

## Sleep

Sleep is one of the most important parts of our physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. It's essential for the body and mind to rest, restore and recharge.

The brain cannot function properly without enough sleep. This is why sleeping problems have such a massive impact on your physical and mental health.

## Common signs of sleep problems

- **Difficulty falling asleep**
- **Laying awake for long periods of time**
- **Waking up during the night**
- **Feeling frustrated and/or anxious about sleep**
- **Lack of concentration**
- **Feeling tired, tearful, irritable, unable to cope**

## What can cause sleep problems?

- Stressful life events
- Relationship problems
- Life changes
- Exam stress
- Anxiety and worry
- Low mood

## What can help?

### Top Tips

- ✓ Create your own **bed time routine**. Write down the steps you will take to wind down in the last 30 minutes before you go to sleep. Follow the steps every night
- ✓ Aim to go to bed and wake up at a **similar time everyday**
- ✓ **Avoid using electronic devices** before bed. The light from your devices tells your body to stay awake
- ✓ Avoid having naps **during the day**
- ✓ Only **sit or lay in bed when it's time to sleep**
- ✓ If you are having trouble getting to sleep, **get up and do something relaxing** for a while before trying again, e.g. reading, colouring, listening to music
- ✓ If you can't sleep because of anxiety, spend 5 minutes before bed **writing down your worries**. Use a mind map/spider diagram or just scribble them down. This way, you can put those worries down for the night and think about it tomorrow

### Relaxation Techniques

Relaxation techniques help your body to relax and your mind to switch off. You could include one of these as a step in your bed time routine, or, just use them when you need to.

#### 1. Deep Breathing Exercise

Practice using your breath to trigger your body's natural relaxation response and move focus away from your thoughts

#### 2. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

This exercise helps you to relax by tensing and releasing different muscles in your body

#### 3. Guided Meditation

Search for a "guided meditation for sleep" on YouTube. There will usually be a soothing voice which guides your mind and body to relax throughout a 10-20 minute video.