



Mental Health Focus—Sleep

The importance of restful sleep in our lives cannot be understated. Sleep is a requirement for life; lack of sleep can cause many problems in our lives.

Studies show that nearly 1 in 5 Americans has difficulty sleeping at least a few nights per week. Some side effects of lack of sleep include moodiness, irritability, and difficulties inhibiting ones' self.

Impaired memory, sadness, flattened emotional responses, lack of creativity and difficulty multi-tasking are more long-term consequences of sleep deprivation.

Sleep problems are often a sign of other, more vexing problems. Weight problems, cardiovascular issues like hypertension, diabetes, immune system dysfunction and other health concerns can cause us to have difficulty with sleep. Psychological concerns like depression, anxiety, stress, and substance abuse disorders are often a root of sleeping troubles as well.

To help ensure you are getting enough sleep, some tips may be helpful:

- Don't exercise, work intensely, or use caffeine late in the evening.
- Set a routine for yourself before getting into bed. This may include dimming lights an hour or ½ hour before bed, meditation or prayer, or a light snack before bed.

For more tips on sleep, talk with your therapist about sleep hygiene.



Mental Health Quiz on **SLEEP**

True/False

- 1.) *The average person needs 8 hours of sleep per night.*
- 2.) *As adults age, they need less and less sleep.*
- 3.) *There are four stages of sleep in our sleep cycle.*
- 4.) *Your brain shuts down to rest when you sleep.*
- 5.) *The body has a natural ability to adjust to different sleep schedules such as shift work or traveling through times zones.*



Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast. ~William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Staff Focus—Patricia Kelly, Ph.D.

Dr. Pat Kelly is the founder and President of Kelly Counseling and Consulting. She has Been practicing psychology now for over two decades. Pat received her Bachelor's degrees in Religious Studies and Psychology from Rosemont College and her Ph.D. in Clinical Developmental Psychology from Bryn Mawr College. Here at Kelly, Pat provides individual therapy to adults with a wide-range of issues, organizational consulting, and supervises Interns and Practicum Students from Widener University's Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program. Pat is a psychologist at Life Care Hospital, where she consults with medical staff on various psychological issues of patients. She has been active in providing counseling and leadership and communication training for clergy and pastoral ministries. In her free time, Pat likes to garden, bake, and spend time with her large family of twelve children and 35 grandchildren.





Family Wellness Vignette Each month we introduce a fictional family with various commonly experienced difficulties and provide positive examples of how the family worked through these problems to lead more fulfilling lives as individuals and as a family unit. This month, we feature the story of **Sally's Sleeplessness**

Sally was having a very difficult time sleeping at night. No matter what she tried, she just could not fall asleep like she used to. Sometimes, she would lie awake for hours before falling asleep. Even worse, once she fell to sleep, she often found herself waking up early with no ability to go back to sleep.

Sally was very frustrated with this new pattern. She could not think of why it was happening and she could see that it was causing her problems with her family, friends, and at work. Her family noticed she was much more irritable and she had difficulty engaging with them during the evening hours. Her husband, who used to thoroughly enjoy watching television shows with his wife's running commentary, was finding that she could not pay attention or dozed off during their shows. Her two sons noticed she did not seem to have the energy to play with them or keep them on task with their homework. Sally's friends saw less and less of her because she was "too tired" to do much of anything social with them. At work, Sally found herself unable to get much done a lot of the time and found herself snapping out of frustration at co-workers for very minor issues that normally would not bother her.

Sally went to her doctor and he prescribed a sleep medication. However, Sally did not like the side effects of the medication and asked her doctor for an alternative. He sent her to a health psychologist. The psychologist noted that Sally met the criteria for depression, but felt her depression was mostly due to her sleep disturbance. They set about in helping Sally learn better sleeping habits. For example, Sally was taught deep breathing to help her relax before bed. She was also taught about various influences on sleep, such as decreasing heavy foods before bed (before, Sally was eating a large pasta meal many nights right before bed, which interrupted her ability to sleep), reducing caffeine in the afternoon (she used to drink coffee at 3 and 6 PM just to stay awake), and reducing the naps she took after work.

The health psychologist also helped Sally make her bedroom and bed a place to associate with sleeping. Before, Sally found herself doing catch-up work in her bed, and also watching television when she could not sleep, so she began to associate her bed not with sleep, but with activity. The psychologist helped break this pattern by helping Sally set limits on the use of her bedroom. This helped her associate her bedroom with sleep, and made it easier to fall asleep there rather than remain awake.

Sally began to notice the improvement in her life in several weeks. Her depression alleviated as soon as she was getting a more normal amount of sleep. She was much more energized and refreshed every day and it was easy for her to wake up. Her husband was glad to have Sally's commentary back in the television room and the kids were happy to have mom play with them and help them with their homework. Sally's friends saw her more as well. Sweet dreams!

News/Current Happenings

- Our staff continue to do good things for the community. This month, we put another 40 meals together for the Aid-for-Friends organization, which provides meals to shut-ins. So far, we have made 285 meals for this organization. We are also putting together holiday cards for our troops overseas, as well as adopting a needy family to provide them Christmas presents.
- Next month, our newsletter will expand to four pages. Be on the lookout for the new format and expansion.

Quiz Answers

- 1.) True. Most adults require 8 sleep hours per 24-hour day.
- 2.) False. As we age, we need about the same amount of sleep; however, we often have less and less ability to sleep. Older people tend to have more fragile sleep that tends to be more easily disturbed by things like pain and sensitivity to sound or light.
- 3.) True. There are four sleep stages that we cycle through in a typical night. Transitional, light, and deep sleep are three stages and Rapid Eye Movement (REM) is the fourth.
- 4.) False. Our brains remain quite active during sleep.
- 5.) False. Our bodies have mostly adapted to having a set schedule of sleep every night. Shift work greatly disrupts what we have adapted to, as does travel, which is why many become "jet lagged."

If you like this newsletter, feel free to have us pass it on to a friend or family member. Just send their e-mail to the address below and they will be added!

To subscribe or unsubscribe from this newsletter: E-mail newsletter@kellycounseling.com

