The Better Sleep Workshop Series

Session 2

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Welcome Back!

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Recap of Session 1

- Sleep systems: sleep drive & circadian rhythm
- “Normal” sleep patterns
- Sleep difficulties as patterns
- Meditation exercise
- Sleep diary

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For this session you will need...

- Access to a pen and paper; or
- The notes app on your device

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Reflection on the Sleep Diary

Take a moment to notice your current habits before bed and in your daily routine. Which habits seem to *support* your sleep? Which habits might make sleep *harder*?

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Sleep Diary Example

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Day	Bedtime	Wake up time	Restfulness (1-10)
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			

Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)

- A method of systematically tensing and releasing muscle groups
- Helps reduce physical tension and calm the nervous system
- Can improve sleep onset
- No need to “force” relaxation, just notice sensations

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A Brief Practice

- Cameras on/off
- Eyes open or closed
- Sit comfortably or lie down
- Follow along at your own pace

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PMR Reflection

- How does your body feel now?
- Are there any areas that felt more tense or relaxed?
- Did any thoughts arise during the exercise?

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Sleep Hygiene

- Natural light in the morning
- Consistent sleep/wake times
- Limit caffeine and heavy meals close to bedtime
- Reduce screen times 30-60 mins before bed
- Create a calm, relaxing wind-down routine

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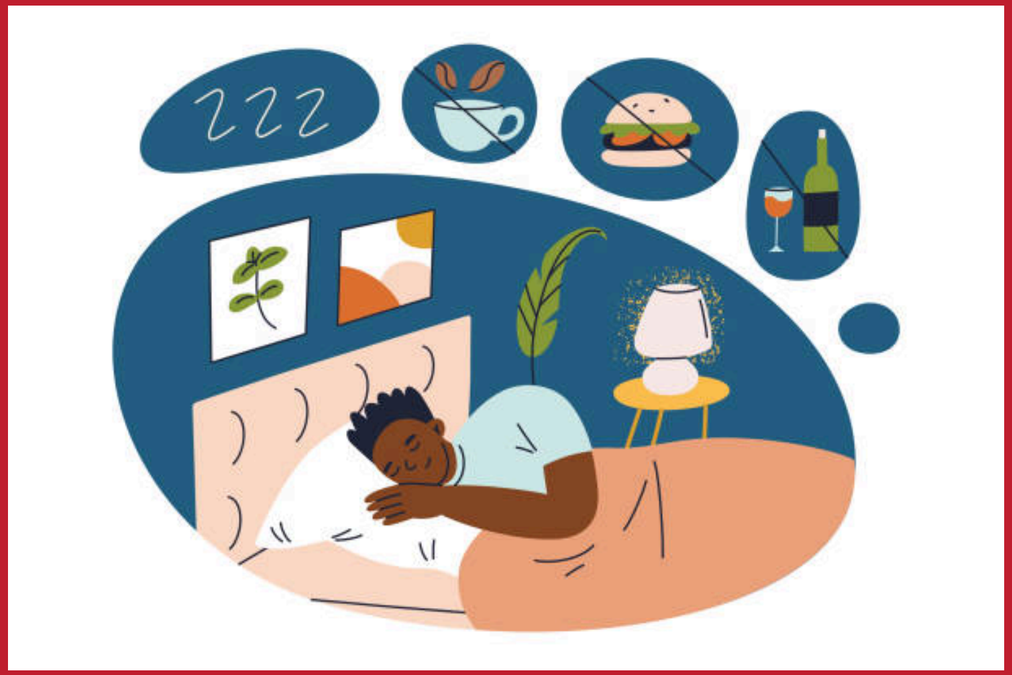
Sleep Hygiene

- Good habits support sleep, they *don't* control it
- Many people with sleep difficulties already try very hard
- Sleep problems are patterns, not personal failures



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Sleep Procrastination

- Going to bed later than intended
- Often linked to stress, overwhelm, or needing “me time”
- Can temporarily feel relieving
- Reduces sleep opportunity and increases fatigue

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The Sleep-Stress Connection

- Stress activates the nervous system
- Sleep requires calm and safety
- We can't force sleep when the brain feels "on-guard"

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The Wind-Down Window

- Sleep doesn't happen instantly
- The brain needs time to transition
- Routines signal predictability and safety

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The Wind-Down Reflection

- What might your wind-down time look like?
- What activities feel calming to you?
- What might make this easier or harder?

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Sleep Scheduling and Napping

- Aim for a consistent bedtime and wake times each day
- Keep your schedule on weekends when possible
- Short naps (<30 mins) can help, but longer can reduce sleep drive

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Brain Dump Exercise

- Write continuously for 5 minutes
- Put down every thought that comes up
- No organizing, editing, or judging
- Just let it flow onto the page

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Brain Dump Reflection

- How did it feel to write without stopping?
- Did your mind feel different afterward?
- Were there common themes in your thoughts?

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Preparing the Mind for Sleep

- Managing thoughts is part of good sleep habits
- A structured wind-down routine can help signal bedtime
- Including a “brain dump” or intentional time for racing thoughts

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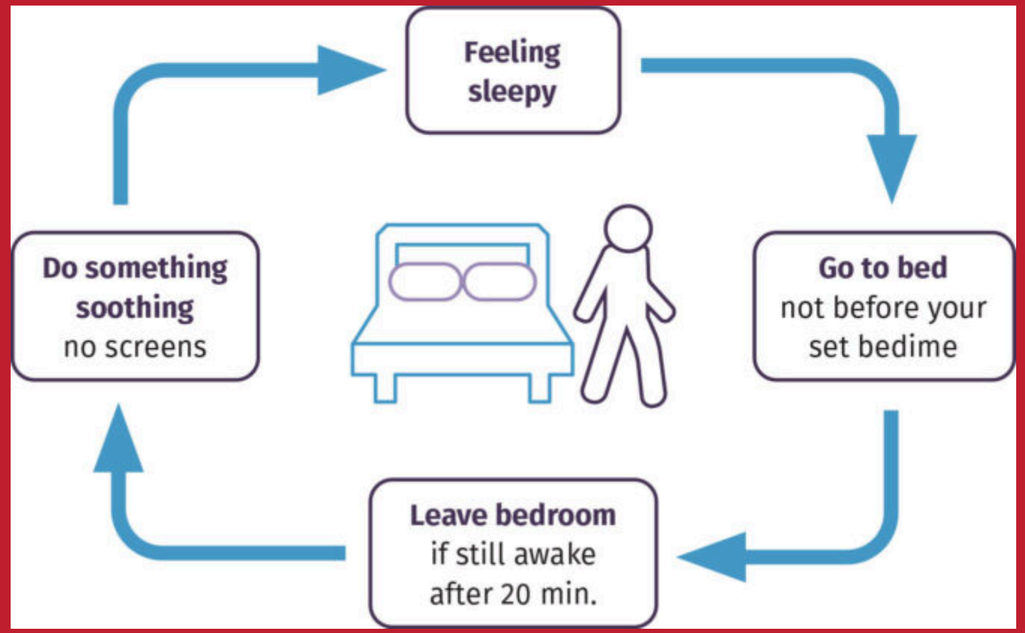
Stimulus Control

- If awake for >15-20 mins, leave the bed and do a quiet activity
- Keep bedroom dark, cool, and quiet
- Avoid work or screens in bed



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Optional Carry Forward Task

- Continue with sleep diary
- Pre-sleep wind down routine
  - Pick 1-2 calming activites before bed
  - Try it for 5-15 minutes each night
  - Notice how it affects your sleep

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Thank you!

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Next Session
Thursday, March 5th at 7:00pm

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