

Realize. It starts with you.

Though sleep is important in maintaining physical and mental health, University of Regina Phd student, Meghan Woods says external factors may prevent people from getting a good night's rest. Woods is specifically examining the relationship between disrupted sleep due to abuse and women's health.

"Women who are abused can have health and psychological problems, and some have suggested that [disrupted] sleep is an important piece in predicting those problems," said Woods.

"We found that 75 per cent of the women in our study reported having sleep problems which was double what women in the general population report."

The findings came from a study Woods developed using research gathered through the Healing Journey project of RESOLVE (Research and Education for Solutions to Violence and Abuse).

RESOLVE is a network of university researchers and community groups from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta that address issues of violence including intimate partner violence, family violence, child abuse and elder abuse.

The Healing Journey project is a five year study that began in 2004, and 216 women who have been abused by an intimate partner participated. During the course of the study each were interviewed approximately every six months about a range of topics. Woods is one of the first students to use the collected data.

"There aren't a lot of [researchers] who are looking at sleep patterns in intimate partner violence. It's brand new. There are only a few researchers doing it and it is such an important piece."

For her master's thesis Woods examined the answers women gave about sleep problems due to domestic violence. These questions ranged from whether they were unable to sleep due to injuries to if they could sleep with another person in the room.

Cases of insomnia are only one aspect of Woods' research. She has found that insomnia can develop for abused women in part from being in an environment where they feel it is unsafe to sleep. They are not sleeping in order to protect both themselves, and in many cases, their children. However, according to Woods, those poor sleeping habits can carry over to when women are in a shelter or their new residence.

"We need to remember that even if a woman isn't cohabitating with her abusive partner and no longer in the abusive relationship there could be a lot of harassment going on. The abuse doesn't end just because she left the relationship and so there could be a lot of things that affect her sleep even after she is out of the relationship. Her partner could be harassing her over the phone. She could feel unsafe because she is worried that her partner is going to crawl through her window."

This is why Woods plans to share her findings with shelter workers and make recommendations that could help their clients.

"At RESOLVE we are very committed to taking our findings back to the community," says Woods. "(RESOLVE) has an alliance with the community. My research isn't exempt from that. I'm excited to be able to take what I have found and give people applications based on it that they will hopefully find useful and practical."



- Meghan Woods

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Wednesday, December 9 8:00 p.m.

University Jazz Ensemble

Conductor: Chris Jacklin

Location: University Theatre (U of R main campus)

General admission is \$10. Fine Arts students with student card will be admitted for free. All other students and seniors: \$7.

For more information, contact the music department office at 585-5532.

December 25 – 31

University of Regina is closed.

January 1

University of Regina is closed.

Wednesday, January 20 12:00 p.m.

Nourishing Thoughts at the Foodbank
Lecture Series

Speaker: Yolanda Hansen, Community Research Unit, U of R

The lecture series is a joint initiative sponsored and coordinated by the Centre for Continuing Education and First Nations University. The public is welcome at no charge and lunch will be provided.

Location: Adult Centre for Employment and Readiness, 425 Winnipeg St.

For more information, contact Kathy Buitenhuis, Centre for Continuing Education, at 585-5764.

Wednesday, January 20 7:30 p.m.

Philosophy Café: an open exchange of philosophical ideas led by a University of Regina philosophy professor.

Speaker: Béla Szabados

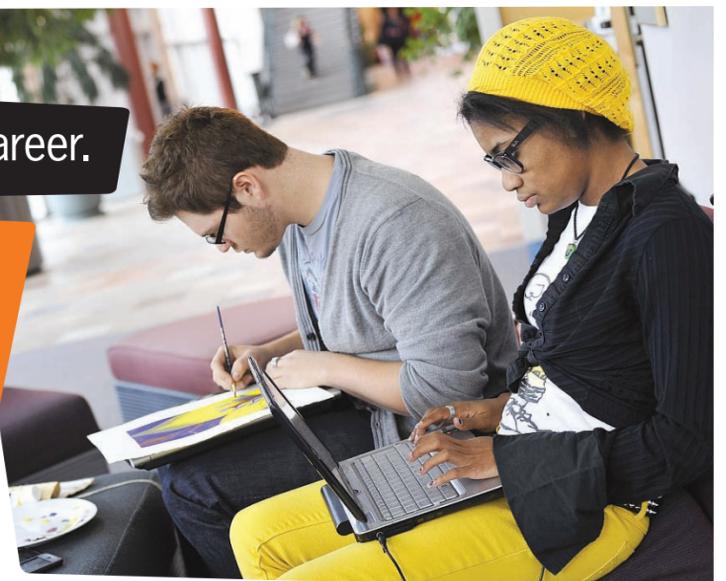
Location: Connaught Library - 3435-13th Ave.

Refreshments will be served. For more information call 585-4332.

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