

Resource 1: Helpful and less helpful sleep behaviours

Helpful and less helpful sleep behaviours

Abe had been feeling fairly tired recently so went to bed early on Sunday to ensure he felt ready for the week at school. He had packed his things ready beforehand to ensure a quick getaway in the morning.

But he couldn't get to sleep so, despite his best intentions, Abe starts Monday by pressing the snooze button, being too late for breakfast, and missing the bus meaning he had to run to school. He got through the morning by eating crisps and energy drinks for a quick energy boost.

Abe tries to finish school work at school so he feels like there is a balance between school and home life. So he stays at homework club till 5pm and works ultra-hard before going to cricket practice at the local club.

When he gets home, Abe showers and has dinner before winding down by messaging friends and watching TV. He tries again to get an early night but just lies awake.

Resource 1b

Consequences of poor sleep habits



Layla has slept through her morning alarm so her dad starts telling Layla off for being late. She shouts back as she runs out of the door.

Abdi’s family business is in making furniture so he often helps out in their woodwork shop after school. Recently, he’s not been getting enough sleep but doesn’t want to let his parents down so he carries on working in the shop.

Su went out with her girlfriend the night before a basketball final as she wanted to take her mind off her nerves. They stayed out longer than expected and she’s feeling pretty exhausted ahead of today’s fixture.

Tal was up really late studying for an exam later in the week so a friend offers him an energy drink from their ‘stash’. Tal wouldn’t normally drink this kind of thing as he knows they aren’t that great for your health but he’s too tired to argue.

Alima is late for her Saturday job at a café so she decides to take her moped. However, she’s slept badly and is not really feeling that alert.

Connor didn’t sleep well last night so when a teacher asks him a question, Connor realises he’s been daydreaming and can’t answer. He feels like a fool in front of the class so spends the rest of the lesson chatting and being generally disruptive.

Resource 2a:

Consequences Answer Sheet

Layla has slept through her morning alarm so her dad starts telling Layla off for being late. She shouts back as she runs out of the door.

The pre-frontal cortex normally allows us a chance to think about our reactions before we do something. But if we are tired, this 'brake' on our emotional reactions no-longer functions so we can end up lashing out or acting without thinking. It would help for Layla and her dad to talk about a better morning routine to avoid similar occurrences.

Abdi's family business is in making furniture so he often helps out in their woodwork shop after school. Recently, he's not been getting enough sleep but doesn't want to let his parents down so he carries on working in the shop.

Working with machines and power-tools whilst tired is very risky – in fact a recent study found that being awake for 17 to 19 hours can impair ability more than being over the drink-driving limit. Researchers found that reaction times in a series of tests were up to 50 per cent slower in people deprived of sleep compared with the same people being given increasing doses of alcohol. This doesn't mean it's okay to drink then operate machinery, simply that lack of sleep can be dangerous when using tools and machinery. It is important that Abdi discusses this with his parents so that he and his family are not subject to unnecessary risk when using the tools and machinery in the woodwork shop.

Su went out with her girlfriend the night before a basketball final as she wanted to take her mind off her nerves. They stayed out longer than expected and she's feeling pretty exhausted ahead of today's fixture.

Attainment in sports is very much affected by lack of sleep. Reaction time and the capacity for strategic thinking are affected so players don't look as 'on the ball' — they are more likely to miss shots or passes and positioning may be poor. Due to the impact of the emotion-filter discussed above being reduced, there is an increased risk of frustration resulting in unsporting conduct. Research also shows that, not only is stamina reduced but there is an increased risk of sports-related injuries.

Su can make minimal impact on her performance for this game but can plan better next time. Su may be tempted to use a standard energy drink or caffeine pills to give her a boost. But these have a range of side-effects which may affect her performance, and they are likely to lose effectiveness just as she needs the energy most. Sports drinks which are well adapted to cardio workouts may be useful at keeping her hydrated, in the same way that they would do when she is not tired, but studies have been inconclusive — some have shown they make no difference, others a slight increase in performance, others suggest the side effects affect performance. In any respect, they are unlikely to mask the lack of sleep

Consequences Answer Sheet continued...

Tal was up really late studying for an exam later in the week so a friend offers him an energy drink from their 'stash'. Tal wouldn't normally drink this kind of thing as he knows they aren't that great for your health but he's too tired to argue.

Energy drinks are notoriously unhelpful around exam season as they can give a temporary feeling of alertness but this is lost quite quickly and the person drinking them is likely to find themselves less able to concentrate than if they hadn't had one at all. Caffeine boosts like this can also affect a person's ability to sleep well by disrupting the circadian rhythm (sleep cycle). Sleep during exam season is incredibly important. Research has shown that better outcomes are often linked to more sleep not less. So cramming for exams can be counterproductive. It is best to stick to a normal sleep pattern and allocate revision accordingly.

Alima is late for her Saturday job at a café so she decides to take her moped. However, she's slept badly and is not really feeling that alert.

Research shows that driving on less than five hours sleep results in a one in ten chance of staying awake on a lengthy journey. Both lack of sleep and alcohol slow reaction time, affect the ability to process information and impair memory. In one study, driving while sleepy and driving while drunk were both found to have the potential to double your risk for a car accident. It's therefore really important that Alima does not drive if she does not feel alert enough to do so. Incidentally, studies suggest that we are generally quite poor at estimating how tired we really are, particularly young drivers.

Connor didn't sleep well last night so when a teacher asks him a question, Connor realises he's been day-dreaming and can't answer. He feels like a fool in front of the class so spends the rest of the lesson chatting and being generally disruptive.

Lack of sleep has been shown to affect concentration, memory, information processing and reasoning. Connor's emotional reaction to the situation can be accounted for by the poor emotional filter explained above. Connor should take steps to stop this happening again and should catch up on the work missed. He should also take responsibility for his behaviour rather than distracting others to mask his embarrassment.

Resource 3:

Managing sleep difficulties



If out late, a person should skip their usual wind down routine (e.g. having a bath, reading a book) to make sure they get to bed as close to their normal time as possible

If someone has been struggling to get to sleep for a long time, they should get out of bed and read or drink a cup of herbal tea

If someone struggles with racing thoughts when trying to sleep, they could try allocating a time to think about the day ahead or about worries — perhaps after dinner

Ensure any clocks or alarms aren't visible from a person's sleeping position so they don't focus on how long they have been trying to sleep for

To help someone figure out what could be causing their sleep difficulties, it might be worth keeping a sleep diary — what they did before a good nights' sleep and what happened when they slept less well

People should leave curtains open so they go to sleep and wake up with the sun cycle

It's helpful to have a TV or radio in the bedroom to help distract a person who is struggling to sleep

Meditation, visualisation and mindfulness techniques can help a person to calm their mind if they are finding it difficult to get to or fall back to sleep

Walking in the sunshine, especially in the mornings, can help to reset the circadian rhythm

Caffeine is fine as long as it's drunk at least 2 hours before sleep

Install a blue light filter on phones to help reduce the impact of screen time on the sleep cycle

Exercising before bed can help tire a person out and help them sleep

Taking a short afternoon nap after teatime is a great way to regularly top up sleep

Keeping to a sleep routine at weekends is important to encourage a regular sleep pattern

Resource 3:

Managing sleep difficulties

TRUE	FALSE
If someone has been struggling to get to sleep for a long time, they should get out of bed and read or drink a cup of herbal tea *However, it is important to try other techniques first (e.g. mindfulness) and to recognise that relaxation in bed is still beneficial	If someone is out late, they should skip their usual wind down routine (e.g. having a bath, reading a book) to make sure they get to bed as close to their normal time as possible *Sleep experts recommend sticking to a 90-minute wind-down schedule daily
If someone struggles with racing thoughts when trying to sleep, they could try allocating a time to think about the day ahead or about worries — perhaps after dinner	It's helpful to have a TV or phone in the bedroom to help distract a person who is struggling to sleep *Screen time and activities are more likely to distract from sleep and blue light from screens can disrupt the production of sleep hormones
To help someone figure out what could be causing their sleep difficulties, it might be worth keeping a sleep diary – what they did before a good night's sleep and what happened when they slept less well	People should leave curtains open so they go to sleep and wake up with the sun cycle *Most of us will find it difficult to sleep with street light, moonlight and car lights coming into the room – blackout curtains can help anyone sensitive to light disruption
Ensure any clocks or alarms aren't visible from a person's sleeping position so they don't focus on how long they have been trying to sleep for	Install a blue light filter on phones to help reduce the impact of screen time on the sleep cycle *This may be helpful but there are no clear studies yet to demonstrate their impacts. Plus, the engagement with friends and gaming etc. still keeps the mind engaged and disrupts sleep
Walking in the sunshine — especially in the mornings — can help to reset the circadian rhythm	Caffeine is fine as long as it's drunk at least 2 hours before sleep *Doctors suggest that those finding sleep difficult should avoid caffeine for at least 6 hours before sleep
Meditation, visualisation and mindfulness techniques can help a person to calm their mind if they are finding it difficult to get to or fall back to sleep	Exercising before bed can help tire a person out and help them sleep *Regular exercise supports sleep but it is important that exercise is completed 2-3 hours before sleep to ensure adequate wind-down time
Keeping to a sleep routine at weekends is important to encourage a regular sleep pattern	Taking a short afternoon nap after teatime is a great way to regularly top up sleep *Naps may help some people if they are maximum 30-45 mins and taken before 3pm. It is important to ensure this does not disrupt regular sleep patterns