

# Digital Mental Health for Sleep Problems

## WHAT IS A SLEEP DISORDER?

It is recommended that adults get between 7 to 9 hours sleep per night, but many people regularly fall short of this. Prolonged and consistent difficulties falling asleep, waking up early and not being able to get back to sleep, or waking up feeling unrefreshed can be a sign of a sleep problem called insomnia.

Alternately, some people get too much sleep, nap regularly and yet continue to experience excessive daytime sleepiness. This is known as hypersomnia.

Other sleep disorders involve abnormal movements, behaviours, emotions, perceptions and/or dreams that occur during sleep or when falling asleep or waking up. Examples include sleepwalking, acting out dreams, discomfort in the legs alleviated by movement, or abruptly awakening from sleep with a sense of intense fear.

Scan to download a free  
PDF version from the  
eMHPrac Website



Sleep problems can be a sign of a  
physical illness.

It is important to discuss any sleep  
concerns with your GP so that the cause  
can be properly identified.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A SLEEP DISORDER?

### Physical

- Difficulty falling asleep (longer than 30 minutes)
- Waking up in the middle of the night
- Waking up early and being unable to go back to sleep
- Excessive sleepiness during the day
- Sleeping too much
- Lack of energy/fatigue
- Muscle tension associated with going to sleep
- Restless feeling in legs
- Sleepwalking or sleeptalking
- Sleep terrors - waking abruptly with intense fear, often inconsolable
- Feeling like you are falling when you drift off to sleep

### Psychological

- Racing thoughts before bed
- Feeling wound up or anxious before bed or about sleeping
- Irritability/frustration
- Poor concentration
- Preoccupation with getting enough sleep

### Behavioural

- Monitoring for signs of sleepiness
- Taking a book/phone/laptop to bed in case of lack of sleep
- Checking the clock

For tips managing other conditions affecting sleep quality such as anxiety, depression, chronic pain, smoking or substance use, please see our other factsheets.

# Digital Mental Health for Sleep Problems

This resource sheet is designed for mental health professionals to use, whether as a resource to share with clients or as a reference guide. Others are welcome to use or share this resource for general information purposes only and within the scope of their professional role.

## National Mental Health Website

### HEAD TO HEALTH

#### Head to Health

A website that links Australians to free or low-cost online and phone mental health services.  
[headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au)

## Information Sites



#### Sleep Health Foundation

Factsheets, resources, and tips regarding common sleep problems.  
<https://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/>



#### Raising Children Network

Information and sleep advice for parents with young children.  
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/>



#### ReachOut

Advice and moderated forums addressing sleep problems in young people. Youth and parent sections.  
<https://au.reachout.com/>



#### Stress Less Tips

Evidence-based tips that can help support mental health and wellbeing by decreasing stress.  
<http://www.stresslesstips.org.au/>

## Online Programs

#### My Compass

An interactive self-help service that aims to promote resilience and wellbeing for people experiencing mild to moderate stress, anxiety, and/or depression.  
<http://www.mycompass.org.au/>

#### MindSpot Clinic

Clinician supported online programs for stress, anxiety, depression, PTSD, chronic pain, or a chronic physical health condition in adults.  
<http://www.mindspot.org.au/>

#### e-Couch

A free self-help program with modules for depression, generalised anxiety & worry, social anxiety, relationship breakdown, and loss & grief.  
<https://ecouch.com.au/>

#### This Way Up 'Insomnia'

Online, self-guided CBT programs for sleep and other issues. Own clinician assisted option available.  
<http://www.thiswayup.org.au/programs/>

#### Centre for Clinical Interventions 'Sleep'

Self-help workbooks for a range of mental health issues and audio files guiding you through relaxation techniques.  
<http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/looking-after-yourself>

## Phone Services

#### Beyond Blue

Information, moderated forums, and phone and online counselling for a range of mental health issues.  
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/> 1300 22 4636

#### Open Arms

Interactive online Healthy Sleeping Tool and 24hr crisis support for Australian veterans and their families.  
<https://www.openarms.gov.au/> 1800 011 046

#### Headspace

Factsheets, moderated forums, and phone/email/online chat for young people (12-25 yrs) experiencing a range of issues.  
[headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)  
1800 650 890

#### New Access

Assessment and up to five face-to-face or phone/video sessions with a NewAccess coach to help tackle everyday pressures.  
<http://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess>

## Apps

#### Smiling Mind

A website and app teaching mindfulness meditation to young people (7-22 yrs), and adults.  
<http://www.smilingmind.com.au>

#### ReachOut Worry Time

An app to help control everyday stress and anxiety by giving you a place to store worries, and alerting you when it's time to think about them.  
Available on Apple Store and Google Play

#### High Res

An eToolbox and app to help ex-serving ADF members and their families cope with stress, build resilience and bounce back.  
<https://www.openarms.gov.au/resources/apps-and-online-resources/high-res-app>

#### Sleep Ninja

A free app helping young people aged 12 - 16 yrs with sleep problems improve their sleep.  
<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/resources-support/digital-tools-apps/sleep-ninja/>

## Key



Service appropriate for children, young people or parents.