



Image by artist Chiara Dellerba, who is involved in the Understanding and Reimagining Sleep and its Disorders workshops.

Jan 10, 2023 12:06 GMT

## Creative approaches to sleep disorders

**Sleep researchers from Northumbria University are running a series of workshops, aimed at finding creative ways of coping with poor sleep.**

With sleep disorders on the rise, the project will give people the opportunity to share their experiences, get expert wellbeing advice, and create new resources to help others.

The *Understanding and Reimagining Sleep and its Disorders* workshops have been organised by [Dr Diletta De Cristofaro](#) as part of her Wellcome Trust-

funded research project, [Writing the Sleep Crisis](#).

Dr De Cristofaro, an expert in literary representations of sleep, is working with psychologists Professor Jason Ellis, Dr Pam Alfonso Miller, and Dr Greg Elder from the [Northumbria Centre for Sleep Research](#), as well as artist Chiara Dellerba and [The Sleep Charity](#).

Speaking about the project, Dr De Cristofaro said: “Sleep is vital to our physical and mental wellbeing, but as a society we are currently going through something of a sleep crisis.

“This workshop series is aimed at helping those who have difficulties sleeping not just by offering expert wellbeing advice – which is of course crucial – but by exploring together our experiences of sleep.

“Studies have shown that sharing stories fosters wellbeing and empathy, and this insight underpins the creative approach at the heart of this workshop series.

“We want to explore how sleep health is understood and reimagined through the stories we tell about it and I’m delighted to collaborate with colleagues in Psychology, artist Chiara Dellerba, and The Sleep Charity to deliver this project.”

Director of the Northumbria Centre for Sleep Research, [Professor Jason Ellis](#), added: “I think we need to make sleep a priority and one way of doing that is by making it meaningful to everyone, whether that is through telling peoples’ stories about it or demystifying the science behind it, that’s what this project will do and why we are delighted to be part of it.”

The workshops will cover three themes – sleep and parenting, sleep and aging, and sleep and menopause – and are open to people living in the Newcastle area.

Each will begin with an hour-long online workshop, facilitated by Dr De Cristofaro and one of the Northumbria psychologists, during which participants will be encouraged to share their lived experience of sleep disorders.

This will be followed by a two-hour, in-person workshop, held at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, in Newcastle.

During this workshop the participants will work with artist Chiara Dellerba to develop their ideas and experiences into creative exercises which will support people with sleep disorders.

These resources will include a script for a sleep meditation, a recorded soundscape, and a set of cards which allow people to play out different scenarios when faced with disturbed sleep.

Once finished they will all be used by the national charity The Sleep Charity, which campaigns to raise awareness of the value of a good night's sleep and promote understanding around the complexities of sleep.

All the artwork and resources produced will then be shared through an online exhibition and interactive website.

The workshops take place throughout February and March this year.

To find out more and to register for one of the workshops please visit [www.writingsleep.com/reimagining-sleep/](http://www.writingsleep.com/reimagining-sleep/) or email [Diletta.cristofaro@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:Diletta.cristofaro@northumbria.ac.uk)

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