



Peer
Education
Project



Mental Health
Foundation



Sleep: Finding our confidence with sleep



A guide for caregivers

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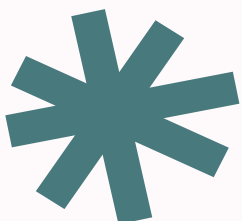
Sleep is integral to all aspects of our lives. We sleep every day, spending about a third of our lives asleep! Yet sleep is often one of the first things we compromise on when things become busy or overwhelming.

Sleep plays a vital role in our ability to cope with the world around us. It affects our learning, behaviour, ability to regulate our emotions, and our interactions with others.

Therefore, it is important to understand what good sleep is and how to develop good sleep health.

Sleep is said to be of good quality if:

- The time it takes to fall asleep is less than 30 minutes.
- Wakefulness once asleep is under 30 minutes.
- We achieve an age adequate total sleep length.
- The sleep efficiency – or percentage of time in bed spent asleep – is more than 85%.



The Five Principles of Sleep

Professor Colin Espie, an expert in Sleep Medicine, recommends that we should:

1. Value our sleep

It is something vital to our lives, and we need to take sleep seriously.

2. Prioritise our sleep

We need to put sleep first when making choices about what we want to do.

3. Personalise our sleep

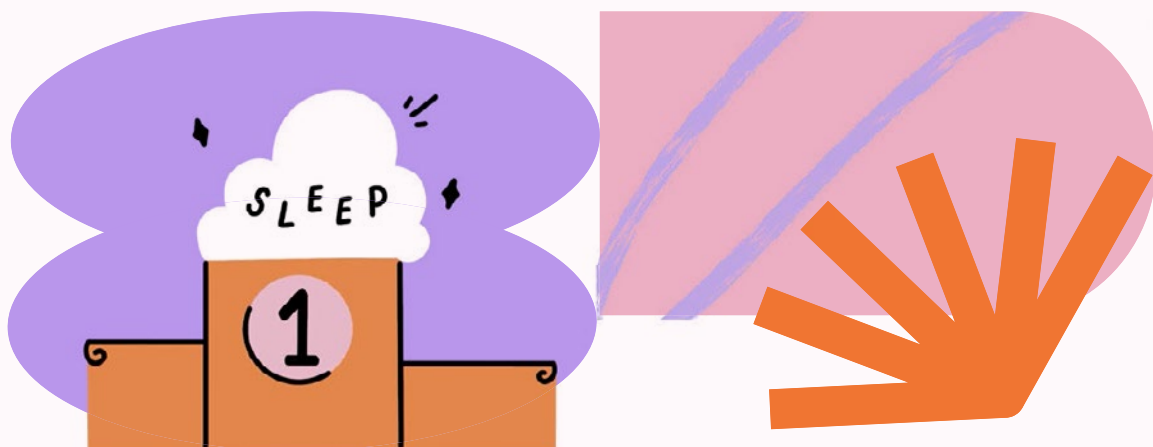
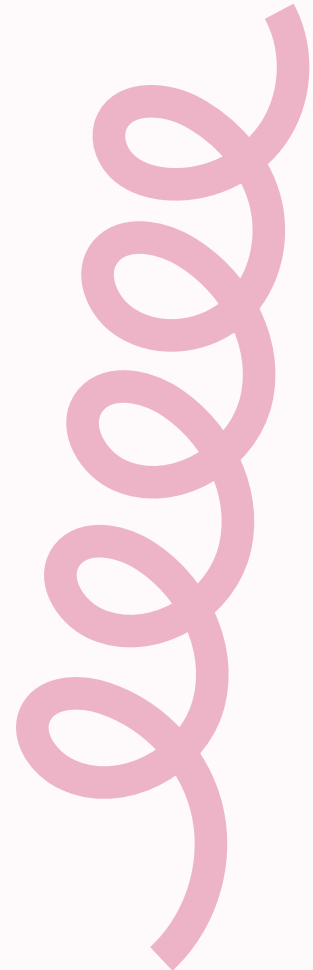
We need to find the 'sleep window' that works best for us i.e. when and how long you sleep.

4. Trust our sleep

It is a natural process, and our sleep will get itself into a good pattern.

5. Protect our sleep

We can do this by avoiding or preventing things that upset it.



This guide provides tips and resources on how to support yourself as a caregiver, as well as your child or young person, to show kindness to yourselves and others.

Supporting yourself with improving your sleep health



Resources to support yourself

Mental Health Foundation resources

Our vision at the [Mental Health Foundation](#) is for a world with good mental health for all. With prevention at the heart of what we do, we aim to find and address the sources of mental health problems so that people and communities can thrive.

[Tips on looking after your mental health](#)

Read these tips on how to look after your mental health.

[Tips on how to manage and reduce stress](#)

Read these tips on how to manage and reduce stress.

[Tips on how to sleep better](#)

Read these tips on how to sleep better - looking at improving the quality of your sleep, what causes sleep disorders and possible solutions, top tips from a sleep doctor, and a sleep diary template to help you keep track of your sleep.

Other resources

[A TED talk on why we sleep](#)

Listen to this TED talk on why we sleep and how it is linked to mental health.

[A guide on understanding sleep problems](#)

Read this guide from Mind on different sleep problems, and what you can do and where you can go for support.

[A meditation to help sleep](#)

Try this free, 10-minute meditation from Headspace to calm your mind before bedtime.



Support services for adults

Samaritans

Samaritans are open 24/7 for anyone who needs to talk.

Call: **116 123** (free)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Post: Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS

The Samaritans Self-Help app is a tool to track how you're feeling and receive tips on things you can do to look after yourself.

Samaritans also have a Welsh Language Line on **0808 164 0123** (7pm–11pm every day).

Hub of Hope

Hub of Hope is a UK-wide mental health service database, allowing you to search for local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support. You can filter results to find specific kinds of support.

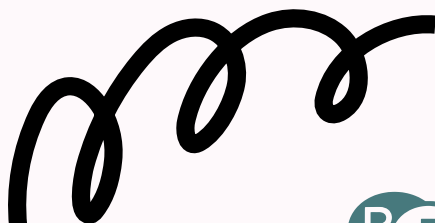
Mind

Mind offers advice, support and information to people experiencing mental health difficulties, and their family and friends.

InfoLine: **0300 123 3393**

Lines are open Monday to Friday
9am to 6pm (except bank holidays).

Email info@mind.org.uk



Side by Side

Side by Side, hosted by Mind, is an online community where you can listen, share and be heard. The online community is moderated to keep the community safe and supportive.

The Sleep Charity

The Sleep Charity provide advice, education and support around sleep. They offer a helpline to support anyone struggling with their sleep.

Call: **03303 530 541**

Lines are open (excluding bank holidays):
7 - 9pm, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.
9-11am, Monday and Wednesday.

Young Minds

Young Minds provides a parent helpline for parents and caregivers seeking detailed advice, emotional support and signposting about a child or young person up to the age of 25.

Call: **0808 802 5544** (free), available
Monday – Friday, 9:30am - 4pm.

Webchat: available Monday – Friday,
9:30am - 4pm.

Supporting your child or young person with improving their sleep health

Children and young people may feel unsure or frustrated about sleep, especially if they feel like they have tried lots of things that haven't worked.

The important thing is to remind your child or young person to be patient and give their bodies time to adjust when they try new things – good sleep health develops over time.

[MHF Tips for Young People on Sleep](#)

Share these top tip postcards, written by the Mental Health Foundation, to support your child or young person explore and improve their sleep health..

You can support your child or young person to improve their sleep health by encouraging them to:

Have drinks before bed that encourage a calming effect on the body and aid sleep.

Such as chamomile tea, rather than sugary, caffeinated drinks.

Eat foods that promote sleep.

If they feel hungry before bed, like bananas, cherries and even tomatoes.

[A blog on improving sleep through diet changes](#)

Read this blog on the link between diet and sleep.

Prioritise time during the day to exercise or move their bodies.

Excercise can release tension and energy and bring their bodies into a restful state for sleep.



Reduce screen time before bed.

Screens can make it harder to fall asleep because they suppress the production of the sleep hormone, melatonin, which we get from darkness. They could still use their phone or device to listen to music, a podcast, or a guided meditation to help them get to sleep but they should limit their time looking at screens before bed.

[Meditation for sleep](#)

Find out more about how meditation can help with sleep.



Create and use a sleep diary that records the timing, quality, and quantity of their sleep.

This gains a more realistic idea about the type of sleep they get and can help them plan how to get better quality sleep.

Create a wind-down routine in the hour before bed.

This could include limiting screen time, homework, or physical activity and encouraging strategies that work for them to calm their mind. For example, reading, listening to relaxing music, or journaling.



You can support your child or young person with their sleep health by creating a positive sleeping environment at home by:

Keeping living and sleeping spaces as dimmed as possible at night-time.

This will help your child's body to release a hormone called melatonin, which relaxes the body and prepares it for sleep.

If possible, encourage your child or young person to keep their bed as a sleep zone.

For example, they should avoid doing homework or playing games on their bed.

Lead by example and role model good sleep health in yourself.

Try to keep the temperature of their bedroom cool and the space clutter free.

This creates a calming environment for sleeping.

Try and keep their bedroom a quiet space, as noise can disrupt good sleep.

This may not always be possible to achieve when sharing bedrooms or living with family members with different sleep patterns.

Be realistic, patient and understanding.

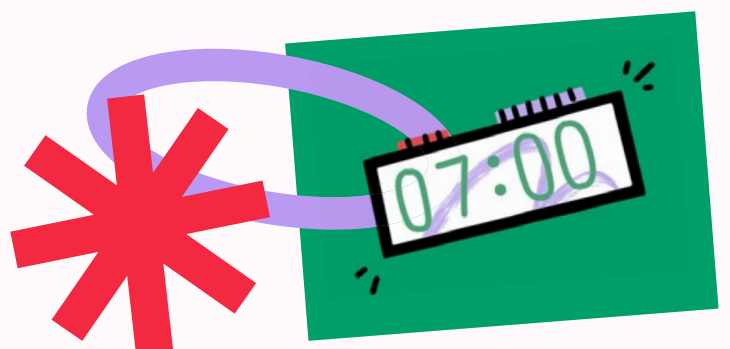
There is a lot going on for children and young people including very real, biological changes to their circadian rhythms, or 'body clocks', that can impact their sleep. Work with them to find positive strategies for promoting good sleep that works for them as individuals and that positively impacts their mental health and wellbeing.

Have open, safe and honest conversations about sleep.

Ask about each other's sleep in the same way that you would ask about your days.

[The Teen Sleep Hub E-book](#)

Share this eBook by The Teen Sleep Hub with your child or young person, to help them feel more confident in making the right changes to their sleep..



Support services for young people

The Mix

The Mix offers online information as well as helpline support to under-25s about anything that's troubling them.

Email: via their [online contact form](#)

Call: **0808 808 4994** (free)

Telephone services available 4pm – 11pm everyday.

Text: **THEMIX to 85258**

The text service is free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK.

One-to-one chat: Free [1-2-1 webchat service](#)

The webchat is available 4pm – 11pm, Monday to Saturday.

Childline

A support service for anyone under 19 in need of support.

Call: **08001111** (free)

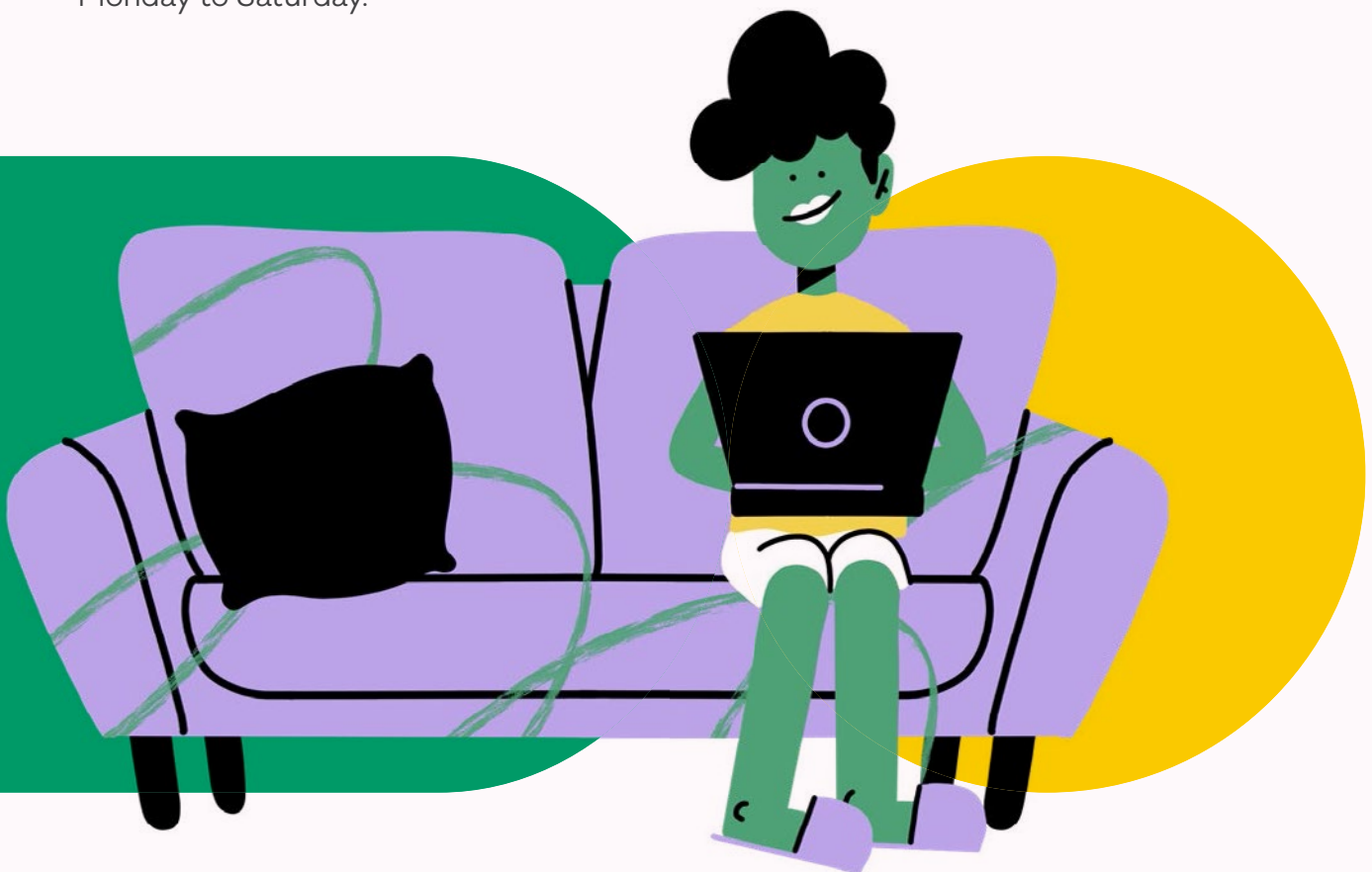
Telephone services available 24-hours a day, every day.

Young people can [sign up](#) for a free Childline locker (real name or email address not needed) to use Childline's free [1-2-1 counsellor chat](#) and email support service.

Shout

A support text service, available 24-hours a day, every day.

Text: **SHOUT to 85258**





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