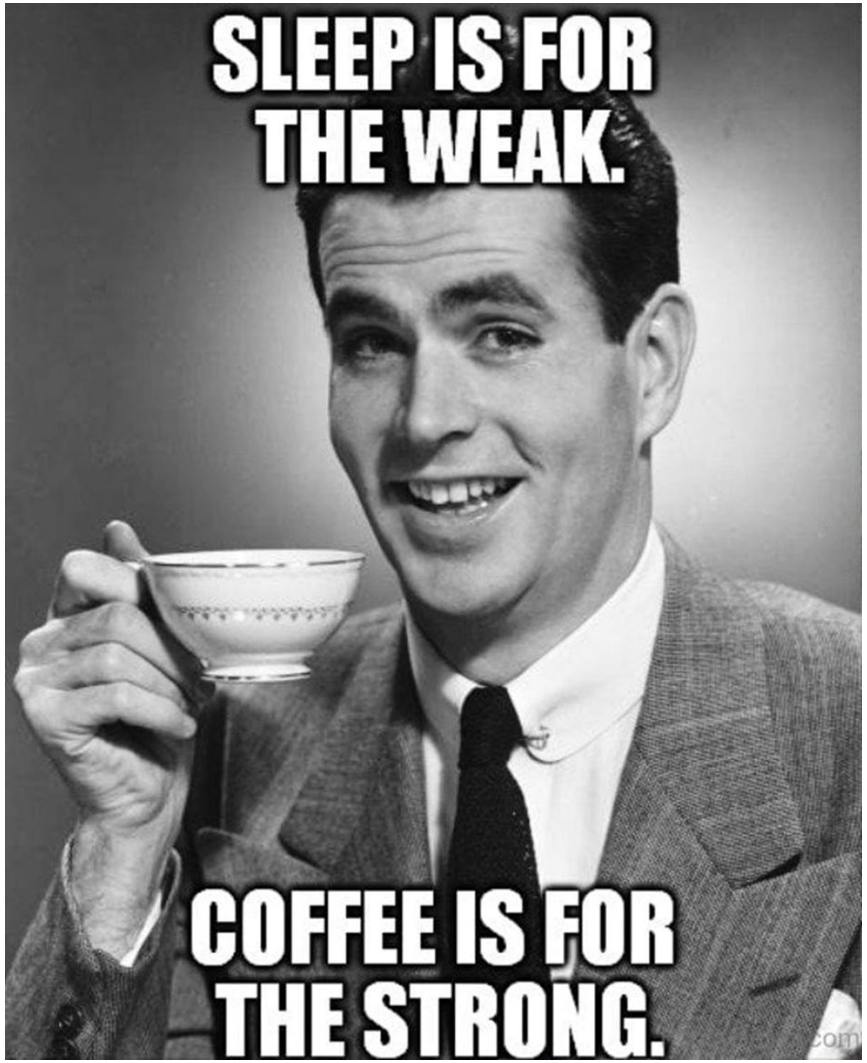
- Artificial light (i.e. screens) can give your body false wakefulness cues, disrupting circadian rhythm.
  - TV screens, smartphones, tablets/iPads, very bright alarm clocks, video games, computer screens
- Avoid artificial light the last hour before bedtime.



Naps

- Appropriate for children under 7
  - Help with development and growth
- For those over 7, naps should be used sparingly and no more than 20 minutes.
- You can’t make up for lost sleep with naps as they do not provide most of the benefits of nighttime sleep.
  - Napping only gives a short-term boost in alertness and performance.

Caffeine



- Careful with caffeine – especially in the afternoon or evenings
  - This includes most sodas, coffee, tea, energy drinks and chocolate
  - Caffeine is a stimulant whose effects can last up to eight hours
- Avoiding caffeine can increase deep sleep.

Sleep Hygiene as an Intervention

- Psychoeducation
  - Family sessions are key here, especially with children but even with teens
  - Explaining the “why”
    - The importance of sleep
    - The reasoning behind the sleep tips
- Continue assessing, checking in, and problem solving around sleep deficiency.
  - Help the family make connections between moods, behaviors, and sleep

Sleep Hygiene with Teens

- Teens come with special challenges with sleep:
  - Natural shift in circadian rhythm
  - Screen time/social media
  - Social activities
  - Extracurriculars
- Explore goals with teens and provide psychoeducation on how healthy sleep can help them achieve their goals.
- Provide teens with information on the benefits of sleep and sleep hygiene.
- Provide choice in what teens want to work on with their sleep.
- Encourage the family as a whole to prioritize and practice healthy sleep.

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Questions?

Contact Information:

Melissa Shields, LPC-S

melissa.shields@mycanopy.org