

SANE AUSTRALIA

SANE Australia Mental Health Meet-Up

Date: 01/07/2021

Topic: Sleep and Wellbeing

Description: Many of us can struggle to get the amount and quality of sleep that we need, yet sleep is quite 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 come together to reflect and learn about how we can cope with our sleep concerns, and support each other

HappyCastle (PSW)

Hi everyone! Welcome everyone to today's Peer Group Chat talking about sleep! First, we'd like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands we're 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. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

This is a new peer support service. Because of this, we really value your thoughts on how it goes, so we will send a link to a short survey at the end of this chat 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 access the survey here now: https://sane.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uUF0sHJRQ6wyW.

Tonight, peer support workers @TideisTurning and @HappyCastle 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, anyone could benefit from getting some better 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 mental health struggles. @Otter, who moderates on the SANE Forums, 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-faqs#what-if-i-am-having-a-tough-time-and-need-immediate-support>) or message @Otter.

We're looking forward to creating a space where we can reflect and learn together and expand our ideas of managing our own sleep. Lastly, just so you're aware, the transcript of this group will be made available for download afterwards on SANE's Peer Support website.

Alicat	Hi~†
Shaz51	hello @HappyCastle (PSW)
HappyCastle (PSW)	Welcome everyone! We'll be starting the discussion shortly, and will just allow a bit more time for people to log on and join ☺ In the meantime, feel free to introduce yourselves. I'm @HappyCastle
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi Alicat & Shaz51! Glad to have you both with us! :)
HappyCastle (PSW)	How are you both this evening?
Shaz51	hello @Otter (Moderator)
Alicat	I'm good and cosy sitting up in bed
Otter (Moderator)	Hi there! @Shaz51 Nice to see you all tonight :)
HappyCastle (PSW)	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?
Shaz51	I am sitting in bed too @Alicat
Alicat	Ongoing for many years, I find it hard to go to sleep before 12
Shaz51	for myself I have CKD and I go to the toilet 4 times a night @HappyCastle (PSW)
HappyCastle (PSW)	That sounds hard @Shaz51 I hope you have some warm ugg boots!
Alicat	I am a sleepy head once asleep
Shaz51	for my mr shaz , with anti anxiety meds he sleeps all night @HappyCastle (PSW)
Shaz51	hello @bipolarbunny@Emelia8
HappyCastle (PSW)	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.
HappyCastle (PSW)	For me, I struggle to sleep when I am stressed. I can ruminate on things from the past and get stuck in a cycle a little bit.
TideisTurning (PSW)	I may not recognise it in the moment, but yes. Often, it relates to what I like to call 'busy brain' where I just can't seem to stop thinking and settle into sleep. These thoughts usually relate to some sort of stress or other trauma.
Shaz51	happens to me in the middle of the night @HappyCastle (PSW)

Alicat	I stress when I'm having to get up early for work ect, anxiety goes round and round that I'm still not asleep yet
TideisTurning (PSW)	That's so hard @Alicat
Shaz51	i usually sleep straight away but it is through the night when i am wide awake @tideisturning
Alicat	It's frustrating! It's not like I'm going to do brain surgery .it's when I need to sleep I can't
HappyCastle (PSW)	When you are experiencing sleep issues, what effects do they have on your health and wellbeing? How does this compare with when you sleep well?
TideisTurning (PSW)	Hi @adge & @Zoe7 ☺
Alicat	I'm lucky there once asleep i stay asleep, broken sleep sounds more tiring @Shaz51
Shaz51	it is @Alicat
Zoe7	When I sleep well I can function better the next day
Shaz51	very true , wish i could @Zoe7
HappyCastle (PSW)	Oh totally agree @Zoe7. It really impacts me for the next day and concentration is hard
adge	:grin:
Alicat	I'm short with people, my memory is effected
TideisTurning (PSW)	100% @HappyCastle (PSW) @Zoe7
Shaz51	makes a big diffenece to having a good night sleep
Candydipper1	Hi
HappyCastle (PSW)	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 .
adge	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? I rarely get through an entire night, without 1)Back Pain kicking in at about 1.00am & Disrupting any ability to Sleep B) Having to go toilet at least Once (about 12.00 Midnight). 4) Even 8 hours Sleep is Never Restful - I am always Fatigued in the Morning, Due to Sleep Apnea & Complex PTSD symptoms
Zoe7	No phone use is not an issue - I do not use the phone much at all - mainly for emergencies
TideisTurning (PSW)	Because I've read similar reports, I try to be very careful and conscious of my interacting with screens before going to sleep. I'll try to refrain at least half an hour before by doing something like reading a book, away from a screen
Zoe7	Same @adge Sleep apnea and cptsd
HappyCastle (PSW)	That's good @Zoe7 and @TideisTurning (PSW). It's something I struggle with. It's hard if you're tossing and turning not to reach for the phone
adge	It often takes me up to 1 hour to even get to Sleep, then sometimes wake up 1 or 2 hours later (in the middle of the night)

adge
Shaz51
justme
Alicat
HappyCastle (PSW)
Zoe7
adge

Hi @Tideis Turning
i am fine with phone and tv as i can fall asleep straight away but then getting up 4 or 5 times a night makes it very tiring
Does anyone else experience nightmares?
Yes with nightmares, I grind my teeth really bad
@Alicat I relate to the teeth grinding!
Yes @justme but more infrequent now with the help of meds
On-going Sleep Deprivation & Broken Sleep causes severe Stress - & has impacts on MH. Here's an example: 2 & 1/2 year ago I had Severe Pain in Shoulder from Bursitis - I could not Sleep any night for over 2 weeks (I usually Sleep on my Left Bursitis Shoulder Side). The combination of the Strong Bursitis & Sleep Deprivation (for over 2 weeks) Tipped me Over the Edge - I virtually had a Breakdown, as a Direct Result of it.....

Shaz51
justme
HappyCastle (PSW)

i know what you mean @adge
Zoe7 yesm Ive heard of meds, great if helping, I try to journal it out if I can at this point, evening all bit tricky logging in
Good evening @justme glad you could make it.

HappyCastle (PSW)

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, other people in our life can help support us and help hold us accountable if we communicate that we're wanting to sleep at certain times, or 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?

TideisTurning (PSW)
Alicat
Zoe7
justme
adge

Hi @justme, @beth & @Forumuser. Glad to have all of you with us :)
Think I would fight with my hubby if he said it's bed time
I have a great GP and cpap machine but I cannot always use it as my trauma is related to my face being covered so it can often also set off the nightmares - it is tricky
ta, Happy Castle, support to stay up later so dont wake in wee hours is useful, some days or nights I crash at 8 then awake real up before sun time..
I do not usually have Nightmares @justme - I used to have "Night Panic Attacks" on occasion. Officially they are not Nightmares - Yet I screamed, & woke up in a terrible Fright, totally Disoriented (not knowing where I was) - I fell out of Bed during Night Panic Attacks, a few times....

justme

Sounds awful adge, it does seem nightmares and night panic attacks are echoes of trauma experiences in our stories eh

HappyCastle (PSW)
Shaz51

That wouldn't have helped the shoulder @adge I'm glad that isn't a regular occurrence for you
no help here , specialist is happy that my getting up 4 times a night is normal @HappyCastle (PSW)@HappyCastle (PSW)

adge	I scared my Wife at that time (because I Screamed) - I'm not married now, so there is no-one to Scare if I Wake up in a Fright (from Night Panic attack).
HappyCastle (PSW)	Sleep may be thought of as a state of unconsciousness where we are unaware of external stimuli around us. Rest, meanwhile is an activity aimed at increasing physical and mental wellbeing, but which are more aware of our surroundings. What does rest look like for you?
justme	My cat oft comforts in wee hours when my fella sound asleep, hes→† hard of hearing so I can slip out and journal adge
justme	rest is a deep state of calm for me....
Otter (Moderator)	Meditation, when it works well, can be a really good way to shut off my thoughts and really relaxing too - more relaxing than sleep sometimes!
adge	I have always been a very Light Sleeper - If a Pin dropped on the Floor, it would probably wake me up....
Zoe7	Rest for me is not doing anything and not thinking about anything - that is putting all that I need to do to the side for later - fur baby cuddles though of course.
Alicat	Rest is zoning out on tv.
Shaz51	rest is totally doing nothing
Alicat	Tv is more of an escape than rest
Alicat	I'm not to sure if I do rest actually, I do a lot of nothing
adge	Yes Meditation is very helpful - I use it as the Only Effective means to make up for Lost Sleep. I cannot Sleep or Nap during the Day at all @Otter (Moderator)
justme	I find during the day I rest better if Im listening to something, a guided meditation or visualisation occupies my brain and blocks voices increasingly, so I can relax and drop in for rejuvenation..
TideisTurning (PSW)	For me, it depends on the kind of rest that I need. Often, it can be taking time out for myself. A walk after work, while it isn't necessarily what you might immediately think of as "rest" can actually be a really good form of mental rest for me, as can going for a drive.
HappyCastle (PSW)	This article says that there are 7 types of rest that every person needs: https://ideas.ted.com/the-7-types-of-rest-that-every-person-needs . Does this article resonate with you? If so- how? Are there types of rest here you haven't considered before?
TideisTurning (PSW)	Everything in that article makes so much sense! But I never stopped to consider it so deeply that there could be different kinds of rest.
HappyCastle (PSW)	The idea of sensory rest is interesting. Absolutely something I should focus on more!
justme	I definitely need breaks /rest from stimulus
Zoe7	Some of it does @HappyCastle (PSW) I think identifying when you do need rest - from whatever source and in whatever way works for you is key
justme	Love the idea of creative rest Happy Castle, I find visuals can be so soothing....

- TideisTurning (PSW) Yes @justme. Maybe that explains why I'm such a theatre nerd! :)
Zoe7 I agree @justme I am a real visual person so looking at things that are pleasing to the eye can be restful. I love watching water run in a stream
justme Yes Zoe 7 awareness of when need rest is crucial, being tired turns everything up in volume...aaahhh water, waves to shore, ripples
HappyCastle (PSW) This might be a good time to ask this question!
HappyCastle (PSW) What do you do to promote better sleep?- Do you have any particular habits, strategies, or techniques that help?
Alicat Wow! That was fabulous, thank you do rest especially emotional, sensory and spiritual rest. I know the feeling when I need space and having a sensory overload. I just thought that I was being triggered, now I can see it as I need to rest and disconnect to energise.
HappyCastle (PSW) I use a sleep machine in my room at night, the white noise really helps me. If it stops for some reason, I wake up straight away. So I relate to what you said before @adge about sleeping lightly!
TideisTurning (PSW) For me, it can be things like avoiding any caffeine after a certain time and other relaxing things to help me settle
Zoe7 I have quite a lot of meds LOL For me they are essential as there were years where I barely slept - maybe an hour or 2 a night and I was very unwell. Now in order to maintain my current managed depression I do need to keep on top of sleep - so meds it is.
justme A warm cup of something creamy and honey filled before bed, yep meds to kick patterns back in, cuddles
Shaz51 yes mine is my night time meds and also cutting back on protein, salt , sugar etc to help me
Otter (Moderator) Having one of the aforementioned fur babies nod off at the same time as you is very comforting also :)
Alicat Yep night meds and reading
HappyCastle (PSW) @justme yes! A warm milk and honey is what I have always had. So soothing
adge No Caffeine for me after about 4.20pm - That was a Doctor's General Advice (for anyone), years ago.
Shaz51 yes i agree and i miss my furbabies @Otter (Moderator)
Zoe7 @Otter (Moderator)→†My fur baby takes himself to bed when I am beginning to get ready to do so also - so no worries about him sleeping. I also now have my squishy face (kitten) that comes to bed with us.
adge I use Herbal Remedies like Valerian & Nutmeg - They help me feel more Relaxed, & drowsy....
TideisTurning (PSW) Love puppy hugs!
justme yes adge! Motherwort, Leonurus cardiaca is great too, chill tea brew
adge Chamomile Tea is Good, it helps with Relaxation & Sleep - but I hate the Taste of Chamomile (yuk like Pee)
HappyCastle (PSW) Smells bad too!
Shaz51 ha ha totally

HappyCastle (PSW) I also like to stretch before bed. I find that helps too. Does anyone else do that?

adge I shall have to look that Motherwort, Leonuris cardiaca up @justme

justme Motherwort-† doesnt taste great either but it kicks in and does the job....bitter but goooood

Shaz51 no , i get lots of cramps @HappyCastle (PSW)

adge Yes Stretching Before Bed does help @HappyCastle (PSW)

Zoe7 Going to jump in here for anyone that does have medication that it is a good idea to consult your GP before taking anything else not prescribed. Some of what you have mentioned @justme reacts with my current meds and the side effects are horrible - headache, nausea

justme Meds taste pretty **** if you chew em too! Yoga can be useful eh

adge If I Stretch to get some of the Kinks & Aches out of my Joints (Before Bed) - Then I maybe have Less Back Pain, & Less Neck & Shoulder Pain during the Night.....

HappyCastle (PSW) I feel like everyone here has had lots of experience and tried a lot of different things to help with their sleep. Have you learned anything helpful from others' experiences here tonight that you might be able to apply in your own life? If yes, what was it that you took away?

Shaz51 very true , i cant take anything because of the kidney disease @Zoe7

justme Well said Zoe 7, always good to check it out before imbibe anything

Alicat Yes...that rest is different to sleeping and I wish I could snuggle with a puppy or pussycat.

Zoe7 Does Jelly cat not snuggle @adge-†? You can borrow Clover then

adge My Stimulant Medication (from Sleep Dr Specialist) can React with other Prescription drugs - Not usually with Herbal stuff.....

Zoe7 I think I have the sleep thing under as much control as I can for now @HappyCastle (PSW)-†but it has taken years to get to that point. I am still struggling with the machine but the more I use it the better I should get (hopefully) - as long as it doesn't trigger nightmares...

Otter (Moderator) Hadn't thought of doing yoga or stretches before bed for more comfortable and deeper sleep, will have to give it a go!

adge Oh Yes I would love to borrow Clover @Zoe7 - Jelly doesn't Snuggle at night.

Zoe7 You can have custody of her on alternate nights @adge LOL

HappyCastle (PSW) I found the article with the different types of rest particularly helpful, I've haven't really thought about it in those terms, so that was a great take away for me tonight

Zoe7 I find it hard to sleep without my fur babies - especially Toby - I don't feel as safe in a way without him

Alicat Thank you everyone..sweet dreams

HappyCastle (PSW)	Tonight's topic may have brought up some uncomfortable feelings as we talked about sleep and how it can be difficult for us sometimes. Would some self-care be helpful for you after we finish? If so, what might you do? (Hopefully have a big sleep!)
adge	Jelly Cat does Purr very Loudly (like a LawnMower) - The closer she moves to me (or the more I Pat her), the Louder she Purrs....
justme	Read that article again for sure, nighty
Zoe7	I have a date with the footy @HappyCastle (PSW)→and maybe something creamy as @justme suggested
Zoe7	I can barely hear Clover purr so you will not be woken by her
HappyCastle (PSW)	I'm going to eat some cheesecake...that's creamy and will help right?
Zoe7	LOL @HappyCastle (PSW) not sure that is what @justme meant but if it works...
adge	Cheesecake Helps with Absolutely Everything @HappyCastle (PSW)
justme	Wisdom is what works eh
adge	So does Cheese in general....
HappyCastle (PSW)	You had me at cheese!
Shaz51	ohhh yes cheese yummm @adge
adge	Funny thing is a Piece of Cheese (or some Milk) before Bed - Helps me to get to Sleep.
Shaz51	no cheese lover @HappyCastle (PSW)
Zoe7	I can feel my IBS playing up with just the mention of cheese....
HappyCastle (PSW)	lol @Zoe7 apologies!
Shaz51	ha ha me too @Zoe7
justme	Dairy has 5HTP in it which is some funky brain chill outer, bump cant have it...
Zoe7	I am laughing here @HappyCastle (PSW) @adge @Shaz51 @justme
adge	Cheese doesn't affect my IBS - In fact it Helps it....
HappyCastle (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_5uUF0sHJRQ6wyW
HappyCastle (PSW)	What a fun way to end the night - thank you all for the laughs!
Shaz51	i don't care, i just love cheese @adge
Otter (Moderator)	Thanks so much guys - it was a blast!

adge Me neither @Shaz51
adge Gotto have Cheese.....
Shaz51 thanks and see you soon @Otter (Moderator)
Zoe7 Sleep well everyone ...and yes that was tongue in cheek
Shaz51 ha ha just my usual night @Zoe7
Zoe7 Hearing you @Shaz51
HappyCastle (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 a question for our next topic and suggest your own! And you can read the transcripts of all our previous topics too ☺
justme Thanks all
TideisTurning (PSW) Thanks everyone for joining us this evening and sharing your ideas and insights! :)