

## Sleep and Spring!

This week I've been interviewing people with sleeping problems. It's part of a research project that I'm undertaking. Listening to people's stories, I've been struck by how very hard they work to manage the impact of poor sleep on their work and lives.

Poor sleep is very debilitating, as many of you will know. My interviewees described how lack of sleep made it difficult to get motivated in the mornings, how they felt physically as if they were dragging themselves around and how their brains were in a constant fog. Yet the vast majority of them suffer in silence.

Most people also said they were reluctant to go to their GP as they "weren't ill" and that they should be able to sort their sleep themselves rather than use sleeping pills.

When it came to self-help however, they felt very unsure about what they could do. Some blamed themselves for somehow not doing the "right" things to bring good sleep. They had tried relaxation but it just didn't "work". Others had given up, telling themselves that they are "bad" sleepers and this is how it just is. Yet others tried to rationalise the problem away, attributing lack of sleep to age, the menopause or the inevitable pressures of work.

So for my interviewees, it seemed to boil down to a choice of

- It's my fault (or my body's fault)
- It's me. I am a bad sleeper. Full Stop.
- It's to be expected, given my age, the menopause, my work pressures, my family situation.

I know however that there is another choice! If you find yourself giving up or blaming yourself, then I urge you to re-consider! Sleep is a fragile habit and, like many good habits, it doesn't take much to knock it off track. That's life! However, poor sleep is to be cured, not endured! So please don't give up or think it's your fault!

This is an exciting time for sleep therapy. We now have properly validated, highly effective approaches to overcoming insomnia. They use a range of strategies to approach sleep holistically and retrain the body and mind to sleep well at the appropriate times.

Now. Spring is here - at last - and it's a far easier time to start new projects than New Year, when the days are short and dark. Daylight gives us a real boost and also plays a vital part in good sleep. So now's a perfect time to get your sleep sorted and put a spring back in your step!

With this in mind, look out for the **Sleep Clinics** which I'll be running at Riverside over the coming months and also my **Sleep Well** course later in the year.

Just email me to stay in touch

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