



**WELCOME**

**Tired but Wired**

**By Kerry Davies of The Sleep Charity**

# Who are The Sleep Charity



# WHO ARE THE SLEEP CHARITY?



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

- Established in 2012 by a former sleep deprived mum
- Formerly 'The Children's Sleep Charity'
- Multi award-winning, small national charity
- Evidence based approach supported by The Sleep Council advisory board
- Our Mission 'To Empower The Nation To Sleep Better'

# THE SLEEP CHARITY



SUPPORT TO FAMILIES  
USING AN EVIDENCE  
BASED, BEHAVIOURAL  
APPROACH



PROVISION OF HEALTHIER  
SLEEP INFORMATION  
THROUGH  
TRAINING/WORKSHOPS/  
SEMINARS



RESEARCH INTO SLEEP



CAMPAIGNING TO  
INCREASE AWARENESS  
ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE  
OF SLEEP



PROVISION OF HEALTHY  
SLEEP INFO FOR ADULTS

# Importance of Sleep

# SO WHY IS SLEEP IMPORTANT?



Sleep is as vital as  
food and water



We spend approx.  
1/3 of our lives  
asleep



Significant impact  
factor physical and  
mental health

# SLEEP IN EDUCATION STAFF

Education professionals often experience high cognitive and emotional demands throughout the day.

Teaching requires sustained attention, emotional regulation, rapid decision making and managing complex classroom environments.

When the brain remains highly alert all day, it can make it harder for the nervous system to fully switch off at night.

This is why many teachers report feeling **physically exhausted but mentally alert at bedtime.**



# THE TEACHER WELLBEING INDEX REPORTS:

- A large proportion of education staff experience significant workplace stress (76% of all staff and 86% of senior leaders are stressed)
- High workload and long hours are common across teaching roles
- Emotional demands and responsibility for pupil wellbeing can be significant
- Many staff report difficulty switching off after the school day
- 1 in 4 education staff have actively sought to change or leave their current job due to pressures on their health and wellbeing

When the brain remains highly alert throughout the day, the nervous system can stay in “**problem-solving mode**” into the evening.

# THIS CAN LEAD TO:

- difficulty falling asleep
- waking during the night
- racing thoughts at bedtime
- feeling tired but mentally alert

Understanding how stress affects sleep can help individuals take small steps to support their sleep and overall wellbeing.

# WHY DO WE SLEEP



No one really knows why we sleep

Sleep is not negotiable – it is essential for life

It is needed for recuperation and restoration of physical and mental functioning

*“If sleep does not serve an absolutely vital function, then it is the biggest mistake the evolutionary process has ever made.”*

*Rechtschaffen, 1971, p. 88*

# EPWORTH SLEEPINESS SCALE

How likely are you to doze off or fall asleep while engaged in the below activities?

Score 0-3 with 0 being would never doze, 1 = slight chance, 2 = moderate and 3 = high chance

- Sitting and reading
- Watching TV
- Sitting inactive in a public place e.g. cinema, theatre, meeting
- Riding as a passenger in a car for an hour without a break
- Lying down to rest in the afternoon
- Sitting and talking to someone
- Sitting quietly after lunch without alcohol
- Sitting in a car, stopped for a few minutes in traffic

# HOW DID YOU SCORE?

Your scores provide estimates of how likely you are to fall asleep during routine situations in your daily life. The higher your score, the higher your daytime sleepiness.

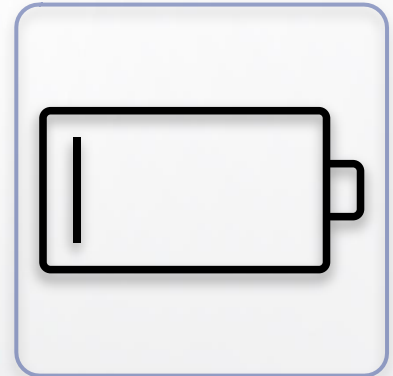
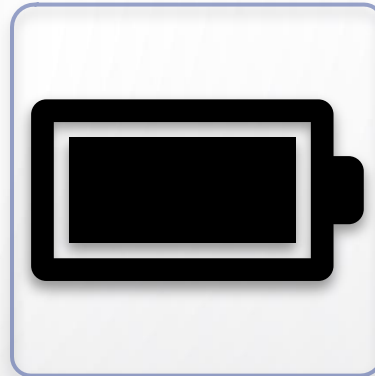
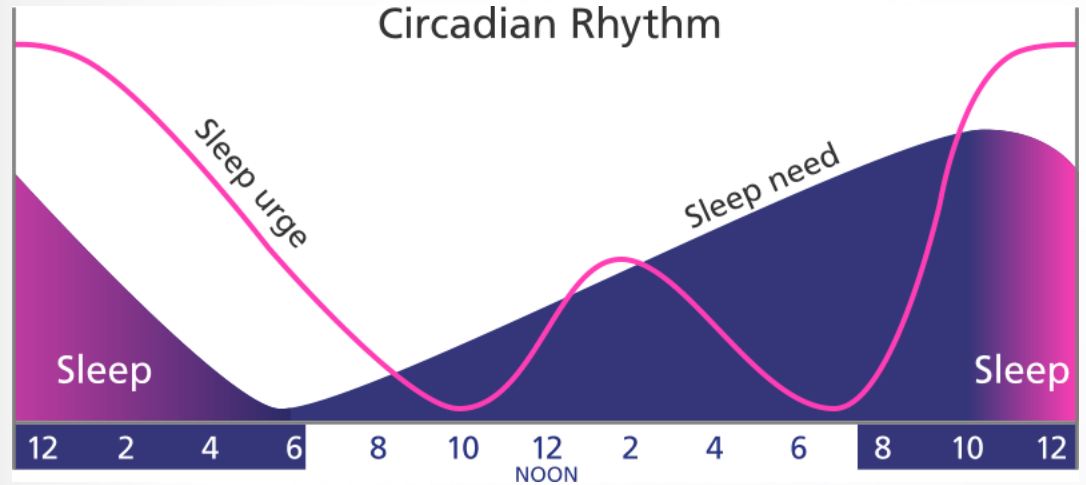
Anything over 10 is deemed as being 'over sleepy'

# SLEEP DRIVE

Sleep/wake homeostasis creates a drive that balances sleep and wakefulness

Builds during the day

In the day we are using the battery and at night we need to recharge it



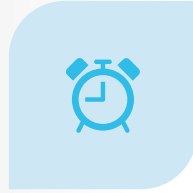
# CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS



NIGHT OWL/LARK



IMPORTANCE OF  
ROUTINE



SET WAKE UP/BEDTIME



THE ROLE OF DARKNESS  
AND MELATONIN



THE ROLE OF LIGHT -  
LIGHT BOXES

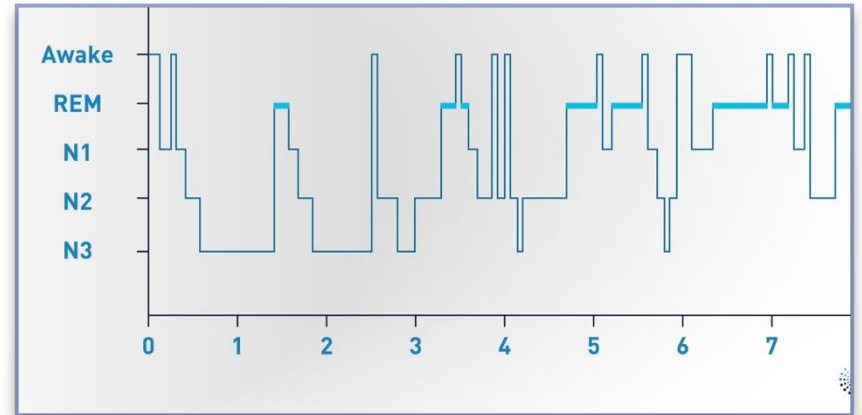
# SLEEP STAGES

Stage 1 – light stage of sleep from which we can be easily roused. You may experience twitching or jerks

Stage 2 – still quite light sleep but the body is preparing for deep sleep

Stage 3 – deep or slow wave sleep, more difficult rouse from. You may feel disorientated if woken from this stage. It is the most restorative sleep of all stages.

REM (Rapid eye movement) – this is where we dream and it is vital for mental and emotional development



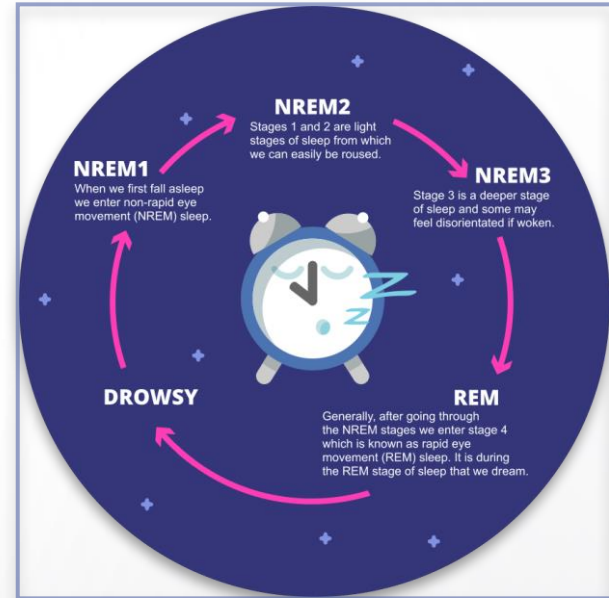
# SLEEP STAGES

We experience different stages of sleep and we sleep in cycles.

Deep sleep towards the beginning of the night;  
lighter sleep in the early hours of the morning.

Each cycle lasts around 1½ hours and we need to experience all four stages in order to wake up rested

A good night's sleep consists of four or five cycles, whereas disturbed sleep consists of far fewer.



# Causes of Poor Sleep

# COMMON ISSUES

🕒 Lack of routine

🧠 Stress & anxiety

🤝 Partner disturbance

🔑 Bedroom environment

☕ Diet – caffeine, alcohol and food

🏃 Lack of exercise

🕒 Excessive screen time

✖ Inappropriate napping

# Impact of Sleep Deprivation

# IMPACTS ON OUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## Emotional & Mental Health

- Mood swings
- Irritability
- Depression and anxiety
- Stress

## Physical Health

- Heart disease and stroke
- Alzheimer's
- Obesity and Type 2 diabetes
- Lowers immune system

4/5

**4 in 5** long term poor sleepers suffer from **low mood** and are **seven times more likely** to feel **helpless** and **five times more likely to feel alone**.



<6hrs

Those who frequently **get fewer than six hours a night** are at significant increased risk of **stroke and heart disease**.

# WHAT POOR SLEEP DOES TO YOU:

## Impact in the Classroom

Sleep deprivation can affect many of the skills that education professionals rely on each day.

This may include:

- reduced patience
- lower emotional resilience
- increased feelings of overwhelm
- difficulty concentrating
- slower decision making

Protecting sleep therefore supports both **personal wellbeing and professional performance.**



# SLEEP MYTHS

🚫 Everyone needs 8 hours of sleep a night

🚫 Napping in the day is bad

🌙\* You can catch up on lost sleep

👴 Older people don't need as much sleep

🍷 Drinking alcohol helps you sleep

🍴 Eating cheese gives you nightmares

# Stress and Sleep

**Work stress → Hyper-alert nervous system →  
Fragmented sleep → Lower coping capacity → More  
stress.**

### **Why Stress Disrupts Sleep**

High responsibility = brain stays on “alert mode”.

Cortisol remains elevated into the evening.

3am waking = problem-solving brain activated.

Sleep becomes something you try to *manage* rather than allow.

### **What Poor Sleep Does to You**

Reduced patience and emotional bandwidth.

Increased overwhelm and decision fatigue.

Lower resilience to everyday classroom stress.

Harder to switch off after the school day.

# HELPFUL STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATION STAFF

## **Create a clear end-of-day boundary**

Teaching often does not have a natural stopping point.

Writing a short list of priorities for the following day before finishing work can help signal to the brain that work is complete.

## **Allow a transition out of “work mode”**

Going directly from marking or lesson planning into bed can keep the brain in problem-solving mode.

A short wind-down period such as reading, stretching or watching a calm programme can help the nervous system settle.

# Practical tips and strategies

# GENTLE COGNITIVE TOOLS & RESETS

- **Counting Backwards**

Count slowly backwards from 1000 in 7s. If you lose your place, gently restart, no pressure.

- **Word Link Game**

Link one word to the next (Apple → Tree → Leaf → Green...).

Keep it simple and calm.

- **A-Z Game**

Pick a category (animals, foods, cities).

Work through the alphabet slowly.

- **Pictorial Game**

Visualise an object, something predictable and repetitive:

**These tools can be particularly helpful for individuals with busy or analytical minds who find their thoughts becoming active when they try to sleep.**

# IF YOU ARE AWAKE AND STRESSED

If you feel wired, frustrated or clock-watching:

Get out of bed.

Keep lights low.

Do something calm and neutral (read, gentle stretch, breathing).

Return when sleepy again.

This protects the bed as a **place of safety, not stress.**

# HELPFUL ADVICE



Consider what may be causing your sleep issues before adopting strategies



Exercise during the day



Regular hours for bedtime and wake up time. Start with the morning.



Plan a routine - wind down time in the hour before bed



Consider temperature, lighting, noise and the bed in the bedroom



Avoid stimulating screens an hour before bed

# HELPFUL ADVICE



EXPOSURE TO  
NATURAL DAYLIGHT  
EACH MORNING



DIM LIGHTS AT NIGHT



FIND A WAY TO  
SEPARATE WORK LIFE  
FROM HOME LIFE -  
DON'T WORK CLOSE  
TO BEDTIME



AVOID CLOCK  
WATCHING



WATCH ALCOHOL AND  
CAFFEINE INTAKE



WRITE DOWN  
WORRIES BEFORE BED

# SIGNPOSTING



Education Support's website & helpline 08000 562 561



The Sleep Charity website & National Sleep Helpline 03303 530 541



Sleepio or Sleepstation – CBTi



NHS: Insomnia



NHS: Obstructive Sleep Apnoea



Royal College of General Practitioners



GP

# Thank you

For more information about our work, further training and to sign up to our mailing list visit

[www.thesleepcharity.org.uk](http://www.thesleepcharity.org.uk)

Email [info@thesleepcharity.org.uk](mailto:info@thesleepcharity.org.uk)

