

Matthew Milne
Rural Adversity Mental Health Coordinator







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 though 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.
 Heartrate, 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 it's 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

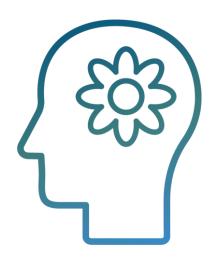




WHAT ABOUT DREAMS?

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



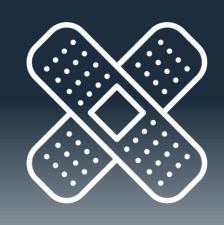


- The process of being fully engaged and present in the moment by being aware of our thoughts, feelings, sensations and environment around us
- We assess thoughts and feelings as they pass,
 without judgement, and let them go
- If our thoughts drift, we bring them back to the moment by grounding
- Mindfulness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





- 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 is 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 can by 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





- Grounding exercises can be quick and rough ways to catch ourselves when our thoughts and felings 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







This presentation has been developed by the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health as part of the Rural Adversity Mental Health Program.





