



# PHN Mastermind: SLEEP AND MINDFULNESS

Matthew Milne  
Rural Adversity Mental Health Coordinator



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## CONTENT OUTLINE

- What is sleep
- What happens when we sleep
- Psychology of sleep
- Sleep hygiene
- Mindfulness

30mins

## WHAT IS SLEEP?

- A distinct period of inactivity and recovery
- Regulated by our 24 hour circadian rhythm
- Influenced by light, activity and food
- Allows the body to repair and remove toxins
- Create new pathways, memories and learn
- As essential and oxygen, water and food



## THE PHYSICAL (AND CHEMICAL) PROCESS OF SLEEP

- Hypothalamus – controls arousal through exposure to light
- Brain stem – communicates with hypothalamus to control transition between wake and sleep
- Thalamus – turns on and off and plays a role in dream formation
- Pineal gland – produces *melatonin* and plays a role in circadian rhythm
- Amygdala – active during REM sleep
- Forebrain – releases *adenosine* to support sleep



## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE SLEEP?

- Sleep is generally classified as non-REM or REM sleep
- We transition through a number of stages during sleep
- Our brain does different things at different stages
  - 1 – non-REM – body and brain transition from wake to sleep. Heart rate, breathing and movements slow
  - 2 – non-REM – light to deep sleep transition basal body temperature achieved, minimal brain activity
  - 3 – non-REM – deep sleep, everything is at its lowest, slowest point, most restorative sleep and hard to wake
  - 4 – REM – occurs 90 mins after sleep initiation. Eye movement, brain and body functions increase. Paralysis. Dreaming occurs here



## WHAT AFFECTS SLEEP?

There are a number of factors that and have some effect on our sleep cycle and quality of sleep

- Sleep environment
- Stress
- Medication and diet
- Medical conditions
- Lifestyle e.g. shift workers
- Devices



## WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DON'T SLEEP?

If we don't give our body the chance to repair during sleep, things can go wrong

- Fatigue
- Difficulty with attention, concentration and memory
- Impaired performance
- Irritability and mood disturbance
- Decreased energy and motivation
- Increased risk of errors and accidents



## WHAT ABOUT DREAMS?

Science is still out to lunch on what the purpose of dreams are but there are a few popular theories:

- Freud and his “Interpretation of Dreams” in 1900
- Reorganisation and filing of memories
- Neurotransmitter activity
- A bit of both?





## SLEEP HYGIENE

- Have a sleep schedule/wake up
- Be active
- Eat well
- Stay off devices
- Set bedroom up for success
  - Quiet
  - Dark
  - Temperature
  - clutter



## SLEEP TECHNIQUES

- If our sleep hygiene is up to scratch and we are still having trouble with sleep initiation it is important to have a chat with your GP. There are also a few other things that can be trialled to improve sleep
  - Relaxation exercises
  - Breathing exercises (square breathing, belly breathing)
  - Body scanning
  - Progressive muscle relaxation
  - Journaling/sleep diary
  - Visualisation
  - Driving the bed



## MINDFULNESS

- The process of being fully engaged and present in the moment by being aware of our thoughts, feelings, sensations and environment around us
- We assess thoughts and feelings as they pass, without judgement, and let them go
- If our thoughts drift, we bring them back to the moment by grounding
- Mindfulness is not meditation
- Mindfulness is not spiritual or religious



## MINDFULNESS

- Why should we practice mindfulness?
- Mindfulness can help us reduce stress and relax, stay focused on a task, become aware of our surroundings and immerse ourselves in a moment
- Mindfulness can help us break unhelpful thinking styles and challenge our feelings in a kind way
- Mindfulness can help us take a break from a busy day and help us recharge quickly
- Practicing mindfulness before/in bed can help us get to sleep



## MINDFULNESS

- Mindfulness can be practiced standing, sitting or laying
- Pay attention to your breathing
- Notice what your body is doing, engage your senses
- Recognize that thoughts and feelings are fleeting
- Notice what your mind is doing, have you drifted?
  
- Try a mindful walking or eating exercise
- The more practice we have, the better we get



## MINDFULNESS

- Grounding exercises can be quick and rough ways to catch ourselves when our thoughts and feelings are escalating
- It required us to engage our senses, one at a time, to be present in the moment
  - Five things you can see
  - Four you can hear
  - Three you can touch
  - Two you can smell
  - One you can taste





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