

“SHIFT-HAPPENS” NAVIGATING SHIFT WORK

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FRUSTRATIONS AROUND SHIFT WORK...YOU ARE NOT ALONE!!!

- “I don’t know what day of the week it is. I can usually figure it out but since beginning shift work full time, my life is like this. .
- I start a set of 12 hr day shifts on Friday, Thursday night I’m convinced it’s Sunday I think I should be at church. Friday is the new Monday and I’m wondering why all my friends are making party plans. Saturday is hump-day and Sunday feels like nothing in particular. Then I get a few days off and all of a sudden its the weekend...but really it is only Monday and no one is making any party plans and I’m ready to go out!!!!
- I work a few more days and it is back to feeling like Monday when actually it really IS the weekend and I’m back to “normal”.

ROLE OF THE FAMILY

- **Most important factor is the support of the partner and family** - it is not always understood that when a shift worker is working often the family or more importantly the partner is also working “shifts” ie, doing domestic activities - cleaning the house, vacuuming at night so that the shift worker is not disturbed while sleeping during the day.
- **A partner may stop doing activities they would normally do around the house and leave the house so that the shift worker can sleep** - this may involve taking the children out, going grocery shopping or doing some errands.

ROLE OF THE FAMILY

- **To resolve any relationship/domestic conflicts...communication is the key!**
Use a calendar, noting working days/nights and the type of shift (colour code days and nights).
Set times for sleep - this allows the partner or family member to organize their activities in tandem.
- **Spend time with the ones you love, you don’t have to wait for a day off** - if you work nights and your spouse works days, plan to have breakfast together. Watch a video with your kids before you leave for a night shift. Use a “noteboard” in your kitchen to relay important messages.
- **Communicate everyday with your family to keep the relationship strong!!**

WORKING NIGHTS & DAYS

- **Getting through a 12 hour shift** - what kind of work do you do? Is it busy all the time? Do you normally get a chance to sleep?
- **Routines are important to implement in order to help yourself and your body cope with working days and nights.**
- **Strategies for nights** - stay up late the night before your night shift then try to sleep in as long as you can.
Go to bed late and get up early therefore when you lie down in the afternoon you will feel tired.
Get up early and go to the gym - exercise will help you feel rejuvenated, yet allow you to sleep later in the day.
Stay away from drinking coffee - it might make it more difficult for you to settle for a nap during the day.

WORKING NIGHTS & DAYS

- **Strategies for Days - go to bed early!!**
 - Go to bed earlier than you would if you didn’t work...easier said than done!!!
 - If you are having trouble sleeping the night before try having a bath before you go to bed.
 - Read a book
 - Listen to calming music
 - Meditate

FIND WHAT WORKS FOR YOU...AND STICK WITH IT!!!!

STRATEGIES

- ◉ Plan to get together with friends and family around your time off - meet for coffee before a night, go for breakfast after, keep the odd weekend off.
- ◉ If you start work at midnight or you're off a 1900 still try to make appearances at events. You don't have to drink but you can still be with your family and friends.
- ◉ When you have a few days off in a row, try to save at least one day for catching up on life - laundry, groceries, appointments.
- ◉ Make time for YOURSELF - do what makes you happy - spending time with friends, staying in your pj's all day, sleeping!!!!

TO SLEEP OR NOT TO SLEEP THAT IS THE QUESTION????

- ◉ One of the main challenges shift workers face is the adverse impact of shift work on their sleep.
- ◉ The amount of sleep you need varies from individual to individual, by age, and by life circumstances.
- ◉ Having regular routines before bed, irrespective of sleeping during the day or night is essential.

STRATEGIES TO A GOOD DAY..OR NIGHTS SLEEP

- ◉ **LIGHT** - light does not contribute to restful sleep. Research shows you become more alert when exposed to light - dim the lights when you want to sleep.
- ◉ **NOISE** - if your place of rest is noisy, chances are you are not getting the sleep you need to perform your best.
 - Let your friends and family know your sleep schedule.
 - Take your phone off the hook
 - Turn on a fan or humidifier to create "white noise"
 - Wear ear plugs.

- ◉ **TEMPERATURE** - most people sleep better in a cool environment. Do what you can to make your bedroom more conducive to sleep.
 - Turn down the heat
 - Turn on a fan
 - Install air conditioning
 - Sleep in the basement
 - Sleep IN YOUR BIRTHDAY SUIT!!!!!!

- ◉ **FOOD** - to ensure you sleep well, eat small healthy meals at regular intervals.
Avoid heavy, greasy, acidic, spicy foods that may cause heartburn or other digestive issues.
Avoid eating a large meal right before you go to sleep.
Drink LOTS of water...but not too much that you have to pee all night or day!!!
Limit your consumption of caffeinated beverages such as tea, coffee, and pop.

NUTRITION TIPS

- ◉ Shift work - working outside of the 7am to 6pm time period. 3 out of every 10 Canadians works shift (straight nights, days, or evenings)
- ◉ Working shifts can upset your bodies "internal clock" - this tells your body to be awake during the day and sleep at night.
- ◉ When you work shift work you may find it hard to know WHEN and WHAT to eat and how to avoid common problems such as:
 - Weight loss or weight gain
 - Constipation, diarrhea or gas
 - Indigestion, heartburn, stomach ulcers or HTN

10 TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

- ◉ **Eat your main meal before you go to work** - if you are working days your main meal is breakfast. If you are working nights, your main meal is at 6:00pm.
 - Have a small meal and healthy snacks during your shift.
 - Eating large meals during the night can cause heartburn, gas or constipation.
 - This can also cause you to feel sluggish and sleepy. Be careful not to overeat on the job!

- ◉ **Pack your own healthy snacks** - it can be difficult to find healthy snacks during the afternoon and night shifts. Vending machines may only carry salty or high fat snacks (use the Food Guide)
- ◉ **Avoid fatty, fried or spicy foods** - these food choices can lead to heartburn and indigestion. Eating too much fat can also increase your risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.
- ◉ **Avoid sugary foods and drinks** - you may feel a quick boost of energy after eating a chocolate bar but it won't last and you may experience low levels later on.

- ◉ **Take your time eating** - don't rush when you eat. Enjoy every single bite of your meals and snacks. If possible, eat with your co-workers for some company and laughter!!!
- ◉ **Stay well hydrated** - being well hydrated will help you stay alert and not feel so tired. Take a water bottle with you to work and keep it near by. Encourage fluids on yourself... just like we do our patients!!!
- ◉ **Watch the caffeine** - drinking coffee can help you stay awake but try not to consume more than 400mg/day. Caffeine can stay in your system for up to 8 hours, this can affect your sleep.
- ◉ **Avoid alcohol** - especially on the job!!!! A drink may make you feel more relaxed but it can disturb your sleep!

- ◉ **Have a light snack before bed** - it is hard to fall asleep when you are hungry...or too full.
 - if you are still hungry after work, eat a small healthy snack before bedtime.
 - try cereal with milk or a piece of toast with jam.
 - if you are too full at bedtime, try cutting out a snack during your shift.
- ◉ **Stay at a healthy body weight** - healthy eating and active living play a vital role in helping you reach and maintain a healthy weight. This will lower your chance of getting heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancer.

SERIOUSLY I HAVE TO EXERCISE TOO????

- ◉ Working shift work can make it difficult to exercise - don't let this happen to you!!!
- ◉ Exercising may be difficult to fit in during a 12hr shift - it may work better for you to have a exercise routine on your days off.
- ◉ Combine exercise with leisure and recreation activities - this way you can include time with friends and family.
- ◉ Fit in exercise with tasks - take the stairs, walk the dog, shovel the snow or mow the lawn. These all count as activity!!

- ◉ Some workplaces provide a gym in house - if you can, go an hour early before work (8hr shifts vs 12hr shifts)
- ◉ On some units you can take 1-2 hr breaks at night - use that time to go for a walk, stretch, or do some weights.
- ◉ Make an exercise program with a friend or colleague - having a workout partner is the best way to motivate yourself and each other!!

HAPPY HOLIDAY'S...WHAT....I'M WORKING????

- ◉ Working holidays is difficult - you are giving up time with YOUR family to take care of others. BUT remember...you choose this profession!!!!
- ◉ Embrace the holiday - be thankful that you are able to work and can give back to families that can't share the holidays with their loved one.
- ◉ Holidays = family - it is not about the day, it is about spending time with your loved ones. Change the day ie, Christmas can be celebrated on any day not just the 25th.

- ◉ It's not about making sure you celebrate on the right day, it is whether you make the time to celebrate.
- ◉ Depending on the size of your department, maybe you can make some trades.
- ◉ Dress the part for work - get into the spirit
- ◉ Have pot lucks
- ◉ Buy gifts for each other

EMBRACE WORKING THE HOLIDAY'S...EVEN IF YOU ARE CLEANING UP POOP!!!! REMEMBER YOU CAN GO HOME AT THE END OF THE SHIFT!

WHAT DID YOU SAY AGAIN???

- ◉ *Family roles* - communicate with your loved ones and discuss the needs of both you and your family/partner.
- ◉ *Working days/nights* - find a routine that works for you and stick with it. Talk to other colleagues and see what strategies they use.
- ◉ *Sleep* - ...as much as you can!! Communicate with your friends/family about your sleep patterns. Do what works for you.
- ◉ *Nutrition* - eating well is essential when working shift work.

- ◉ *Exercise* - YES you can do it!!!! It can be anything that you enjoy to do.
- ◉ *Holiday's/weekends* - Embrace the holidays at work...you are with your "other" family! When you have to work weekends be thankful that you get time off during the week when every one else is working!!

YOU CAN STILL HAVE A GOOD TIME ON A TUESDAY!!!!!!

QUESTIONS???

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL PROFESSION OF NURSING!!!!