Sleep Supporters

Community Practitioner Handbook

thesleepcharity.org.uk

Empowering the nation to sleep better

WELCOME

Dear Sleep Supporter,

Welcome to the Sleep Supporter project, we are delighted that you are going to share our evidence- based sleep information with members of the community that you support.

The pilot project for Sleep Supporters was kindly funded by the Doncaster VCFS fund which was set up to address a range of community needs arising from Covid-19.

Sleep issues are highly prevalent with research suggesting that up to 40% of adults have difficulties. The pandemic has resulted in more sleep issues than ever before with reduced exercise opportunities, disruption in routine, increased anxiety and screen times usage all playing a significant part.

Having access to simple, honest, relevant advice has never been more important. Helping people to sleep better will have a positive impact on their wellbeing and mental and physical health.

To support you, we will:

- Provide you with pre-recorded training to watch at a time that suits your work pattern. This must be completed before you attend the live training session
- Provide you with a live training session led by a Sleep Practitioner who will answer any questions you may have and guide you through using the resources that have been developed to support your work
- Contact you every 8 weeks throughout the project to find out how delivery of the materials is going

Benefits to you:

- Develop your sleep knowledge by accessing our evidence-based training
- Provide you with resources to share with members of the community that you support

We look forward to working with you to make a difference to those in need of a good night's sleep.

The Sleep Charity Team

The Sleep Charity Team

OVERVIEW

Sleep Information

SLEEP INFORMATION

Sleep issues are common yet often lead those suffering feeling lonely and isolated. Sleep is as vital as food and water.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION

If we don't get enough sleep it can impact negatively on our lives in many ways including:

- Mental health
- Emotional regulation
- Lowers immune system
- Concentration issues
- Lowers our mood
- Increased anxiety
- Links to heart disease, strokes, obesity

CIRCADIAN RHYTHM

- Biological clock / Body clock
- Regulates appetite, body temperature
- Genetically programmed to some extent
- Relies on environmental cues and cease when cues removed, e.g. light/dark, social cues (alarm clock), daily routine
- Human circadian clock doesn't run precisely on a 24 hour cycle, a light/dark cycle runs to 24 hours
- Light cue via receptors in retina to suprachiasmatic nucleus to entrain biological clock
- Set wake up and bedtimes help to keep it on track

MELATONIN

- Naturally occurring hormone produced by the pineal gland in the brain
- Controlled by circadian clock - Levels rise at night and fall at dawn
- Teenagers release melatonin later in the evening – hence why they fall asleep later
- Screens may interfere with melatonin production and efficacy of prescribed melatonin
- Some research suggests those with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder may not produce enough melatonin and those with ADHD may release melatonin later in the evening
- Exposure to natural daylight in the morning helps to keep the body clock on track

POSSIBLE CAUSES

- Lack of routine/poor routine
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Pain
- Night-time urination
- Day time drowsiness
- Over stimulating bedtime
- Sleep disorders – OSA, restless legs
- Substance misuse
- Exercising too close to bedtime
- Temperature regulation
- Over thinking – too many rituals
- Diet and many more!

SLEEP DISORDERS

Remember, some clients will have sleep disorders that require medical intervention. If in doubt always advice that they visit their GP to discuss their sleep difficulties. These issues most commonly include:

- Insomnia
- Obstructive Sleep Apnoea
- Restless legs syndrome
- Bruxism – tooth grinding
- Sleep walking
- Nightmares
- Night terrors

REFERRING ON

Organisations To Signpost To

REFERRING PEOPLE ON

ANXIETY UK

A nationwide organisation assisting with anxiety, stress, anxiety-based depression or a phobia that's affecting daily life

Call: 03444 775 774
Text Service: 07537 416 905
support@anxietyuk.org.uk

www.anxietyuk.org.uk

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR BEHAVIOURAL AND COGNITIVE PSYCHOTHERAPIES

To find an accredited Cognitive Behavioural Therapist

www.babcp.com

CALM

An app for guided meditation and sleep stories

www.calm.com

HEADSPACE

An app that gives you tools and resources to look after your mind, they also have a section on sleep.

www.headspace.com

HOPE2SLEEP

A charity that offers information and support to those suffering with sleep disordered breathing and sleep apnoea

www.hope2sleep.org.uk

MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

Provides a range of content for more information on mental health and how to look after it.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

MIND

Mind offer advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

Call: 0300 123 3393

www.mind.org.uk

RLS-UK

A charity providing help and support to people living with Restless Leg Syndrome and Periodic Limb Movement Disorder

www.rls-uk.org

SLEEPIO

A digital sleep-improvement program featuring cognitive behavioural therapy techniques

www.sleepio.com

THE SLEEP SCHOOL

Offers science-based and data driven support for individuals and organisations suffering with sleep

www.sleepschool.org

TALKING ABOUT SLEEP

Conversation Starters And Practical Tips

TALKING ABOUT SLEEP

- **Put them at ease –** Clients may be reluctant at first to discuss their sleep issues, put them at ease, introduce yourself and let them know you are there to listen and share information.
- **Outline clear boundaries –** You are able to share basic sleep information – if you feel they need further intervention you must signpost on.
- **Getting started –** Some people may find it difficult to open up, there is still some stigma attached to having sleep issues. You can use some of our conversation starters if needed.
- **Language –** Think about the language you use, avoid asking why questions – these can make people feel judged. Make clear what you are asking and for what purpose.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- "How did you sleep last night?"
- "How are you feeling today?"
- "When was the last time you had a great night's sleep?"
- "What stops you from falling asleep easily at night?"
- "What kind of things do you do to help you to fall asleep more easily?"

GOAL SETTING

- Important to identify what people want to change about their sleep
- Sometimes it is overwhelming and one small change is enough
- Identifying and agreeing a goal is important

IMPORTANT TIPS

- Acknowledge how difficult sleep issues can be
- Normalise it
- Take an interest in what they are saying
- Take their concerns about their sleep seriously
- Let them know that you are listening
- Reassure them that they aren't alone, sleep issues are common and there are lots of things that can help

PRACTICAL TIPS

- Consider sleep patterns and timings
- Discuss the bedroom environment
- Pre-bedtime activities and routine should be explored
- Exposure to light each morning is important
- Regular sleep and wake times are vital
- Look at diet and exercise
- Consider the age of the client, our sleep changes over time
- Avoid sympathy, respond with empathy
- REALLY listen

SAFEGUARDING

- Follow your organisation's safeguarding policy
- Make it clear that the information shared is at a basic level and signpost them to the most relevant resource as necessary

NOTES

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CSC-1047 VAD Sleep Supporters Training - Resources - V1 - 20210513 | Design by pip-creative.com