

MINDFUL MOMENTS

MARCH: SLEEP

Introduction

Everyone needs sleep, but many of us have problems with it. We all know that terrible feeling when you're tossing and turning, unable to sleep and worrying about how tired you'll be tomorrow. While a few nights of poor sleep can be annoying, it's hard to know when it's really a problem and what we can do about it. There's a close link between sleep and mental health. Mental health problems can affect our sleep and poor sleep can impact our mental health. This is a vicious cycle which can be hard to break out of.



How does poor sleep impact me and my work?

If you're having problems sleeping, you might find it difficult to get to sleep, stay asleep or wake up earlier than you'd like...

A lack of sleep can affect your day to day life. You might start to feel tired throughout the day or you might fall asleep at times when you want, or need, to be awake. This can lead to you being more likely to feel anxious, irritable or depressed, while also making decision making more difficult.

This can be challenging at work as it may impact your performance and make it more difficult to focus on what you need to do, as well as affecting your work-life balance or relationships with colleagues.

Often people who don't get enough sleep are more at risk of developing mental health problems.

Do you think lack of sleep is having an impact on you and your work?

How can I help myself?

The things that affect our sleep differ for everyone and can include stresses or worries, health conditions, medication or alcohol. It's important to remember that, when trying to improve sleep, different things work for different people. Don't put too much pressure on yourself if something isn't working. Give some of the tips below a try and if they don't help, seek further advice and support. There are many ways to improve sleep, but it's about finding what works for you and makes you feel good.

Tips to help you sleep better

1. **Try to get into a routine** – Waking up and going to bed at the same time each day can help you establish a regular sleeping habit.
2. **Relax and unwind before bed** – This can help you feel calm before you sleep, making it easier to drift off. Try listening to music, having a hot bath, visualising peaceful scenarios, muscle relaxation or breathing exercises.
3. **Make your sleeping area comfortable and cosy** – Try different temperatures, light and noise levels to see what works for you.
4. **Reduce your screen time** – Too much screen time in the evening can impact sleep. Avoid screens an hour before bed and use a blue light filter in the evenings.
5. **Look after yourself** – Physical wellbeing can help to improve your sleep. Think about diet and how this impacts your sleep. Physical activity can make you feel tired, helping sleep.

Support available

There are many places you can reach out or get more information and support with your sleep or associated problems:

- Samaritans - Call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org for 24/7 support
- Mind's Infoline - Call 0300 123 3393 or email info@mind.com
- NHS Live Well - www.nhs.uk
- British Snoring & Sleep Apnoea Association - www.britishsnoring.co.uk