Module 4: Sleeping and Dreaming
Topic 1 Content: The Sleep Cycle

Introduction

Starting with Stage 1, and going in numeric order, click the pulsating stars next to each stage of the sleep cycle. Click the ***NEXT*** button to begin.

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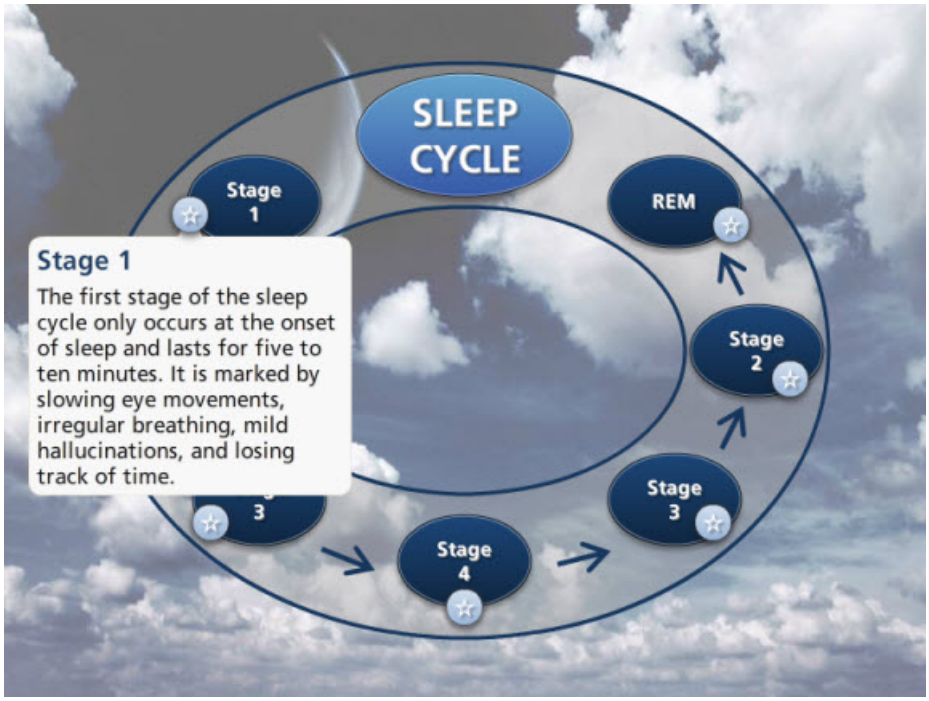
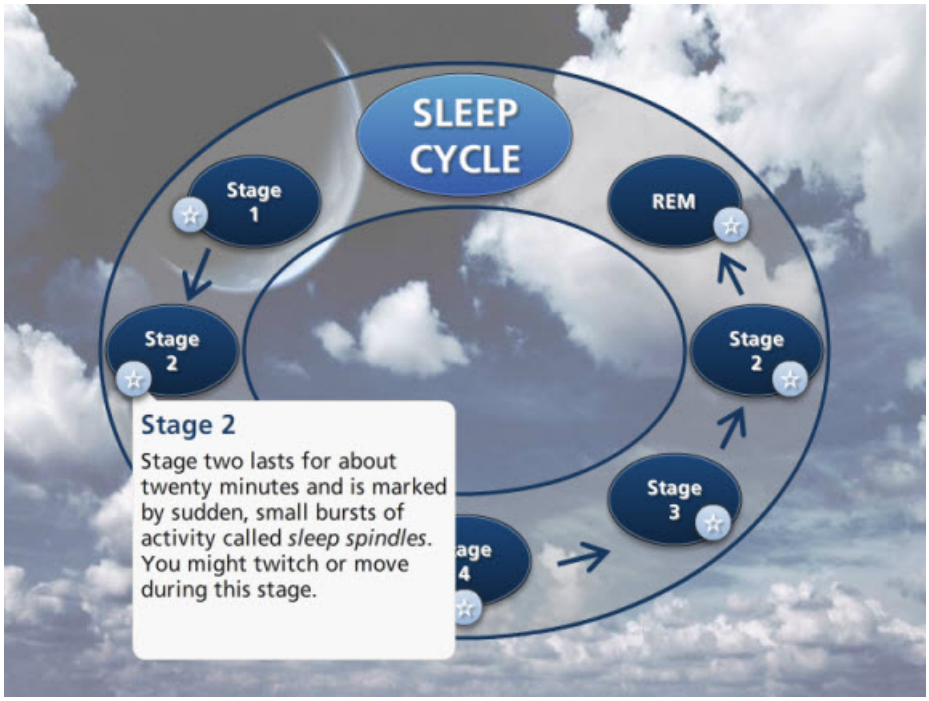
Stage One



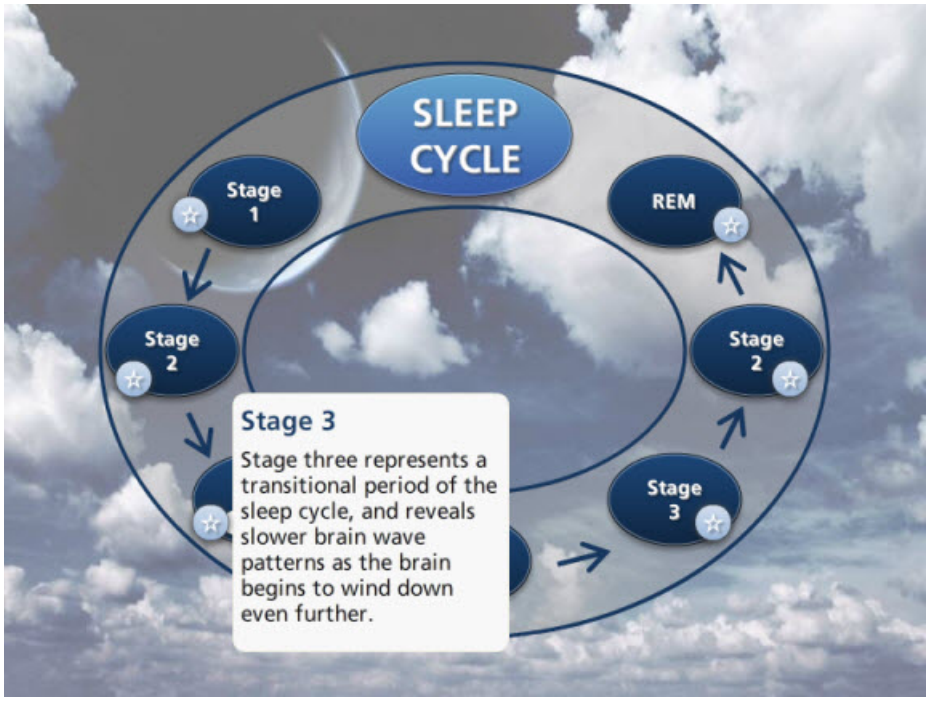
The first stage of the sleep cycle only occurs at the onset of sleep and lasts for five to ten minutes. It is marked by slowing eye movements, irregular breathing, mild hallucinations, and losing track of time.

Stage Two



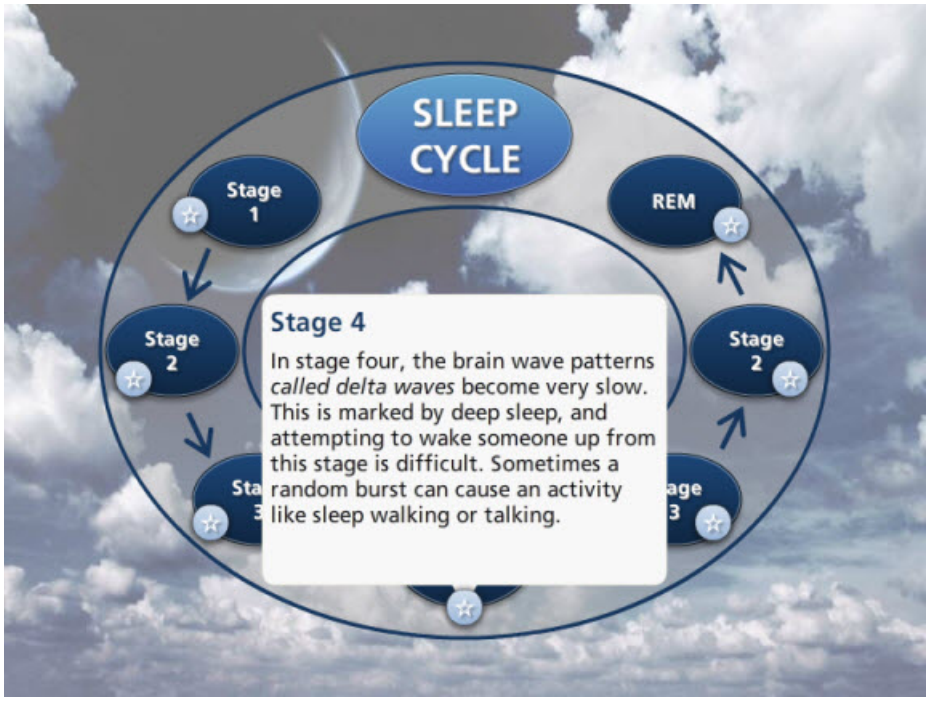
Stage two lasts for about twenty minutes and is marked by sudden, small bursts of activity called *sleep spindles*. You might twitch or move during this stage.

Stage Three



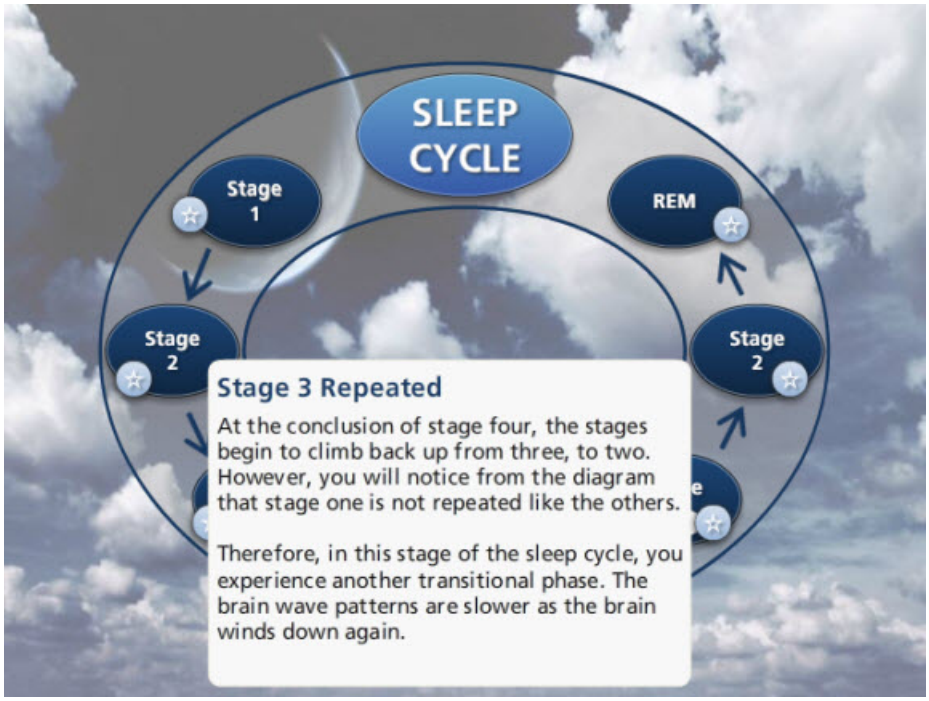
Stage three represents a transitional period of the sleep cycle, and reveals slower brain wave patterns as the brain begins to wind down even further.

Stage Four



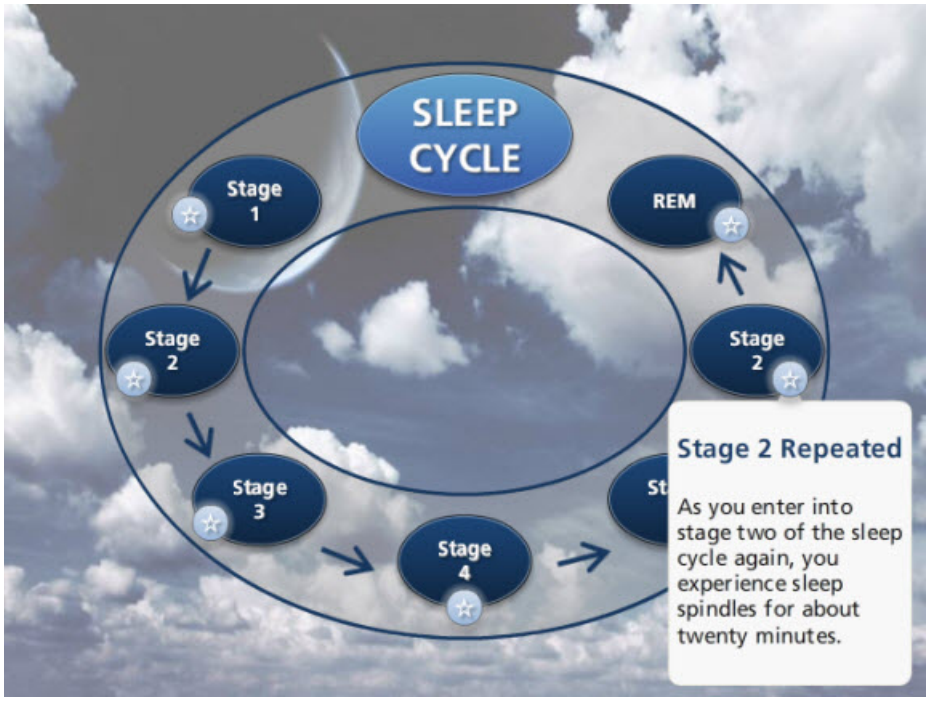
In stage four, the brain wave patterns called *delta waves* become very slow. This is marked by deep sleep, and attempting to wake someone from this stage is difficult. Sometimes a random burst can cause an activity like sleep walking or talking.

Stage Three Repeated



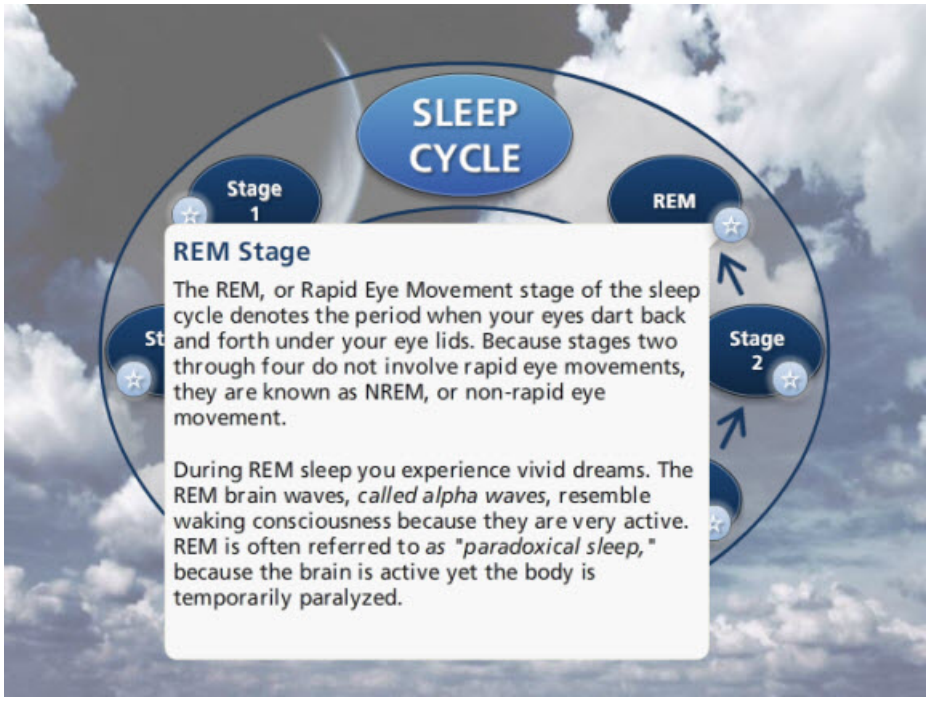
At the conclusion of stage four, the stages begin to climb back up from three to two. However, you will notice from the diagram that stage one is not repeated as are the others. Therefore, in stage three repeated in the sleep cycle, you experience another transitional phase. The brain wave patterns are slower as the brain winds down again.

Stage Two Repeated



As you enter into stage two again, you experience sleep spindles for about twenty minutes.

Rapid Eye Movement Stage



The REM, or Rapid Eye Movement, stage of the sleep cycle denotes the period when your eyes dart back and forth under your eye lids. Because stages two through four do not involve rapid eye movements, they are known as NREM, or non-rapid eye movement. During REM sleep you experience vivid dreams. The REM brain waves, called *alpha waves*, resemble waking consciousness because they are very active. REM is often referred to *as "paradoxical sleep,"* because the brain is active, yet the body is temporarily paralyzed.