

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BULLETIN

THE SLEEP EDITION



GEORGE
SALTER
ACADEMY

Welcome to the GSA Mental Health and Well-being bulletin! This is a guide for parents and carers to support you with encouraging your teen to look after and manage their own mental health every day. This month's bulletin looks at the importance of sleep, how it is linked to mental health, the impact quarantine has had on sleeping patterns and how to encourage good sleep hygiene.

Why do teens need more sleep?



Sleep is critical to our physical health, concentration and immune system. It's also a key promoter of emotional well-being

and mental health, helping to manage and reduce anxiety, stress and depression.

Whilst a teenager's brain is still developing their ability to manage and regulate emotions and make rational decisions is improving and sleep is a key factor in supporting this improvement.

Teenagers who do not get enough sleep and are overtired are more likely to:

- Struggle in school
- Have trouble with memory, concentration and motivation
- Experience low-moods and feel depressed

Want to know more?

Watch: How sleep affects our mental health

How sleep affects our brain
Why sleep is important to our mental health



1:33

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVWfPR65Gpk>

It is recommended that teenagers get **8 to 10 hours** of sleep per night, however research shows 7 out of 10 teenagers do not get their recommended daily amount!



How has quarantine affected young people's sleeping patterns?

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on everyone's sleep routine. The increased anxiety and worry around our health, the disruption to our routines and not being able to spend time with friends and family outside our households has affected the way we think and therefore the way we rest. In addition to this, teenagers are still going through adolescence and struggle with managing their emotions which then effects their sleep routine even more, and how to our teenagers cope with this... by taking a nap! Napping in the day leads to further disruption to their sleep routine, then they struggle to sleep at night and the cycle keeps going round and around.

General sleep issues

Sleep issues are common during puberty. Teenagers may experience difficulty going to sleep, frequent night awakenings, nightmares and sleep terrors.

What is Sleep Hygiene?

Sleep hygiene is the habits we need to have a good nights sleep.

For teenagers it is important they are encouraged and shown how to practice good sleep hygiene. An easy way to encourage this is through **S.E.L.F** correction:

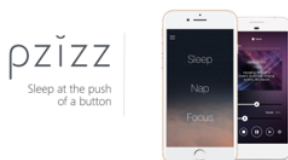
- 🧐 **S – Socialising:** advise your teen to reduce the interaction they have with peers online or phone calls at least an hour before bed. Encourage them to turn their devices onto sleep mode to limit distractions.
- 🧘 **E – Exercise:** Encourage your teen to exercise daily. As little as 10 minutes of aerobic exercise such as walking or cycling can improve quality of sleep.
- 🌙 **L – Light:** Lights send signals to the brain and encourage brain activity. Electronic devices send out **blue light** and too much exposure to this can lead to insomnia. Encourage teens to limit their daily screen time to 2 hours per day and avoid screen time at least 1 hour before bed.
- 🍽️ **F – Food:** Going to bed hungry can interrupt sleeping patterns, but also eating heavy meals, sugary foods or drinks with caffeine will encourage brain activity and make going to sleep easily difficult. Encourage teens to have a good routine with the times they eat and drink before going to bed.

USEFUL APPS:

There are some great apps that encourage good sleep hygiene, through tracking sleeping patterns and activities to creating a calming screen-free routine. Here are some useful apps that have been tried and tested by our students and staff at GSA:



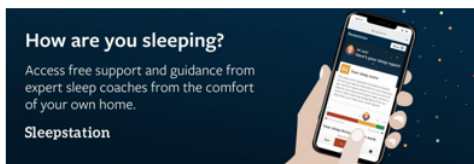
Sleep Cycle tracks and analyses your sleep through motion detector



Pzizz helps you to sleep, nap or focus through 'dreamscapes' – a mix of music, voiceovers and sound effects designed to help you sleep



Sleepio is a 6 week sleep improvement programme helping you fall asleep faster and stay asleep throughout the night



Sleepstation is a 6 week online course and gives you access to a team of sleep experts who will offer helpful advice



Calm is a meditation, sleep and relaxation app which features sleep stories to help you fall asleep quickly and guided meditation to reduce anxiety.



#Recommended by Miss Jones (Y7 SWM)
Insight is an app with an online community for meditation. The app features music and sounds to help you relax and go to sleep.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Talking to your teen about sleep hygiene can be challenging, we find it helpful to talk to young people about our personal experiences with sleep issues to break the ice. This week our Mental Health First Aiders have sent out an e-briefing to students on their experiences with sleep problems and how they have improved their sleep hygiene:

"Sometimes I struggle to sleep and I wake up in the night. Reading a book and not using electronic devices an hour before I go to bed really helps"

**Mrs Garcha
(Y9 SWM)**

"Sometimes I struggle to sleep and then I wake up lacking energy and focus. It is then harder to work on my daily school/home tasks and therefore I am less productive. I tried to improve my sleep hygiene by exercising more in the evening, using a lavender sleep spray, it's amazing! And drinking lemon green tea around an hour before bed"

**Miss Philora
(Business Studies Teacher)**

"I used to struggle to get to sleep but I now use an app called 'Insight Timer' its free too. It gives relaxing sounds and music. Each sound clip plays for a different length of time. I've found the one about mermaids knocks me out!"

**Miss Jones
(Y7 SWM)**

"Sometimes I struggle to sleep due to thoughts around what I have been doing during the day and what I have to do the following day. I have tried to improve my sleep hygiene by trying to cleanse my thoughts, not using electronics before bed or switching them off completely. Having a luke warm shower before going to bed. In this weather a window open always helps too"

**Mrs Parmar
(Attendance Officer)**

"Sometimes I struggle to sleep and wake up feeling thirsty. I then know the next day to hydrate myself throughout the day and drink plenty of fluids. I keep on top of my sleep hygiene by having a good bed time routine; I put my phone down at a certain time and go to bed at a certain time"

**Miss Dale
(Safeguarding Officer)**

"Sometimes I struggle to sleep because I have a lot on my mind, so I write down the things I am thinking about in the notes on my phone and make a plan of how to tackle them. Then I listen to my favourite playlist on my phone"

**Miss Moore
(Inclusion Manager- STEPs)**

"I practice good sleep hygiene by keeping a small notebook and pen on my bedside table so that if I have thoughts in my head that I can't shake, or ideas of things I need to do, I quickly make a note of them. Then it allows my brain to park the thought because I know it won't be forgotten. Other failsafe methods are good routine, reading before bed and clean sheets! Keeping a tidy room and trying not to work in the same space that you sleep, if that's not possible keep all the work stuff stored away and try to leave the room for a couple of hours before bed so that your body recognises the change in purpose of the space"

**Mrs Cook
(#iWill Coordinator/ LSA)**

"Sometimes I struggle to sleep and I wake up thinking of all of the things that I need to do. I tried to improve my sleep hygiene by ensuring that I don't use my mobile phone once I go to bed. This helps me to relax and switch off, as I'm not checking messages/social media accounts/work emails".

**Mrs Bradley
(English Teacher and SENCo)**

Sometimes I struggle to sleep and I wake up in the night. I improve my sleep hygiene by going for a walk everyday or doing Yoga at home to tire myself out a little. I have also stopped using my phone at least half an hour before bed and I turn the blue light filter on and turn the brightness down in the late evening"

**Mrs Bains
(Y8 SWM)**