EMPOWERING THE NIGHT SHIFT

The Circadian Home

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A Nurse-Led Framework for Circadian Alignment · *a planning-stage project*

1 · BACKGROUND / PURPOSE

My mother was an LPN who also worked nights. She developed type 2 diabetes at 36 and died of metastatic breast cancer at 49. I cannot say shift work caused her illnesses. However, current research shows that long-term circadian disruption and persistent night-shift work are associated with increased health risks.

I can't change the past, but I can educate the future.

AT UAB, NIGHT SHIFT WORKERS REPORT MORE DISTRESS AND BURNOUT

63% of night shift workers reported distress, compared with 51% on day shift

55% reported burnout, compared with 45% of day shift workers

WE CARE's own evaluation. Survey of 878 UAB Hospital shift workers (ref. 3).

WHO / IARC 2020: night shift work is "probably carcinogenic to humans" (Group 2A).

That is a hazard classification. It does not mean every night worker will get cancer.

2 · METHODS / IMPLEMENTATION

I read the research on circadian rhythms and shift work, then put it into plain language nurses can use.

- Built from peer-reviewed research and the World Health Organization report on night shift work.

NEXT STEPS, IF THE PROJECT MOVES FORWARD

- Have night-shift nurses review it, then write it up as a handout and a one-page schedule.
- Ask about their sleep and confidence before and after.

THE CIRCADIAN HOME FRAMEWORK · FIVE PRACTICAL LEVERS ACROSS ONE NIGHT



The goal isn't a perfect schedule.

It's knowing which signals tell your body **"be alert"** and which help **prepare it for sleep**.

3 · RESULTS / OUTCOMES / IMPACT

This project is still in the planning stage, so I do not have outcome data yet.

What I hope it does:

- Nurses learn how important sleep is, and how to use what is here
- Nurses sleep better on a night rotation
- Nurses feel more confident moving between nights and days

4 · CONCLUSIONS

The research on circadian health is already out there. It just has not been turned into something nurses can use.

Shift work is essential to healthcare, but nurses deserve education that helps them work with their biology instead of against it.

Shift work is necessary. The biological cost nurses pay is not.

ONE SCHEDULE DOES NOT FIT EVERY NURSE

This can be adjusted around your hours, your commute, your family, your health, and whether you are naturally a morning or a night person.

Want to see the full example?

Scan for the complete three-night → four-days-off example and share your night-shift feedback.

www.karensanderson.com/we-care

SELECTED EVIDENCE

AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE • International Agency for Research on Cancer. Night Shift Work. IARC Monographs, Vol. 124. Lyon: IARC; 2020. Overall evaluation, §6.4.

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