The importance of sleep for mental health

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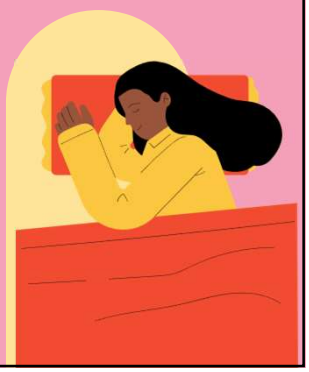

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Sleep and Mental Health

- Why do we need sleep?
- How does sleep affect our mental health?
- Things to avoid before sleep
- How to create a sleep routine with your child.

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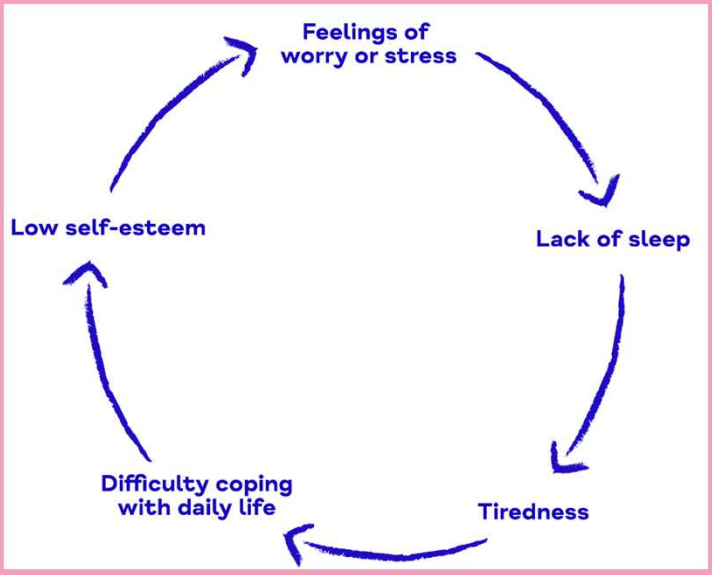
Why do we need sleep?

- The amount of sleep we get has a direct link to our physical and mental health.
- It helps our immune system, blood sugar levels and can affect our appetite.
- It recalibrates our emotional brain circuits making things feel easier the next day.
- It helps us store and consolidate what we have learned so that we are able to learn more the next day.
- It helps us to forget painful or problematic memories over time.

Source: Why we sleep by Matthew Walker Phd.



Source: Mind

How does sleep affect our mental health?

"A ruffled mind makes a restless pillow"
Charlotte Bronte

How did the pandemic affect sleep?

- General anxiety/worry about the pandemic affected the quality of sleep.
- Lockdown periods affected sleep routines as children were not having to get up at a certain time to travel to school.
- Children sleeping during the day affected the quality of their sleep at night.
- Possible dietary changes which could have affected sleep quality/quantity.
- Higher use of technology to communicate with others could have led to issues getting to sleep.

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Things to avoid before bed-time:

- Caffeine- 50% of it will still be in your system 5-7 hours later.
- Even decaffeinated coffee has 15-30% caffeine.
- Eating lots late at night.
- Exciting films/computer games

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How to create a good sleep routine

- Set a routine- try to go to bed at the same time each night so that your body can get used to it.
- Have a bath or warm shower to relax your body.
- Try some meditation or breathing exercises.
- Consider your sleeping area- is it dark enough? Is it warm/cool enough? Is it quiet enough?
- Journal before bed.
- Write a gratitude list of things you are thankful for in your life on that day.