


SLEEP WELL LIVE BETTER: Insights from KITE-UHN



World Sleep Day 2026 at  **UHN** KITE
Research
Institute

March 13th, 2026

World Sleep Day[®]

Hosted by World Sleep Society

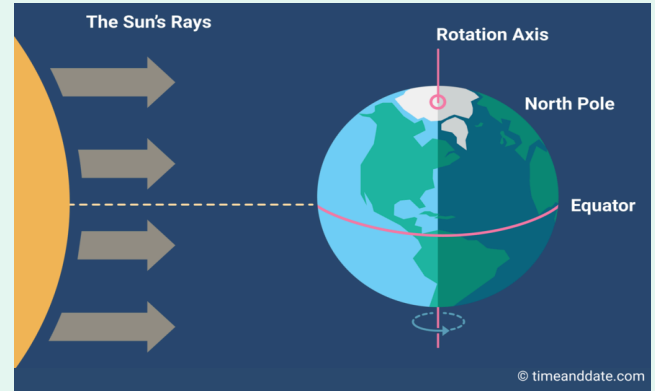
Sleep Well Live Better

March 13, 2026

The World Sleep Day, founded in 2008 by the World Sleep Society, is an annual event to bring attention to sleep.

It is held on the Friday before the March Equinox, which is when day and night are of equal length everywhere on Earth.

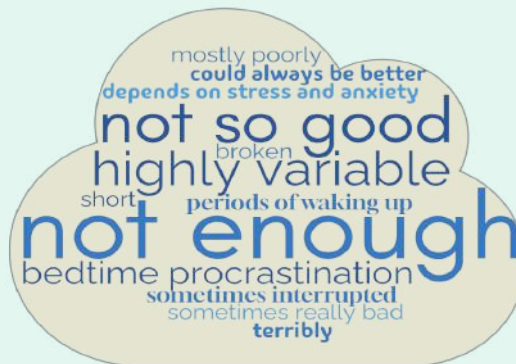
The theme of this year's World Sleep Day is "Sleep Well, Live Better."



In support of the Day, we engaged with 20 trainees, staff, scientists, and clinicians at the KITE Research Institute, Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, University Health Network (Canada). We sought reflections on our relationship with sleep, feasible micro-actions, and strategies to support better sleep.

How well do we sleep?

Responses to *In a few words or a short phrase, how well would you say you currently sleep?* varied greatly and were both positive and negative.



The larger the font, the more people aligned with the response.

Very well since getting a CPAP...and since losing 50+ pounds. I dream. I am usually rested.



Terribly! Sleep hygiene...is very hard to practice when your job is demanding...

Sleeping well is personal, but patterns emerged. Many emphasized that sleeping well depends on workload, stress, and lifestyle.

What does "Sleep Well Live Better" mean to us?

Reflections on "What does 'Sleep Well, Live Better' mean to you personally?" included:

That sleep is critical to human well-being whether that be mental acuity, performance, emotional stability, etc...



It's pretty ominous since I don't sleep well.

I can't do most anything well if I don't sleep well, consistently.

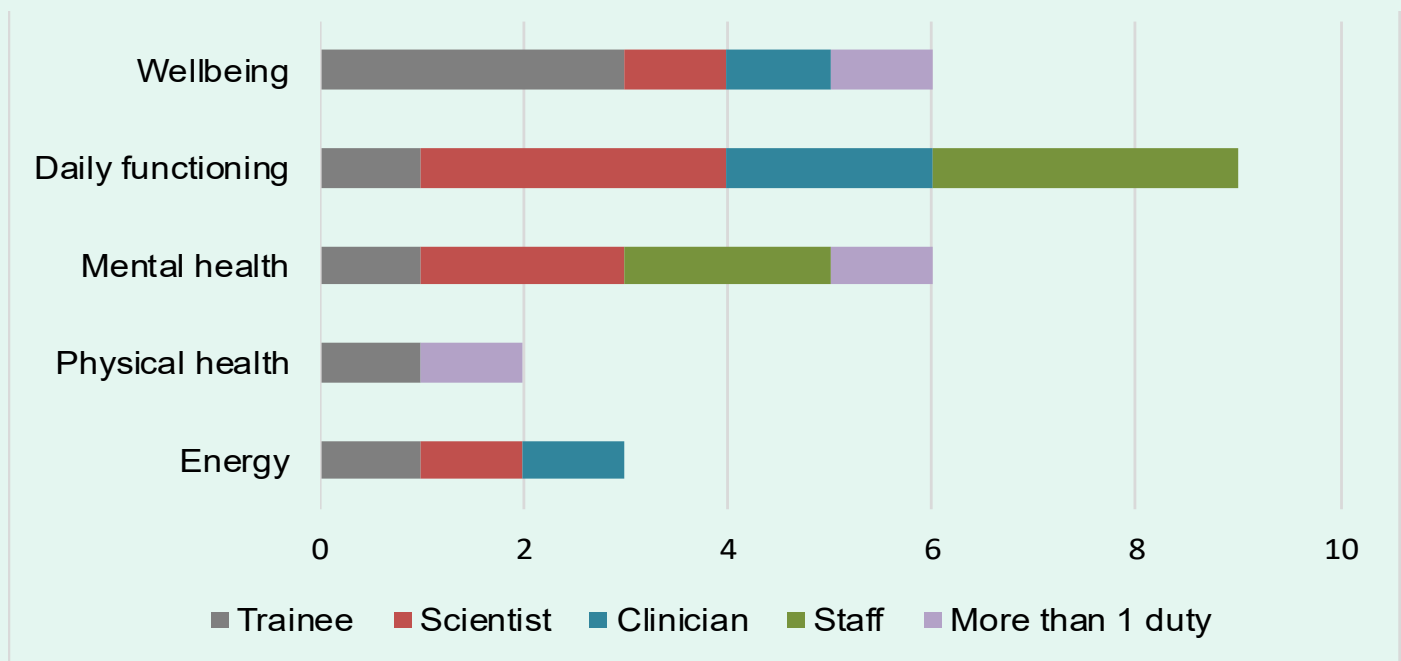


Sleeping is a non-negotiable, it is needed for daily functioning and well being and lack of it is detrimental to that—it is not a luxury.

The quality of my sleep will translate into the rest of my life and how productive, active, and happy I feel.



Thematic interpretation of 'Sleep Well, Live Better' by respondent group:



Thematic interpretation varied by group, but collective responses emphasized that sleeping well is crucial for living well through having enough energy for daytime function, productivity, maintaining physical and mental health, and general well-being.



Trainee



Scientist



Clinician



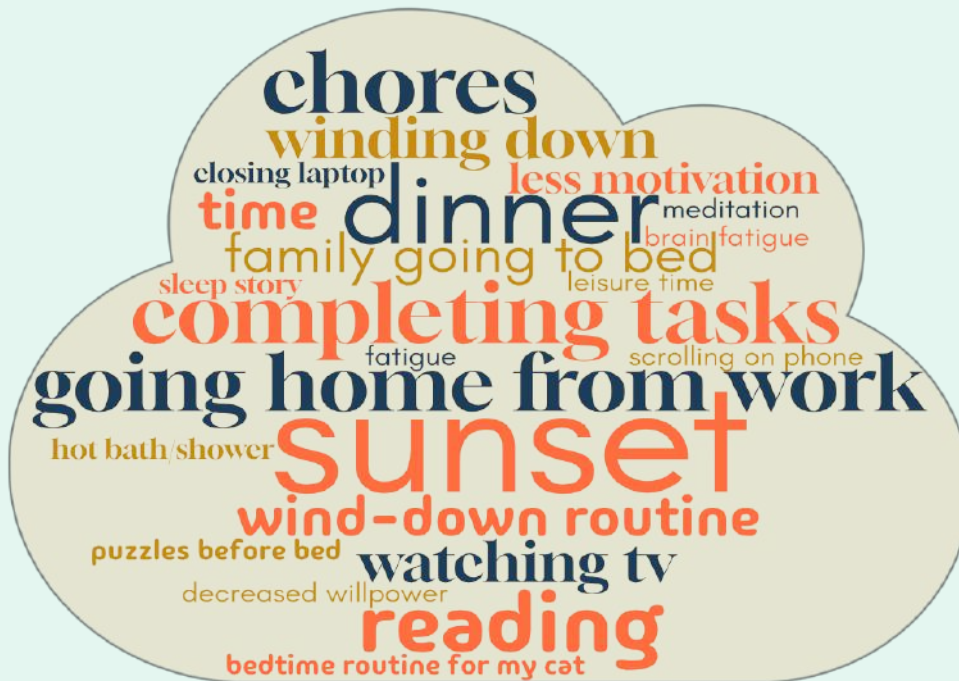
Staff



Person with more than 1 duty

How do we transition from day to night?

Responses to *What helps you transition from the day into the evening? What signals that the day is coming to a close?* included many different activities and parts of peoples' routines.



The larger the font, the more people aligned with the response.

I know it's time to sleep when I lose motivation to continue studying. This usually happens when people around me like my siblings are starting to go to sleep.



The time. But only when there are no pressing tasks. When I have tasks to complete, I lose sense of time and bedtime is when the task is done.

Daylight leaving, dinner time ending, cleaning up, getting ready for bed.



The sun goes down and I start to wind down.

Differences in roles are reflected in how people wind down, suggesting that the transition to sleep is guided by personalized routines rather than a universal pattern. Still, across these varied routines, many of us pointed to sunset as a shared, natural cue that signals the day is coming to an end.



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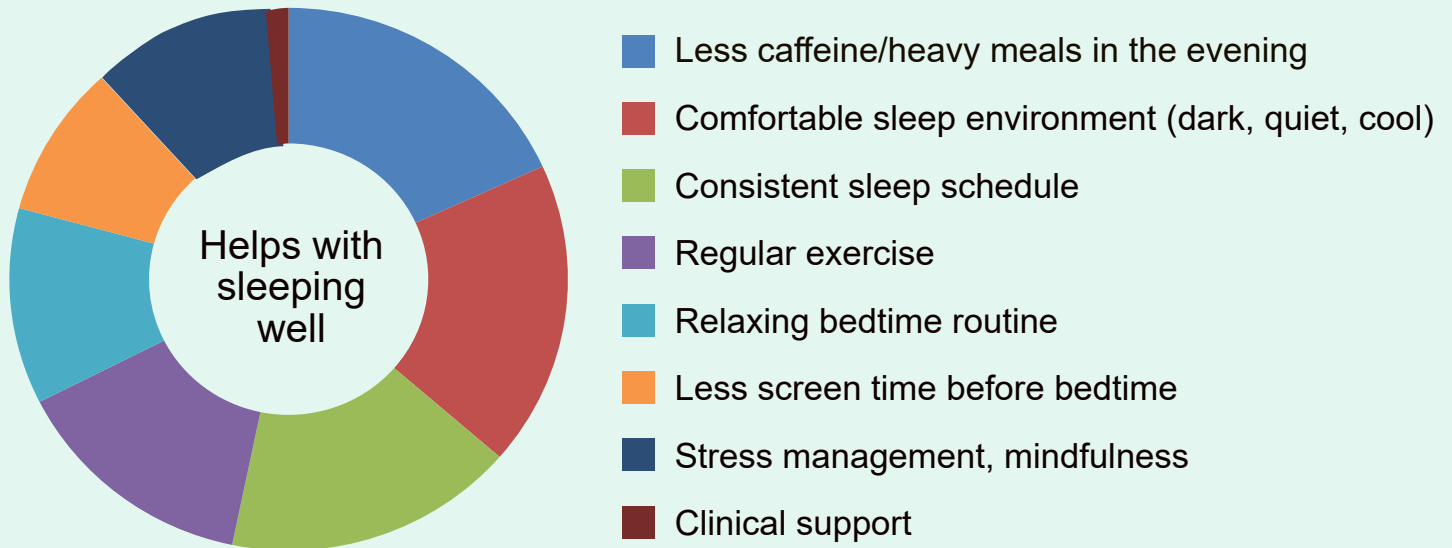
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Person with more than 1 duty

What helps us sleep well?

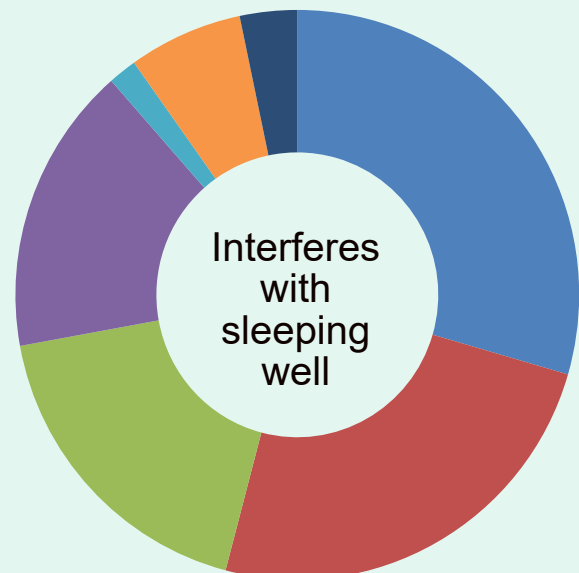
When asked to select strategies that help people sleep well, responses were distributed across options:



What interferes with our ability to sleep well?

When asked to select factors that interfere with sleeping well, responses were distributed across options:

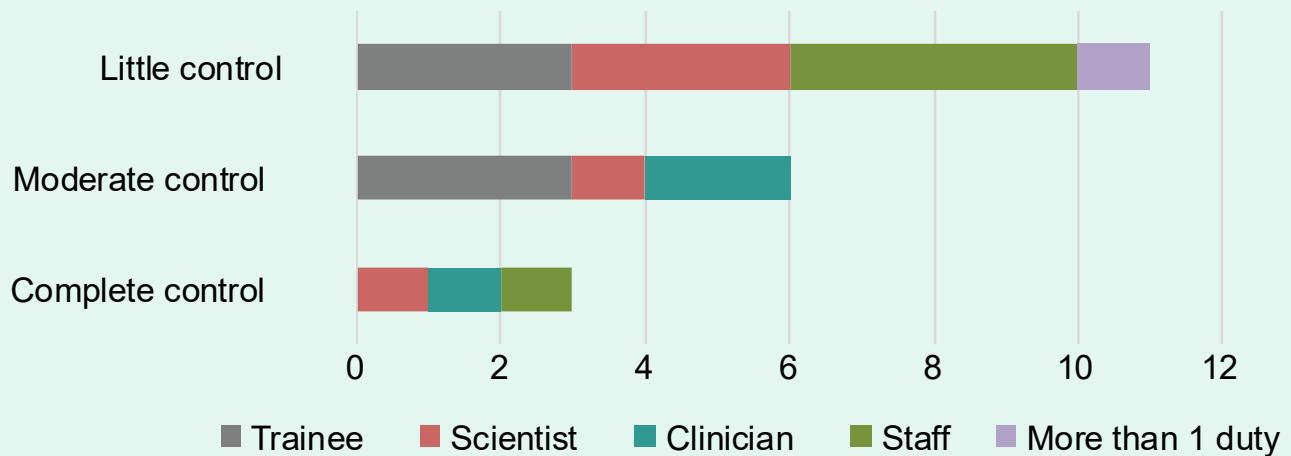
- Heavy workload
- Stress or anxiety
- Shifted or irregular schedules
- Family health, care responsibilities
- Thoughts and news
- Pain or health concerns
- Nothing interferes with ability to sleep well



We are aware of what helps us sleep well. At the same time, many of us shared that heavy workloads, household responsibilities, health related concerns, and worries often get in the way, highlighting how everyday demands can make these routines hard to maintain.

How much do we feel in control of our ability to sleep?

When asked *How much control do you feel you have over your ability to sleep*, few people feel in complete control:



What can KITE do to help us sleep better?

When asked *What could KITE do, even in small ways, to better support sleep and wellbeing within our community?*

Informational support ... by providing concrete statements of how sleep issues create problems in daily life.



I think it is the nature of...research that requires us to consistently be on. Base funding to allow us to work considering the current funding landscape.

Have a quiz on sleep with prizes that promote sleep (mask, ear buds, weighted blanket - anything). Promote benefits of a sleep study, if needed.



Encouraging and educating on boundaries, setting a bedtime routine and when to seek help for poor sleep.

Flexibility in [work from home] for employees; sometimes the afternoon [short nap] is what helps me get through the day. I wish we had a better...respect of biorhythms.



Many sleep difficulties stem from the workday, shaping if, when, and how well we sleep. Building awareness with practical support for healthy boundaries and sleep behaviours can go a long way in promoting sleep.



Trainee



Scientist



Clinician






























Staff



Person with more than 1 duty

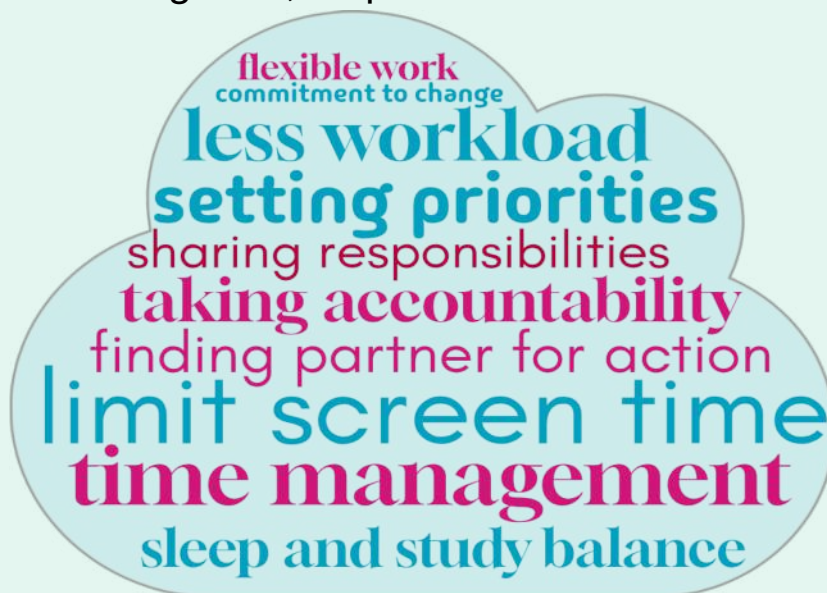
What did we suggest to others for sleeping better?

When asked *If you could offer one sentence of encouragement or advice about sleeping well to your colleagues, what would it be?* responses included:

Category of advice	Advised by:				
 Invest in healthy habit formation	 33%	 25%	 66%	 100%	 100%
 Be conscious of sleep benefits and value	 50%	 25%	 33%	 0%	 50%
 Implement work-life boundaries	 17%	 25%	 0%	 33%	 0%
 Promote self-care and self-worth	 17%	 0%	 0%	 33%	 0%
 Seek sleep assessment, personalized care	 17%	 0%	 33%	 0%	 0%
 Investigate barriers to sleep	 0%	 25%	 0%	 0%	 0%

What do we think can make actions sustainable?

When asked about what might make an action towards better sleep sustainable in the long term, responses included:



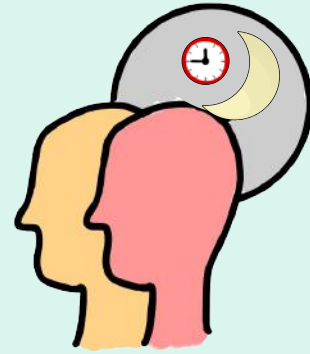
The larger the font, the more people suggested the action.

Our experiences and roles guide what advice we give to others. All groups advised investing in healthy habit formation as a way to sleep better, however only scientists suggested investigating barriers to sleeping well.

A note from the creators

Sleeping well is a reflection of how well we live, and to live better we need to sleep well.

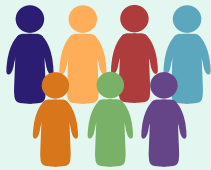
We hope that participating in this World Sleep Day activity helps each of us reflect on our relationship with sleep and recognize the role of sleep in how we feel and function during the day.



Three takeaway messages

Each of us a KITE has a unique relationship with sleep. All of us are aware of the benefits of sleeping well for living better.

However, maintaining habits that help us sleep well remains a challenge in the context of busy routines and external pressures. Each of us can take small steps to change behaviours that are not serving us well.

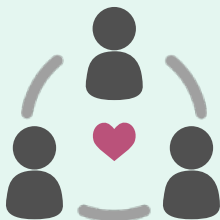


1. Sleep reflects how we live, and vice versa

Our ability to sleep well is deeply connected to how we live, work, and manage our daily habits.

2. There is a gap between knowledge and practice

We are aware of the value of sleep, but few of us feel in control of our ability to sleep well.



3. Sleeping well for living better starts small

Even taking micro-actions towards sleeping better can go a long way for living better.

Sleeping well for living better is both a personal and shared responsibility. Alongside our own efforts, supportive family, friends, and work environments can enable better sleep and, ultimately, better health, functioning, and well-being at KITE, individually and collectively.

Reference

1. World Sleep Day 2026: Sleep Well Live Better. Canada 2026: BRIDGE Lab. Available at: <https://worldsleepday.org/canada-2026-bridge-lab>

Photo Credits

Equinox illustration, page 1: "The March Equinox". Time and Date. Available at: www.timeanddate.com/calendar/march-equinox.html

Creation Team

This material was developed at the KITE-Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, University Health Network (UHN), by scientist Tatyana Mollayeva and research staff Urooba Shaikh, with contributions from clinical social worker Sarah Houghton, and trainees Dua Khan, Ishan Paul, Daniel Phan, and Rachel Spouge. A total of 20 members of KITE, including six trainees, five scientists, four staff members, three clinicians, and two people with more than one role contributed by completing the survey. Those not named chose to remain anonymous.

This resource should be used for reflection on sleep and learning from one another. It is meant as a source of information for KITE and the general public.



Sleep Health Organizations

Organization	Link
Canadian Sleep Society	www.css-scs.ca/
American Academy of Sleep Medicine	www.aasm.org/
National Sleep Foundation	www.thensf.org/
World Sleep Society	www.worldsleepsociety.org/

Prior World Sleep Days at KITE Research Institute, UHN

2025 World Sleep Day: Make Sleep Health a Priority, BRIDGE Lab at KITE. Available at: <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/world-sleep-day-2025>

2025 World Sleep Day. Sleepless and Stressed: Students Share Challenges in Guide To Better Rest. Available at: <https://kite-uhn.com/news/sleep-guide>

2024 World Sleep Day: Sleep Equity for Global Health at KITE. Available at: <https://worldsleepday.org/canada-2024-kite-toronto-rehab-university-health-network-kite-toronto-rehab-university-health-network>