

Mental Health and Sleep during COVID-19

The stress of living through lockdown will be playing havoc with our sleep. Remember it is perfectly normal to have a range of emotional reactions to the current situation which is affecting us all. So finding it hard to sleep during this time of uncertainty will be very common and given that lockdown measures may be in place for the foreseeable future, it is more important than ever we practice good sleeping habits to help us cope through these difficult and challenging times. Good quality sleep can boost our mental wellbeing, how so? Well our body clock prompts the release of hormones which affect our sleep, one of these being cortisol, also known as the stress hormone. Cortisol helps us deal with pressure and cope. For example when we have not had enough sleep our body releases more cortisol to help keep us going, however if we continue to have a chronic release of cortisol it can impact on our sleep, which can lead to sleep problems and long term mood disorders like anxiety and depression. However on the flip side, cortisol levels are at their lowest when we are sleeping meaning that if we practice good sleep habits, this will ensure we have reduced levels of cortisol which will help support our bodies to deal with crisis, let it rest and process information. So when you think about it, there is truth in the saying “sleep on it” getting good sleep really can help us deal with things causing us stress and anxiety.

Below are some resources across the life course to help promote good sleep hygiene.

Pregnant and New Parents

Cry-sis: Support for crying and sleepless babies. Provides a telephone helpline **08451 228 669** (charge attached). Lines open 7 days a week 9am-10pm. Website offers information on how to cope with sleepless/or crying babies. <https://www.cry-sis.org.uk/>

Children and Young people

Sleep Support Line: 0800 138 6565, Monday to Thursday 10am – 4pm . For parents and carers living in Scotland seeking support with their child’s sleep problems can contact sleep advisors

Sleep Scotland: Teen Zone to support teenagers sleep better.

<https://www.sleepscotland.org/education/teen-zone/>

Adults

Heads Up: has information on insomnia, what helps and how to support something living with insomnia.

<http://headsup.scot/>

Mood Juice: Self help guide. Learn more about sleep problems and skills to cope with them.

<https://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/SleepProblems.asp>

Wellbeing South Glasgow: offer a free downloadable called Trouble Sleeping <http://wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/trouble-sleeping/resource>,

Every Mind Matters: Trouble Sleeping, some simple steps you can take to ease those restless nights.

www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/

NHS 24: Taking caking of your sleeping pattern. Watch <https://youtu.be/A7Hy5WVkfsk>

Free e learning

The Royal Society for Public Health: a free e-learning on sleep for the public.

<https://www.rsph.org.uk/our-services/e-learning/courses/understanding-sleep-don-t-hit-snooze-on-your-health.html>