

# Sleep and Youth Mental Health

Dr Rebecca Rollinson

Clinical Psychologist

Lead: The Better Sleep Programme



# Overview



1. Understanding sleep in adolescents and young adults
2. How to get sleep back on track

Resources to check out

# Welcome!



Please be aware that this session will be recorded for sharing later.

We will pause for questions between each section and at the end. Do feel free to add questions and comments to the chat during the presentation.

We want people to participate but please use the 'raise hand' facility to ask questions and contribute when others are talking.

Please be considerate to others - together we want to create a safe, open and reflective space to learn.

You can turn on live captions by clicking on the 3 dots at the top of your screen if you need this.

Please do take the time to provide us with some feedback towards the end of the session.

# Thank you!



# The Better Sleep Programme



- Developed a 1:1 intervention for young people with mental health difficulties struggling with their sleep
- Found high level of need and enthusiasm from young people
- In 56 young people in secondary mental health services (average age 19years), 68% no longer had insomnia by the end of the intervention
- Also saw significant improvements in their wellbeing and less ongoing need from services

[BetterSleepProgramme@nsft.nhs.uk](mailto:BetterSleepProgramme@nsft.nhs.uk)

"I just kind of tell everyone, "Oh my god, try this if you can". Thank you so much. It has changed my life for the better in so many ways."

# The Better Sleep Programme



- Training and awareness raising programme provided by NSFT and funded by Norfolk and Waveney ICB.
- Aiming to embed offer of sleep work in existing services (we don't take direct referrals)
- See [JustOneNorfolk.nhs.uk](https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk) to find out more about resources and available services

# Understanding sleep in adolescents and young adults

Dr Rebecca Rollinson, Clinical Psychologist

Lead: The Better Sleep Programme



# Overview



- How common are sleep difficulties
- Understanding our body clock
- Role of stress and sleep
- A typical journey into sleeplessness
- Impact of poor sleep

# How common is insomnia?



**Adults**

**10%**

**Adolescents**

**20 - 30%**

**Adolescents with  
mental health  
difficulties?**

**60 to 70%**



# 1. Body clock changes

Our internal body clock is like a conductor controlling the timing of many physiological functions, including sleep.



Between 14 and 25 years, the brain signal that it is time for sleep can be delayed by 2 to 3 hours.

But still have to get up at the same time!

# 1. Body clock changes

Getting to bed earlier to try and catch up on sleep just means more time in bed wide awake.

- Lose the association between bed and sleep
- Lose confidence in ability to get to sleep
- Get distracted elsewhere...
- Or more time to dwell on worries



## 2. Stress and sleep

A stressed state makes it harder to fall asleep.

Normal, (even adaptive?) to lose sleep when stressed (under threat)



## 2. Stress and sleep

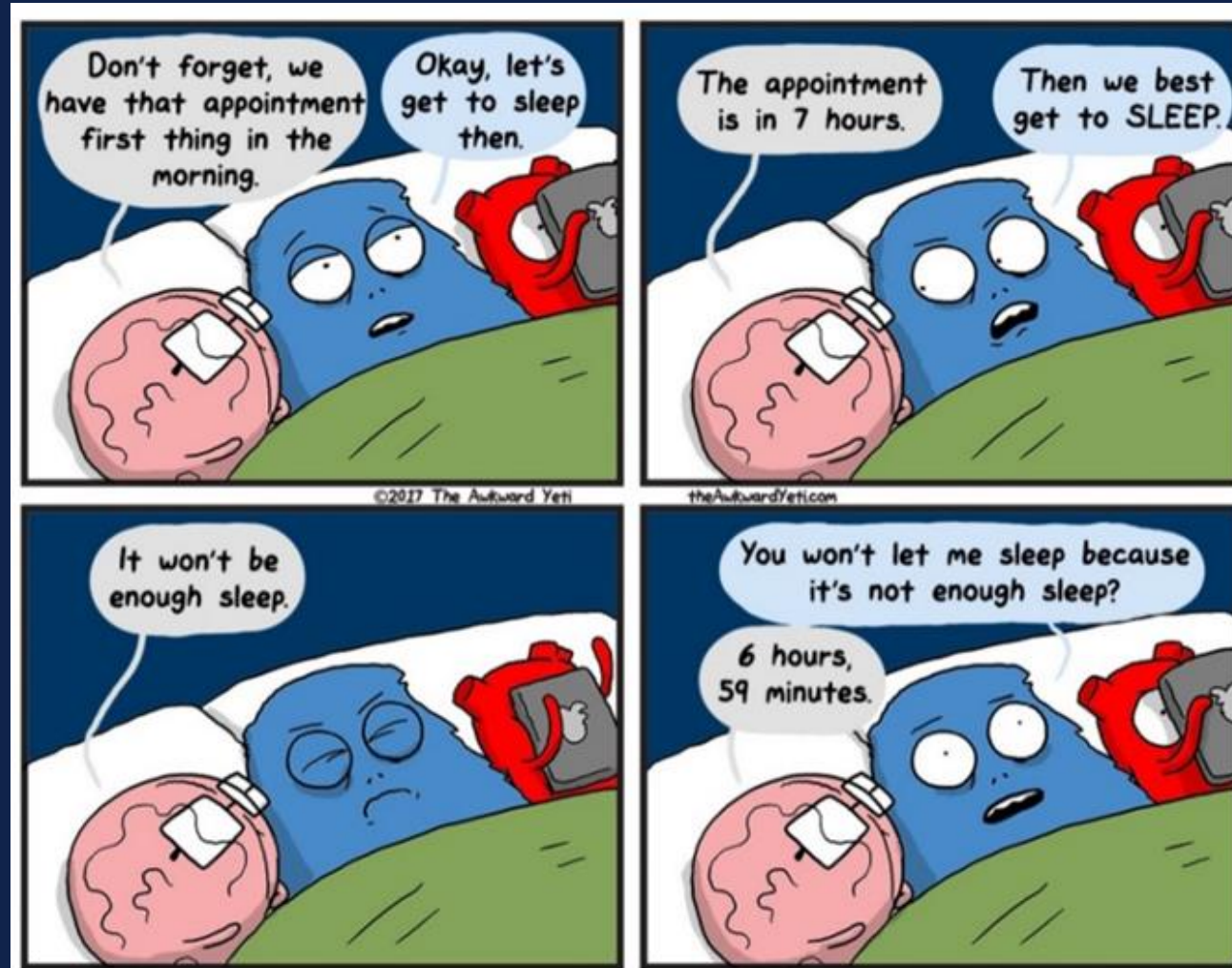


Lying in bed awake for hours, our tired brain tends to see the worst in a situation.



Even if the immediate stressor passes, this can become a worry about getting to sleep...

# 2. Stress and sleep



## 2. Stress and sleep

Sadly, some young people might have learned to be on high alert at night from an early age...





A typical journey...



NO NAP CLUB





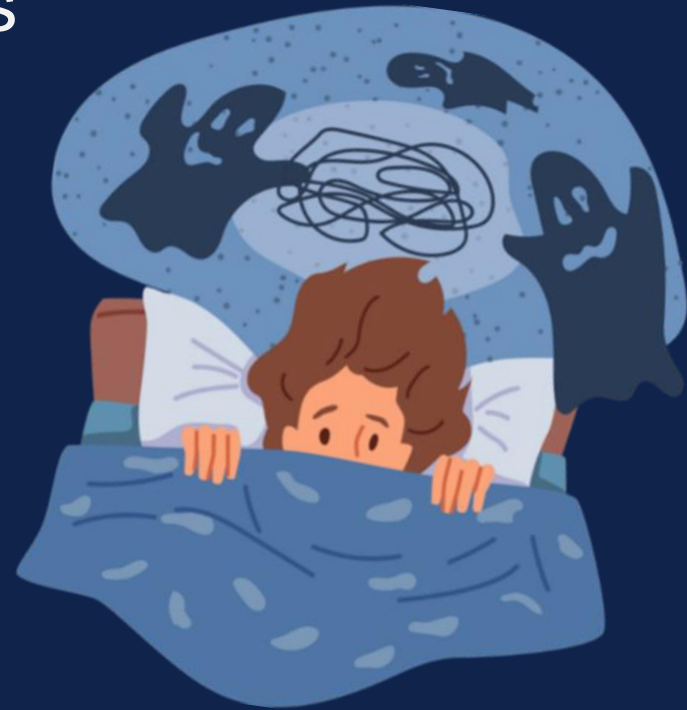
# Impact of poor sleep



# Impact of poor sleep

- We have different stages of sleep that have different functions
- A sleep deprived brain starts to juggle type of sleep around
- More likely to get unusual experiences
  - Nightmares are remembered
  - Dream-like states when waking
  - Unable to move whilst awake

Can all add to stress about sleep



# Summary



- Young people more likely to struggle with their sleep
- Delayed body clock means they are sleepy later
- Going to bed early means more time lying awake
- Role of stress in disrupting sleep
- Typical journey – how it can easily build up
- Impact of poor sleep



Next...how to get sleep back on track!



# Questions/comments?





Norfolk and Suffolk  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Getting sleep back on track

Dr Rebecca Rollinson, Clinical Psychologist

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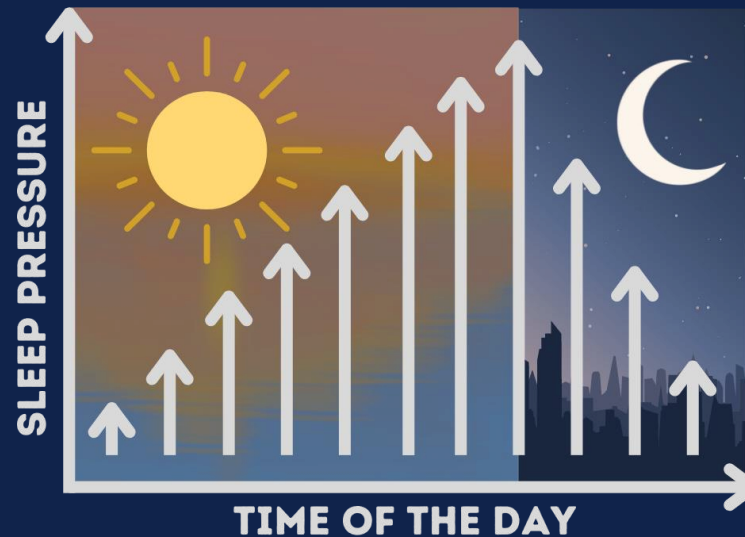
# Systems driving sleep



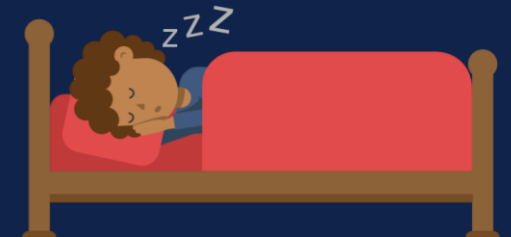
## 1. Our body clock



## 2. Our sleep drive



## 3. Getting brain ready for sleep





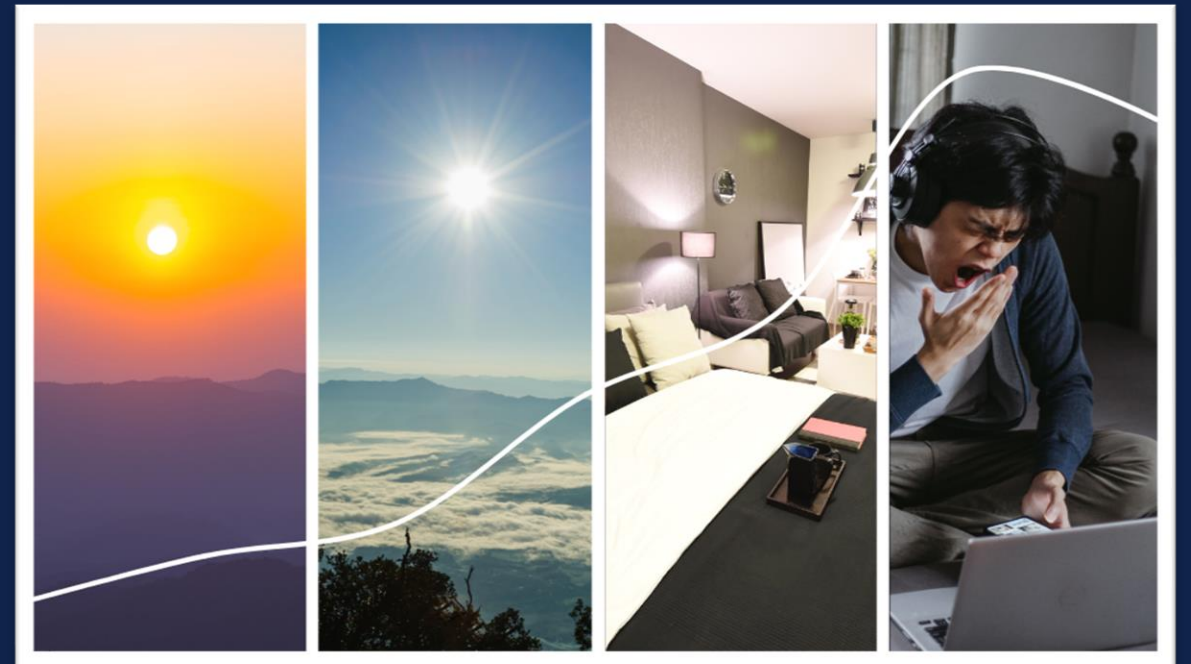
# 1. Setting our body clock

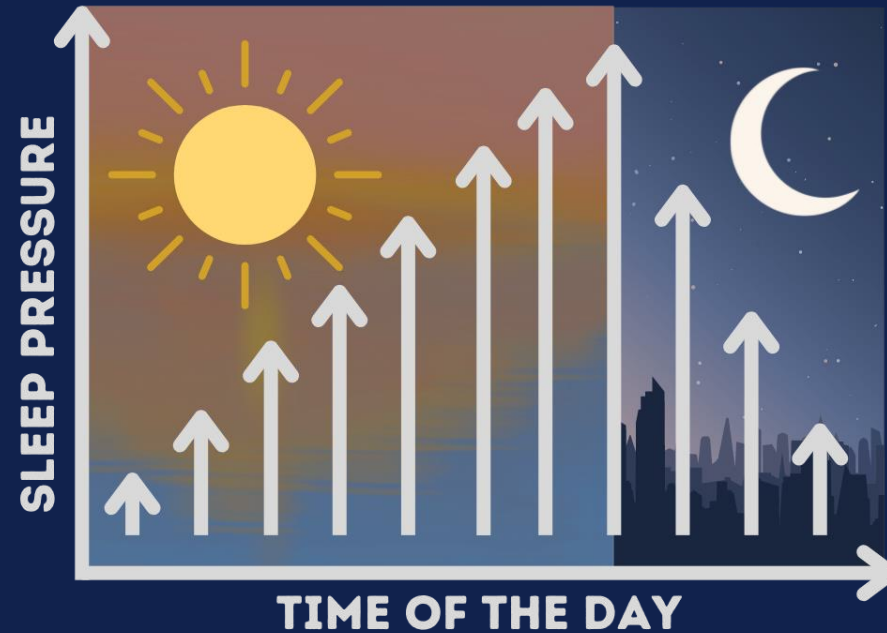
# Signalling with light



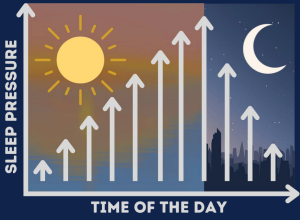


# Mixed signals?





## 2. Boosting our sleep drive



# Boosting sleep drive



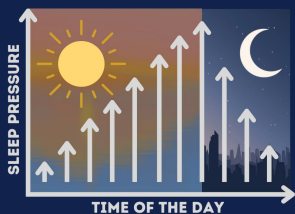
## 1. Caffeine

- Caffeine stops us noticing sleep drive build up
- Then get it all at once
- Then reach for more caffeine...



## Top tips

- ✓ Stock up on de-caff options
- ✓ Limit caffeine to mornings only
- ✓ Everyone's different. Try it and see if makes a difference for you



# Boosting sleep drive



## 2. Naps

- Daytime sleeping reduces need for sleep at night
- If you *have* to nap:
  - Set a timer
  - Keep it earlier in the day
  - Try deep rest as an alternative



## 3. Work with wake up time

- Gradually bringing wake-up time earlier helps increase your sleep drive at night
- It is hard work though – make sure it is rewarding!
- Pair with light for most effect





# 3. Getting our brain ready for sleep

# Bed can become a multi-activity centre!





**BED =**  
**SLEEP**

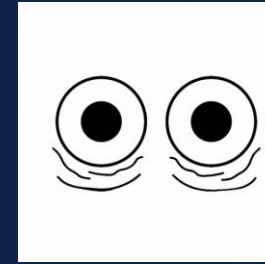
Only go to bed when sleepy  
Only sleep in bed



# Brain ready for sleep



1. Only go to bed when sleepy
  - Waiting until 'sleepy-tired' before going to bed
  - Reduces worry time
  - Means bed becomes a signal for sleep again
  - Plan carefully and think of best time to start this
  - Unlikely to lose sleep as already falling asleep so late
  
2. Only sleep in bed
  - Needs careful planning
  - Beanbag? Desk? Blankets on top of bed?
  - 15 minute rule – getting back up if not asleep



**BED =  
SLEEP**





# Brain ready for sleep



## 3. Quietening brain & signalling safety.

- Wind down routine – two hours ahead of sleep time
- Putting day to rest
- Relaxation and grounding
- Different for everyone

“What helps you feel rested and **safe**”?



# Waking in night and nightmares

- Very common and upsetting experience
- Feels meaningful and foreboding



- ✓ Getting a regular sleep pattern helps the most
- ✓ Grounding strategies
- ✓ Reducing worry about getting back to sleep

# Medication



- Psychological intervention (CBT for insomnia) is first line treatment for insomnia for adults and children and young people (NICE guidelines).
- Sleeping tablets can help you sleep *while you're taking them*
- Recommended for short-term use only
- Careful about drowsiness in daytime



# Tips for success

- Avoid do's and don'ts
- Explain reasoning
- Work together
- Try things out – keep a diary to see if making a difference
- Consequences of making change? Is it rewarding?



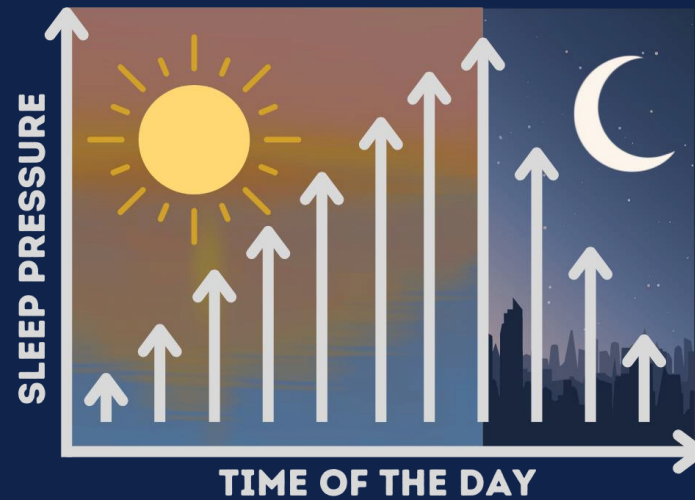
# Re-cap



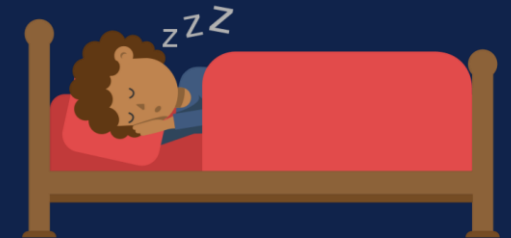
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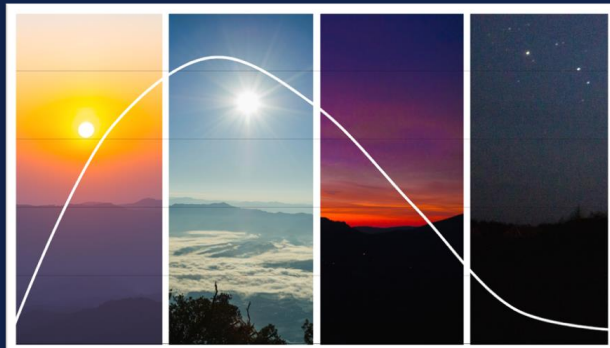
# Re-cap



Normal for adolescents to fall asleep later

**BED =  
SLEEP**

Go to bed when ready to sleep



More light in morning, less in evening

# Resources

Our self-help guide will be available on Just One Norfolk website along with links to other resources and services

For staff members, currently some resources on the TALK website

**QUICK WINS**

### Caffeine

Confuses the body clock. It blocks signals of tiredness and stimulates our brain and nervous system.

Caffeine stays in our system for several hours so it can help to avoid caffeine in the afternoon and see if it helps with falling and staying asleep more easily.



### Nicotine

Also acts as a stimulant and is best avoided or limited before bed. The breathing action associated with smoking can be quite soothing (long breath out) and can sometimes be part of what people find soothing in a night-time cigarette.



### Alcohol

Can confuse our sleep system. It can override our body clock and stop us spotting signals of being sleepy. It also leaves us dehydrated at night with the thirstiness often being enough to wake us. It can also make it harder to wake at the planned time.



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**QUICK WINS**

### Light

This is the strongest way of resetting our body clock if struggling to fall asleep or fall asleep at the right time. Having plenty of daylight or bright light early in the morning and then making sure light is dimmer in the few hours before bedtime (i.e., use lamps instead of overhead lights and avoid too much screen time) will help us feel sleepy earlier.



### Devices

They can be a distraction from trying to settle to sleep. It can interfere with getting your brain ready for sleep by sending the wrong signal to the brain due to the screen light.

Another thing to keep in mind is the content watched – an engaging video or game can make you stay alert for longer and ignore you body cues for sleepiness.



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**PLANNING**

### Wind-down routine

To help us to feel sleepy and cue our brain for sleep, it can be helpful to have a soothing wind-down routine. This routine should focus on the couple of hours before you typically get into bed and include activities to help you start unwinding. This might be having a bath/shower, changing into pyjamas, having a warm drink and light snack, or watching TV.

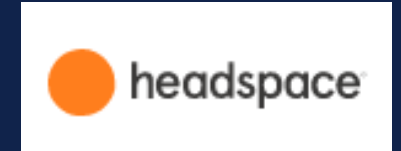
Use space below to think about how this might look for you.

Time	Activity
Approximate time	e.g. Shower Watching TV with warm drink and biscuit



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# Resources



## **The Sleep Charity**

Independent expert voice on sleep issues in the UK, visit their website for resources including videos and eBooks.

## **The Matt Walker Podcast**

Short informative podcasts from Dr Matt Walker, Professor of Neuroscience at the University of California, Berkeley. Available across platforms including on Spotify, Amazon music, Apple podcasts and The Matt Walker Podcast website.

## **Oxford Sparks – What Makes you Tick: Circadian Rhythms**

Youtube video looking at circadian rhythms, how they work and what controls them.

## **Headspace**

Provides meditation, relaxation and mindfulness tools. Some free resources available on their website, many more on their app (subscription charge for app).



# Norfolk Multi-agency Practice Week



Feedback can be provided through the QR code on the left or through this link which will be shared in the chat:

<https://forms.office.com/e/EM5kEwrFLJ>



# Questions/comments?





# Thank you for your time

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