



CHILDHOOD NEURODIVERSITY

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING YOUR YOUNG PERSON'S SLEEP

Psychology in Schools Team

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

CONFIDENTIALITY
AND PERSONAL
INFORMATION

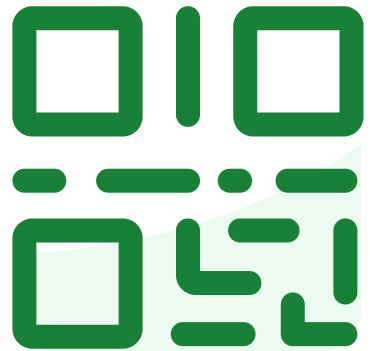
Slido will be used as our main interaction tool. We will not be able to use the Q&A function or answer raised hands.

Slido is anonymous, but other users will be able to see what you have written. When answering questions please **do not** include personal or sensitive information such as names or anything that can identify you or your child.

By using Slido, you are consenting to your anonymised responses being used in possible service evaluation, research projects, publications and/or promotional material.

Our workshops are recorded and uploaded to YouTube, please be aware that anything shared on Slido may be included in a publicly accessible recording.

slido



**Join at slido.com
#3338347**

ⓘ Start presenting to display the joining instructions on this slide.

slido



How old is your child?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



How would you rate your current understanding of sleep difficulties in neurodivergent children?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



How would you rate your current confidence supporting your neurodivergent child(ren) with sleep?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



CHILDHOOD NEURODIVERSITY

UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORTING YOUR YOUNG PERSON'S SLEEP

Psychology in Schools Team

Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

Today's workshop



What we won't be covering in detail today:

- Managing emotions at bedtime
- Communicating with teenagers about sleep

[Supporting your Child or Adolescent with Sleep \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)



The science of sleep



Factors that affect sleep



Sleep and neurodivergence



Tools for sleep



The sleep environment



Bedtime routine and using visuals



Medication

slido



What are you worried about with your child's sleep?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



How do your child's sleep affect you as a family?

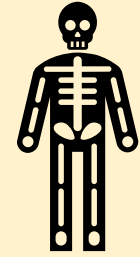
ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Why do we need sleep?

- Sleep is restorative
- It is important for:
 - Learning and memory
 - Concentration
 - Regulation
- It helps neurodivergent children recover from sensory demands and supports emotional regulation
- Neurodivergent children may sleep fewer hours and have fragmented sleep



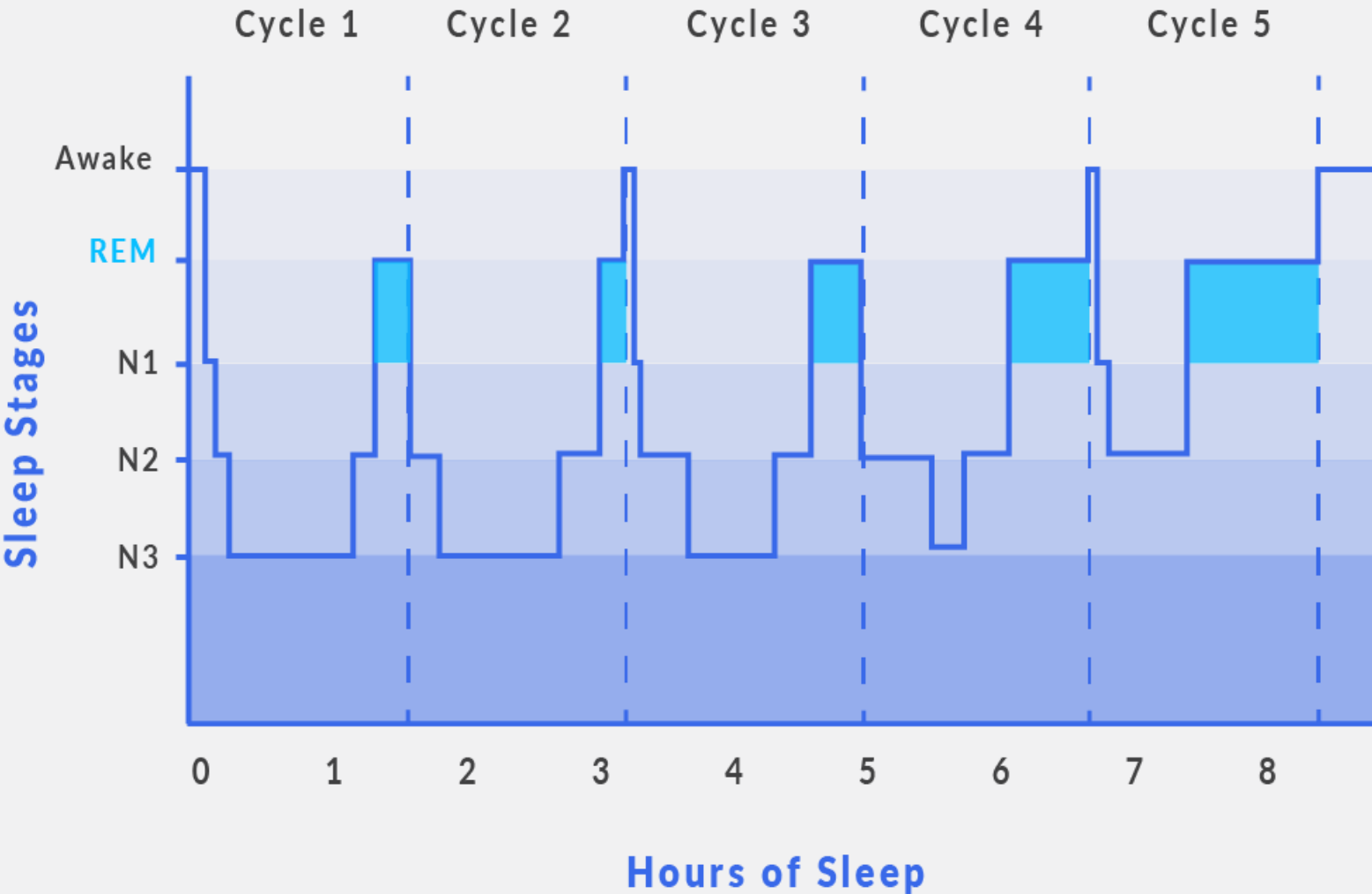
The Science of Sleep: Our Body Clock



- Two systems work together to regulate when we are awake and asleep:
 - Circadian rhythm
 - Homeostasis
- Sleep pressure – we can't put more effort into sleep, we need to need it!
- How much sleep we need varies
- Aligns routines with your child's natural rhythms



The Structure of Sleep



slido



What factors affect your child's sleep?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Factors that affect sleep



Emotions



Adolescence



Food & drink



Alerting
activities



Light



Environment

Previous workshop recordings you might find useful:

[Supporting your Child or Adolescent with Sleep \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting your child with anxiety - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Sleep and ADHD

- Compared to neurotypical peers, children with ADHD may experience:
 - Shorter total time asleep
 - Longer time to fall asleep after 'lights out'
 - Have a later bedtime
 - Sleepier during the day
 - More disturbed sleep
- Predictable routines that include sensory input can help prepare children for sleep

Review by Marten et al. (2023)



Sleep and Autism

- **Autistic children compared to neurotypical peers may experience:**
 - **Shorter total sleep time**
 - **Longer time to fall asleep after 'lights out'**
 - **Resisting going to bed**
 - **More likely fear of darkness**
- **The percentage of autistic children who have sleep problems is estimated between 47-83%.**
- **Visual schedules or bedtime social stories and sensory input can help.**



Liang et al. (2023); Kim et al. (2023); Carnett et al. (2020)

Helping your child with sleep



Tools for sleep



The sleep environment



Bedtime fading and using visuals



Medication



Example situation and advice

slido



What helps your child with sleep?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Tools for sleep

**Regular
sleep/wake cycle**

**Calming,
structured
bedtime routine**

**Be mindful of the
caffeine
consumption**

**Avoid alerting
activities just
before bed**

**Gap between
eating & drinking
and bedtime**

**Don't lie in bed
awake for long
periods of time**

Previous workshop recordings you might find useful:

[Social Media and the Impact on our Teenagers' Mental Health - Parent workshop](#)

[Childhood Neurodiversity: The Benefits and Problems with Using Technology](#)

Sleeping environment



• Comfortable bed



• Noise



• Lighting



• Smell



• Temperature



• Comforting items

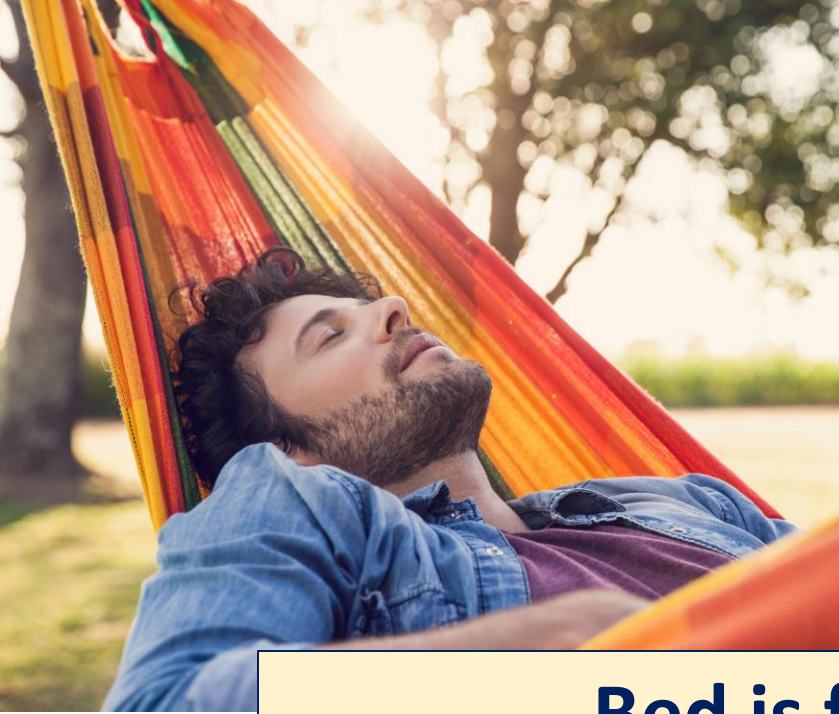


slido



Can you think of one positive adaptation you could make to your child's sleep environment?

i Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



Bed is for sleeping, sleeping is for bed!





Bedtime fading

Identify a bedtime at which your child falls asleep within 15 mins

Gradually set their bedtime earlier and earlier until you reach the ideal bedtime

Keep wake time fixed

Don't allow sleep at other times!










15 minutes

Ensure this process is collaborative with teenagers!

Using visuals to support bedtime routines

CHILD'S Board
Did I stay in bed all night?

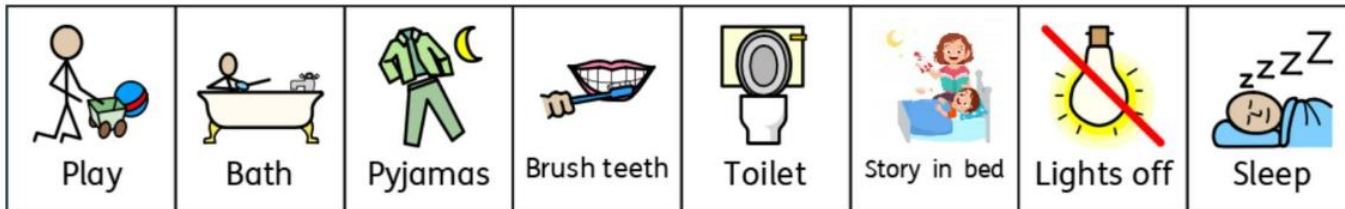


 M Monday	 Tu Tuesday	 W Wednesday	 Th Thursday	 F Friday	 Sa Saturday	 Su Sunday

Reward!



Establishing a
Bedtime routine that
works for you and your
child



Medication



- Melatonin medication can be prescribed by a medical professional as a short-term intervention for significant sleep disorders.
- **Melatonin should not be given to children or adolescents without a prescription.**
- For children taking medication for ADHD, healthy sleep behaviour advice is recommended first, before considering adjusting medication to support with sleep.



Night wakings

- Night wakings are common for ND children
- Some children need support to resettle
- This may be due to sensory or emotional reasons
- Go through the wind down/bedtime routine again
- Support them to use what they need to fall back to sleep



➤ Comfort items may be beneficial



➤ Sensory input



➤ Check the environment

This can be tough for parents managing their own broken sleep and responding to their child's needs



Example: Sam

Sam is an autistic teenage girl who struggles to get to sleep. At night, the cars outside sound too loud and there's a streetlight by her window that is too bright. The bed gets hot, but opening the window makes everything too loud. Sam feels on edge but also worn out, so she distracts herself with TikTok related to her interests in art and animals. People talking in the videos give Sam a warm feeling of having friends in the room. She keeps scrolling, then suddenly its 2am and she still feels just as alert as when she got into bed.



Example: Sam

Suggestions:

- 'Wind down' routine in the evening
- Consider the position of her bed in the room
- Blackout blinds/ eye mask
- Lighter duvet or use blankets/sheets to reduce the temperature
- Only getting into bed when sleepy
- Listen to a podcast or music instead of watching TikTok





Resources



Further resources

- [Sleep and mental health – Mind](#)
- **The Sleep Charity** website
www.thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/
- **The Teen Sleep Hub** Free eBook download about sleep information and advice.
<https://teensleephub.org.uk/>
- **National Sleep Helpline 03303 530 541** [National Sleep Helpline - The Sleep Charity](#) confidential service available Mon/Tue/Thurs evening 7-9pm and Mon/Wed morning 9-11am.

Suffolk support

- [Sleep resources - Suffolk County Council Psychology and Therapeutic Services](#) webpage free resources about sleep for children, young people and families.
- [Learning disabilities - Suffolk County Council](#) Sleep resources shared in a previous slide
- Barnardo's Phoneline for advice on emotional wellbeing – call 0345 600 2090 option 2
- Recovery College: [Recovery College | Norfolk and Suffolk NHS](#)

**CHILDHOOD NEURODIVERSITY WORKSHOP
PROGRAMME: FUTURE WORKSHOPS**



**Childhood Neurodiversity: Managing Parental Stress - Tuesday 25th February at
13:00pm**

**Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting Sensory Needs - Wednesday 26th March
at 13:00pm**

**Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting Planning, Ordering and Remembering -
Tuesday 29th April at 13:00pm**

**Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting Your Child with Low Mood - Wednesday
21st May at 13:00pm**

www.nsft.uk/workshops Psychology in Schools Team Eventbrite page

TO WATCH PREVIOUS RECORDINGS IN THIS
SERIES

Childhood neurodiversity what you need to know as a parent/carer

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: What You Need to Know as a Parent/Carer](#)

Childhood neurodiversity: supporting social relationships

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting Social Relationships](#)

Childhood neurodiversity: supporting your child's education

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting Your Child's Education](#)

Childhood neurodiversity: supporting your child with anxiety

Watch here: [Childhood Neurodiversity: Supporting your child with anxiety](#)

OTHER FREE WORKSHOPS



Psychology in Schools Team: Upcoming live parent/carer workshops:

Supporting your child with anxiety

Supporting your child with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Supporting your child with Tourette's syndrome/tics

Supporting your child to manage big feelings

Emotion Based School Avoidance – Supporting your child to attend school

Recorded previous workshops on NSFT YouTube:

- Stress and resilience, low mood, self-harm, trauma, and more!

www.nsft.uk/workshops Eventbrite page for live bookings

<https://www.nsft.nhs.uk/parent-workshops> All recorded workshops

KEY RESOURCES IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR YOUNG PERSON

- **Young Minds parent helpline** 0808 802 5544 (9am -4.30pm M-F) and webchat service: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-helpline-and-webchat/>
- **School /school nurse**
- [kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com) – free online counselling for 11–25-year-olds (Norfolk & Suffolk)
- **Papyrus – Prevention of Young Suicide**

[Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide \(papyrus-uk.org\)](https://www.papyrus-uk.org)

- **Psychology in Schools Parent**

Workshop: Understanding Self Harm in Children/Adolescents

[Understanding Self-Harm in Children/Adolescents \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

- **111, option 2 crisis support**
- [MIND urgent help](https://www.mind.org.uk)

If you need
urgent mental
health help,
call 111 and
choose option 2



slido



I have found today's workshop helpful

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



Two key things I will take away from this workshop are...

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



How would you rate your understanding of sleep difficulties in neurodivergent children?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

slido



How would you rate your confidence supporting your neurodivergent child(ren) with sleep?

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Childhood Neurodiversity:
Supporting Your Child With Sleep
Feedback Survey (LIVE)



<https://forms.office.com/e/V57FRQ0vGB>