

Managing Sleep Issues

Sleep disturbance commonly involves difficulty getting to sleep with or without early morning wakening (usually around 3am) followed by a restless night thereafter.

To restore a pattern of normal sleep, it is important to practice sleep-promoting behaviours during the day, in the evening, at bedtime and during the night.

It is important to remember that adults are no different to children, we also need wind down routines.

Reflection activity:

Consider how you put your 'inner child' to bed.

Sleep Promoting Behaviours

During the day:

- ◇ Organise your day to keep your inner clock running smoothly. Set regular times to eat meals, exercise etc
- ◇ Regular gentle exercise during the day is important
- ◇ Set aside time for decision-making during the day, to avoid worry or anxiety at night.
- ◇ Avoid napping during the day.
- ◇ Try to go to bed and get up at regular times.
- ◇ Try not to drink more than 2 caffeinated drinks during the day (coffee, tea, soft drinks, etc.)

During the evening:

- ◇ Put the day to rest. If you still have things on your mind, write them down to be dealt with tomorrow.
- ◇ Light exercise in the evening may help sleep. Avoid exercising late as this may make sleep more difficult.
- ◇ Throughout the evening, try to implement a 'wind down' routine. This could include at least a half an hour of quiet activity ie. reading or listening to music.
- ◇ Avoid drinking caffeinated drinks after 4pm.
- ◇ Avoid smoking for at least one hour before bed.
- ◇ Don't use alcohol to help you sleep and keep alcohol intake to a moderate level.
- ◇ Make sure your bed and bedroom are comfortable (not too cold or warm)
- ◇ Avoid a heavy meal close to bedtime

At Bedtime (put your inner child to bed):

- ◇ Try to develop a calming bed routine such as having a warm bath or shower, or do yoga or relaxation. This way your body will learn to know that you are getting ready to go to sleep.
- ◇ Prepare your environment: ie: low music, dim lights to help prepare your body for sleep.
- ◇ Go to bed when you feel sleepy.
- ◇ Don't use technology while in bed (playing on phone or watching tv)
- ◇ Try to not have serious conversations or arguments before you go to bed.
- ◇ Relax and tell yourself that sleep will come when it is ready. Perhaps use a smart phone sleep app to help induce sleep.

During the Night:

- ◇ If you wake up too early and struggle to get back to sleep, don't lie in bed worried or annoyed. Get up and do something relaxing to distract you and then return to bed once you are sleepy again.
- ◇ Get up at the same time each morning. Don't sleep late to make up for lost sleep
- ◇ If noise or light wakes you throughout the night, get ear plugs or a sleep mask.
- ◇ Avoid sleeping pills: They do not provide a long-term solution to sleep problems.

Sleep Diary

If you are experiencing sleep disturbance, it may be worth completing a sleep diary. A sleep diary can help you record and monitor your routine to see if there are any habits that may be affecting your sleep.

On the following page is a sleep chart for you to complete. Below are some simple instructions to follow:

Instructions: Follow the key below when recording your information.

Letter C	Record C when you have a coffee, tea or caffeinated drink
Letter M	Record M when you take medication
Letter A	To record when you consume alcohol
Letter E	To record when you complete exercise
Letter I	To record when you go to bed
Shaded boxes	Top record when you are asleep (remember to leave boxes unshaded to record when you are wake during the day and night).

Please Note: The first line in the chart is an example from the summary below.

On Monday I worked and then went for a walk at 1pm. I had a beer with dinner at 6pm, fell asleep watching the tv at 8pm and then took myself to bed at 11pm. I woke at 3am but managed to get back to sleep by 4am. I started my day at 7am, had a coffee at 8am and my medicine as I walked out the door at 9am.

