

Sleep and mental health

How Able Futures could help if you are experiencing issues with sleep



Hello everyone. I'm Tess. I am the Marketing Manager for Able Futures.

We deliver the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions and we support people in England, Scotland and Wales who may be experiencing issues that are affecting their mental health at work. Some of the people we support are experiencing problems with sleep.

In this session

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1. Sleep and mental health
2. Sleep problems
3. Developing a good sleep routine
4. How Able Futures can support you and your staff if you are experiencing problems with sleep
5. Your questions about sleep and mental health at work

This webinar will feature some videos from one of our Vocational Rehabilitation Consultants Amelia Montague Rendall which have been created to explain:

1. how sleep and mental health are connected,
2. why problems with sleep can affect how we feel and function
3. what we can do to help ourselves sleep better and develop a good sleep routine

And I'll also explain more about how Able Futures can support you and your staff if you are experiencing problems with sleep. And finally I'll let you know how you can ask us questions about sleep or other issues that might be affecting your mental health at work and get in touch with us.

Sleep and mental health



Sleep is as essential to our bodies and our brains as eating, drinking and breathing.

We can all experience issues getting a good night's sleep and struggle to feel well if we have sleep problems.

Our mental health can be affected if we don't get the sleep we need, and mental health problems can sometimes make it more difficult to get good sleep. In this short video our VRC Amelia explains how sleep and mental health are connected.

Video begins: <https://youtu.be/RVWfPR65Gpk>

While we are asleep our brains remain busy - they're doing vital work to restore themselves and process information about what's happened to us. So how we sleep can have a huge impact on our mental health.

There's a reason why we sleep for around a third of our lives - sleep is essential for our brain and our body to recover and have the skills and strength we need to cope with whatever the next day throws at us.

Our brains work differently while they're asleep. Some genes that trigger our brains and body to restore themselves are only turned on when we're asleep.

So if we have a disrupted sleep pattern it can be difficult to recover the energy we need to feel good during the day.

Sleep is also important to learning and memory. When we're asleep our brains have a chance to understand what has happened to us at work, at home, when we're studying or having fun. Whatever we've been through that day, when we go to sleep the information we've interacted with is processed differently by our sleeping brain and if we don't sleep well then our memories and learning can be affected.

To find out more about how sleep and other things like stress, what we eat and drink and our physical health can affect our mental health visit the Able Futures website.

Or call Able Futures on 0800 321 3137 to apply for support from a mental health specialist who can give you advice and guidance when anything is affecting your mental health.

Problems with sleep



It isn't always possible to sleep well. Are you experiencing sleep problems?

- How do you find a bad night's sleep affects how you feel the next day?
- If you have not had enough sleep do you find your mind is less able to control irrational or negative thoughts?
- If you are tired does this make you feel more isolated and lonely?
- Do you feel anxious with thoughts racing through your mind when you try to get sleep?

These are just a few of the problems with sleep that our VRC Amelia talks about in this next video, and she also explains a little bit about why our brains and bodies, feelings and behaviours are affected by how we sleep.

Video begins: <https://youtu.be/4USvySkVN4g>

Insomnia affects about 1 in 5 people. It can mean you have problems falling asleep, staying asleep and that you wake up too early. Insomnia can be a short term thing, maybe triggered by stress, problems with your environment like a bedroom that's too hot or too cold, not getting enough exercise, eating too much or too little, consuming caffeine before you go to sleep or other everyday issues.

But insomnia can also be chronic, lasting for weeks or months, and this could be triggered by unaddressed emotional problems, difficulties at work, anxiety, stress, depression, physical health problems such as heart disease or gut diseases, or medications.

Sleep walking, night terrors, sleep apnoea, restless leg syndrome and sleep disruptions like shift work are some other things that can disturb your sleep, and affect your mental wellbeing.

Sleep is crucial if we want to be able to function well, but we can all have nights when we find it difficult to get to sleep or stay asleep. And sometimes sleeping problems can become the norm and we find our physical and mental health can suffer.

Sleep and mental health affect one another. If you're having trouble sleeping it might be a sign of a mental health problem or if you're having trouble sleeping it could be causing some issues for your mental and physical health.

To find out more about how Able Futures could help you address problems with sleep and other issues like stress, anxiety or depression visit the Able Futures website.

Or call Able Futures on 0800 321 3137 to apply for support from a mental health specialist who can give you advice and guidance when anything is affecting your mental health.

Tips for getting good sleep



In this last video clip, Amelia runs through some ideas that could help you establish a routine that could make it more likely you'll get some good sleep.

Video begins: <https://youtu.be/Kiwe8X-vb2M>

A good night's sleep gives our brain and bodies time to recover and regenerate. It's as vital to our wellbeing as eating, drinking and breathing so it's important we try to give ourselves a chance to sleep well.

Here are some things you can do to try to help yourself sleep better.

Make your bedroom a comfortable space. Use soft sheets and comfortable pillows on your bed. Put up curtains or blinds to block out sunlight if it wakes you up. Maybe try some earplugs.

Try giving your body a little more to do every day so it will feel more tired and in need of sleep when you go to bed. Get some exercise at least 3 hours before you go to bed but start unwinding by doing relaxing activities in the 3 hours before you lie down to sleep. During the daytime make sure you spend some time outside in daylight (even if the weather is grey) to help your body process the melatonin it needs.

Avoid caffeine before bed. Drink herbal teas or a hot milky drink in the evenings and stop drinking caffeine in mid-afternoon.

Turn off your technology before you go into the bedroom. The blue light from the digital screens on your mobile phones, TV, computer or tablet can suppress the creation of the hormone melatonin which your brain needs for the natural sleep cycle.

Try to go to sleep and wake up at about the same time each day. It may feel like a treat to stay up later on a weekend, or have a lie-in on days you're not at work, but your brain can help you sleep better if you have a routine time to try to sleep and wake up every day.

If you can't sleep, get up and try to do something relaxing instead of worrying about not being able to sleep. Listen to some music or an audiobook, have a bath or read a book.

For more tips on how getting a good sleep can help you feel well, visit the Able Futures website.

Or call Able Futures on 0800 321 3137 to talk to a mental health specialist who can support you if you're having problems with sleep or other mental health issues.

Support available from Able Futures

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Able Futures delivers the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service in England, Scotland and Wales, on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The aim of Able Futures is to help individuals learn ways to cope with mental health challenges and move forward to a more enjoyable future.



Personalised advice and support



Nine months of regular catch ups



Resources, guidance and signposting



No cost



Confidential

So, how can Able Futures help your staff when they are experiencing problems with sleep or other issues that may be affecting their mental health at work?

We run the Access To Work Mental Health Support Service on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions, which means they fund nine months of advice, guidance and supported self-help to individuals who struggle in the workplace due to their mental health.

If you have staff who are struggling to sleep or who have other issues that are affecting their mental health then please do encourage them to contact Able Futures.

We can help individuals identify what may be triggering their issues and our Vocational Rehabilitation Consultants will work with them to build a bespoke support plan that will help them learn new skills, build coping mechanisms and feel able to have more good days in the future.

People are able to self-refer to the service and then have monthly appointments with a VRC to develop an individual support plan that is specifically targeted to their needs.

There are many subjects which may be affecting people's mental health that Able Futures could help with – things like coping with how Covid 19 has changed our lives, or anxiety, depression, stress, or many more.

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Get in touch

Freephone 0800 321 3137 | www.able-futures.co.uk

Department for Work & Pensions

Able Futures is a nationwide partnership led by Ingenius UK Ltd delivering the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

If you have any questions about sleep and mental health at work, or how Able Futures could support you and your staff, please get in touch with us by calling 0800 321 3137, visiting www.able-futures.co.uk or by emailing admin@able-futures.co.uk

Thank you for watching this webinar. You can watch the videos again on the Able Futures YouTube Channel or by visiting www.able-futures.co.uk/sleep