

SLEEP

Sleep difficulties are extremely common. Typically one in four people describe various difficulties involving struggling to get off to sleep, frequent waking during the night and waking too early in the morning. This can be extremely frustrating and can typically set off a chain reaction which further exacerbates any possibility of getting off to sleep. Remember that we all have periods of disturbed sleep and that it is not critical to sleep well every night. A poor night's sleep is unlikely to significantly affect your performance the next day. Try to develop a relaxed attitude towards periods of wakefulness; this will help it to pass. The trick is to break the cycle of frustration and worry associated with periods of poor sleep.

Helpful Tips:

- ✓ Try to keep to a regular pattern of going to bed and getting up. Don't be tempted to lie in or take naps.
- ✓ Avoid meals late at night and cut down on caffeine based drinks and alcohol.
- ✓ A tidy room and clean bed sheets are both conducive to a good night's sleep!
- ✓ Ensure your bedroom is dark, cool and quiet. Earplugs can be helpful.
- ✓ Exercise regularly a few hours before bedtime, allowing time for the body to cool down and relax.
- ✓ Put your brain as well as your body to bed. Stop working for an hour before bedtime and wind down with a relaxing routine – bath/shower, DVD, non-academic book, relaxing music.
- ✓ Avoid laptops and technology for an hour if possible before bedtime – the 'blue screen effect' can have a stimulating effect and create a state of wakefulness.
- ✓ Put worries to bed before bedtime – commit them to paper and resolve to address them in a purposeful way the next day. If the worry re-emerges during the night remind yourself kindly but firmly that you will deal with it tomorrow.
- ✓ Worrying about not sleeping will keep you awake. Try not to get bound up in your thoughts – imagine they are like passing clouds, they come and they go. Try the Mindfulness Taster sessions offered by our service during term times to develop skills in responding to thoughts in a more distanced way.

- ✓ Imagine your mind is like a roller coaster and that you have brake to slow the cart down and navigate the bends and loops more gently.
- ✓ Listening to mindfulness meditation or guided relaxation podcasts before going to bed can help – check out the self-help links on our website.
- ✓ Having an iPod to hand with soothing music/sleep APPS can be helpful.
- ✓ Avoid clock watching. Turn the clock away from you and set the alarm to wake yourself the next day.

Other Resources:

Please visit our website for full details of other resources relevant to sleep including:

- our self-help links on sleep
- our iCan workshop programme

You can approach the University Counselling Service to book an appointment to discuss your needs further by contacting us on 01248 388520 or by e-mail counselling@bangor.ac.uk

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