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Peer Group Chat

Date: 15/09/2022

Title: Sleep

Description: Many of us can struggle to get the amount and quality of sleep that we need, yet sleep is important for our mental health and wellbeing. Not getting enough sleep can be an early warning sign that we might not be doing so well mentally. In this chat we'll reflect and learn about how we can cope with our sleep concerns, improve our sleep, and support each other.

PurplePa nther (PSW)	Hi everyone. First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we are all joining this event from. We pay deep respect to the Elders of those Countries, past and present, and we further extend that respect to any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people joining this group tonight. Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about Sleep. We really value your thoughts on how these groups go, so we will send a link to a short survey at the end of this event for you to complete. While this survey is optional, it is a chance to provide feedback for us to improve our services. In case you might need to leave part way through the event, you can find the survey here now: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUFOsHJRKQ6wyW
PurplePa nther (PSW)	Tonight, Peer Support Workers @Girasole and myself will be facilitating a discussion around the topic of sleep. Whether you have lived experience of complex mental health issues, you care for someone who does, or both, everyone can benefit from improving their sleep. We'll be moving through a number of discussion questions tonight, and it's entirely up to you how much or how little you are comfortable with sharing. Some of the conversation may be heavy in nature as we talk about struggles with sleep. @LunaSky, a counsellor, is working behind the scenes to ensure our safety. If you're having any technical difficulties, please see our FAQ (https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat/chat-faq) or message @LunaSky. We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn more together about sleep.
PurplePa nther (PSW)	Within this group tonight we'll be talking about: What causes disruptions to our sleep (e.g. stress, our phones, nightmares) What works for us to help improve our sleep or cope with disruptions Further support that is available

The Hams	Hi. I'm on train atm so may drop out
PurplePanther (PSW)	We will be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join 😊
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Hey @The Hams ! Welcome, its good to see you here tonight 😊
The Hams	Meant to be thumbs up sorry
PurplePanther (PSW)	Welcome everyone! Feel free to introduce yourselves. I'm @PurplePanther
The Hams	Just saying this now. I always put my phone down 1 hour before bed. No screen time b4 sleep either.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Hahaha that's ok, thanks for explaining @The Hams :)
The Hams	Hams here. Forums veteran.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Hi there @the magician ! Great to see you, welcome :)
the magician	hi people I couldn't see the topic for tonight what is it?
PurplePanther (PSW)	Tonight's topic is Sleep
Girasole (Peer Worker)	And a little blurb: Many of us can struggle to get the amount and quality of sleep that we need, yet sleep is important for our mental health and wellbeing. Not getting enough sleep can be an early warning sign that we might not be doing so well mentally. In this chat we'll reflect and learn about how we can cope with our sleep concerns, improve our sleep, and support each other.
PurplePanther (PSW)	Q1: Do you find you have any difficulties with sleep? If so, what do they look like for you? Are they ongoing or only happen occasionally?
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I can struggle to wind down and get to sleep, and also with waking up earlier than I'd like. That's quite ongoing. Occasionally I can struggle with getting enough sleep, if I'm going through a period of a great deal of stress

the magician	i had sleep issues in sleeping in for various emotional and anxiety reasons for 33 years. coming out of that now. with new insights.
The Hams	Yes. I always wake in the middle of the night. Usually if it is early morning say past 5am then I can barely get back to sleep. I got put on melatonin (natural chemical our body uses to sleep). I've also tried herbal remedies too which have helped a bit. Usually it snowballs. If I can't sleep then I worry about not sleeping and so I keep awake. And then it gets worse and worse.
the magician	for me having help meeting those needs in other ways was important.
The Hams	And I am highly anxious before bed then I can't sleep too
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I can really relate to those worried thoughts when you can't sleep @The Hams - I feel like the stress of that then further gets in the way of sleep!
The Hams	Definitely Girasole
the magician	until recently i would go to bed as late as my routine would allow and had so much difficulty waking. when i changed around my sleep hours getting up at 6.30 is easier than 8 o'clock. huge change and so much more time.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Hi there @Aussierecharger ! Welcome :)
The Hams	Yeah I must admit that forcing myself up earlier does definitely help. I'm working full time now so this helps for sure.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	It's really interesting, that! I've also found similar things, if I've gone to bed early enough. It also feels good to have a bit more of daylight hours in the day
PurplePanthor (PSW)	Q2: Have you noticed that issues with your sleep are caused by anything? For example, a lot of stress or a reexperience of trauma may cause issues with our sleep.
the magician	sometimes im so sleepy at the end of reading a book i drift off without medicines. wake up in the night and have to take them so sleep in in the morning.
The Hams	Yes. Anxious thought experiments make me lose sleep. Bit also if it's middle of the night and my mind goes into overdrive at say 2am. I can be awake for about 3 hours.
Aussiere charger	Food, life events.. i regularly get nightmares.. sometimes 2 or 3 a night so i feel very tired the next day
The Hams	About to arrive at my station.

The Hams	Same AussieRecharger
LunaSky (moderator)	I find stress and too much food mean I sleep lightly, like I have kind of been awake all night, not switching off
The Hams	Brb
Girasole (Peer Worker)	One of our next questions is specifically about nightmares, so we'll have a chance to get a bit deeper into coping with those then :)
the magician	i sleep well. my meds knock me out. its been more of a 30 something year struggle against oversleeping.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Significant stress certainly impacts my sleep occasionally. For my more ongoing issues with sleep, I've realised that neurodivergence explains a great deal of it – like hypersensitivity to sound or light in my environment
PurplePanthor (PSW)	I have big problems with sleep when I am anxious. Which makes the anxiety worse.
the magician	sleeping with the blind up helps that.
the magician	i only have issues at night if im trying to plan something and cant find options. leads to a bit of ruminating.
PurplePanthor (PSW)	Q3: For some of us, we can experience nightmares and disturbed sleep related to trauma. If you experience this, have you found anything to be helpful or comforting to help you cope?
the magician	sometimes in my dreams i have my own personal team of psychologists figuring it all out for me. or i call on my dad when asleep for guardian angel type help. its really me reflecting helping me but using another vessel.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	that's really nice @the magician :blush:
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Nightmares are horrible. I find that, if I can, speaking to someone I trust like my partner can help to feel safe again. Speaking about what happened, externalising it (perhaps journaling it), self-soothing and providing myself comfort however I can
the magician	if its a reoccurring nightmare discussing what it could symbolise for me could help.
The Hams	Sometimes I have woken up yelling at night due to nightmares. It's horrible

Girasole (Peer Worker)	Also, with nightmares stemming from trauma, trauma-specific grounding strategies may be particularly helpful afterwards
PurplePanthor (PSW)	Q4: This article shows that most Australians aren't getting enough sleep https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-06-09/australia-talks-not-getting-enough-sleep-phones-to-blame/100161686. The survey results show that for many of us, phone use gets in the way of our sleep. Do you relate to this? If so, have you managed to figure out something that helps address phone use to get better sleep? Or have phones been able to help your sleep, e.g. through sleep apps?
the magician	reclaiming safe space along with martial arts id good too
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I'm not sure if that linked worked - hopefully this does https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-06-09/australia-talks-not-getting-enough-sleep-phones-to-blame/100161686?utm_campaign=abc_news_web&utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_source=abc_news_web
Girasole (Peer Worker)	My phone has certainly been more of a hindrance than a help when it comes to my sleep. Its been helpful for me to realise why that likely is, though- with undiagnosed neurodivergence. In seeking out diagnosis/es and support (among other things), I hope that will help
PurplePanthor (PSW)	I have actually used my phone to my advantage to aid sleep, I have used sleep apps, or used it to read or even do exercises to relax
the magician	i use mine to read also. it doesn't seem to interrupt me the phone. but i have to be ready for bed before reading or ill fall asleep some days without meds im so relaxed.
The Hams	I keep my phone in another room entirely
LunaSky (moderator)	I find reading is a sure way for me to fall asleep and relax too @themagician, sometimes I would like to stay awake longer so I can read more!
PurplePanthor (PSW)	Q5: If we struggle with sleep, we can often try to manage it all by ourselves. But other people can really help in the process! If there are medical concerns, a professional like a GP or psychiatrist could help. Otherwise, others in our life can support us to e.g. not use our phones past a particular hour. Do others already support you to get better sleep? If not, how do you think others might be able to help?
the magician	love that!
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I've found it very helpful to have a GP prescribe something to help with sleep, for when all my efforts still aren't enough to bring about good sleep (e.g. if I'm under an extreme amount of stress). I've also found that if I'm

	more connected to others, like in-person or on the phone, then I'm not looking at a screen and am more likely to fully feel the effects of my body's sleep signals, helping me want to go to sleep earlier
the magician	mothers our Band-Aids, psychiatrist and psychologist with practical suggestions. and some times its just easier for sleep patterns to go to bed at 9.30 rather than 11 o'clock and be up super early to do stuff. or blame the person who invented the Edison's switch.
the magician	in heat waves of '09 i couldnt sleep at all to the point i broke down due to heat exhaustion. meditation all night and a book saved me in the end.
the magician	i pictured myself like my sister on a dairy farm getting up at 5am to feed cows. and thought i wish i could do that too. and changed. it was a very definite decision i made like when i quit smoking.
PurplePanthor (PSW)	Q6: Sleep may be thought of as a state of unconsciousness. Rest, meanwhile is an activity aimed at increasing physical and mental wellbeing, and is valuable to complement sleep. What does rest look like for you?
Girasole (Peer Worker)	The most restorative physical rest for me is when its combined with emotional, mental, and sensory rest too :)
LunaSky (moderator)	Sometimes my mental and emotional rest comes with physical activity
PurplePanthor (PSW)	I need to give my anxious brain a rest. So anything that helps with that.
the magician	rest is gardening, reading, bike riding, camping, music, drawing in a zone. coffee and a pastry while brainstorming a story. showers every morning. tv.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I enjoy rest in the forms of breaks from the daily status quo & tasks I might need to do. Seeing good friends. Watching a good tv show. Simply doing nothing !
PurplePanthor (PSW)	A nap with my cat
the magician	that sounds cute i want one to do that too
The Hams	Rest = silence and some form of nature but also sunlight and reading. Rest is listening to the rain. I like white noise and ambience as well. YouTube is good for that.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	True that reminds me! I discovered 'brown noise' which was very calming on my brain, so now I listen to that for sleep

Girasole (Peer Worker)	more rest – listening to music, engaging in things I love, connection with nature
PurplePanthor (PSW)	Q7: What do you do to promote better sleep? Do you have any particular habits, strategies, or techniques that help?
the magician	a hearing impaired alarm clock for the sedated
The Hams	Hot milk works. As does herbal tea. But the trick is to drink it lol
the magician	exercise meditation stress management. don't underestimate chamomile tea with honey and vanilla.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Trying to get a wind-down routine going; tea; trying to do things other than be on my phone before bed; trying to go to bed and wake up around the same time each day; noise cancelling earphones; having some support from others when needed
the magician	water helps stress water helps headaches water helps being tired and even paranoid in heat.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I'm mindful a few of us related to anxious thoughts and ruminating getting in the way of sleep sometimes. Has anyone found ways to deal with these?
LunaSky (moderator)	Sometimes being completely still, imagining my body is heavy and following my breathe helps still my thoughts
the magician	smart goals. break the problem up into chunks , have a checklist and outpoints. tell yourself there is always another solution and i will find it in the morning. write that down.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I was going to recommend this website I've found helpful (excuse the profanity haha) – https://youfeellikeshit.com/ – it prompts you to consider any unmet immediate needs you might have, and also provides ideas of activities to get anxious thoughts out of your mind, or consider grounding strategies etc depending on how you're feeling :)
PurplePanthor (PSW)	Having the TV on helps me sometimes. It helps interrupt my thoughts. I tend to think in words, so other talking on the tv helps to break that up
The Hams	Gonna head off. Sleep well everyone
the magician	you too Hams

Girasole (Peer Worker)	Take care @The Hams !:)
PurplePanthor (PSW)	Q: Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what did you learn?
the magician	to listen to my body at night when its getting tired even if reading.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I've really appreciated that with all our experiences, there's a lot we can learn from each other :blush: The power of groups!
the magician	glad i made the sleep wake cycle change even if midlife!
LunaSky (moderator)	I've learned about brown noise, and been reminded of the helpfulness of chamomile tea in the evenings. I too appreciate these group chats
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Also what you said earlier @the magician- "sometimes im so sleepy at the end of reading a book i drift off without medicine" - t'd be interesting I think for anyone to reflect on what sort of activities might bring about this effect of sleepiness, for us. :) I've found recently even things on my phone can manage to do that ! Like watching a comfort show
the magician	dealing with an over achieving schedule haha
PurplePanthor (PSW)	Q: Tonight's topic may have brought up some heavy feelings as we talked about the reasons we may struggle to get a full or uninterrupted night's sleep. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do? 😊
PurplePanthor (PSW)	All the talk about tea has kind of made me want one!
the magician	eat a cookie. read new book. chill 2 mp3player. and yes a tea.
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I'm thinking instead of doing the various things I'd planned to do after, I'll just follow my sleep signals and wind down for bed! I'd have more time in the morning anyway, waking up earlier, to get on with them
Girasole (Peer Worker)	I'm definitely making myself a chamomile tea, too :)
the magician	good luck ,sleep well, thankyou and goodnight all.:sleeping:

PurplePanthier (PSW)	Here are some further resources we recommend having a look at: 1: On the science of sleep and barriers (+ solutions) to getting a good sleep: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCWBOzv_MNA 2: 8 things to try if trauma is ruining your sleep: https://www.self.com/story/trauma-sleep-strategies 3: an app designed to support stress related struggles with sleep: https://sleepstoreapp.com/
PurplePanthier (PSW)	We'd like to invite you to complete a survey reflecting on your experience in this Peer Group Chat. We'd love to hear any feedback you may have. It will only take a few minutes to complete. Please click this link: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUFOsHJRKQ6wyW
PurplePanthier (PSW)	Thank you for joining, and we hope you enjoyed the discussion 😊 If you'd like to be informed when our next Peer Group Chat will be taking place, you can sign up to our mailing list here https://www.sane.org/peer-support/peer-group-chat . You can also ask questions for us to discuss in future peer chats!
LunaSky (moderator)	Rest well everyone :)
Girasole (Peer Worker)	Take care and have a good night everyone! I hope you have a good sleep :) Or if not, I hope you at least feel a bit more equipped to respond to any difficulties :blue_heart: