

How can I help myself?

- ✓ Do try to go to bed at a reasonable time
- ✓ Relax before you go to bed
- ✓ Learn some relaxation techniques
- ✓ Practice/use the relaxation techniques that work best for you
- ✓ Get into a routine before going to bed
- ✓ Try writing your problems down to stop thinking about them when you are in bed – do this early evening, then you can put the paper away and forget about it until another day
- ✗ Do not exercise just before going to bed – this will wake you up
- ✗ Do not smoke, drink alcohol or coffee before going to bed
- ✗ Do not worry about getting enough sleep
- ✗ Do not sleep during the day

What else can I do?

- Exercise
 - Helps you sleep better
 - Helps relax your muscles

You don't have to do a sport, a 30 minute walk a day is fine
- Keep yourself busy
 - Takes your mind off things
 - Helps you sleep
- Eat healthily
 - Try to eat plenty of fruit & vegetables
 - Try to eat regular meals
 - Keeps your energy levels up
 - Keeps you well
- Do things that relax you
 - Have a warm bath before bed
 - Listen to music
 - Read a book
 - Have a warm milky drink before going to bed
- Make sure your surroundings are right for you
 - Too noisy or too quiet?
 - Too hot or too cold?
 - Light on or off?
 - Bed near a window or away from the window?

Having nightmares?

You may have nightmares if you are:

- Stressed, Anxious, Depressed
- Recovering from or have seen a traumatic event

Nightmares can be a normal reaction to how you feel. By following some of the tips in this guide they may reduce or eventually stop altogether.

Your mind may use nightmares to deal with how you are feeling. It is important to try and deal with your problems rather than avoid them. For example by using drugs or drinking too much alcohol

When you have a nightmare:

- ~ **put the light on, read for a while, get up for a few minutes**
- ~ Use a relaxation technique to help you get back to sleep
- ~ Try putting the radio or TV on when you go back to bed. This will take your mind off the nightmare you just had.
- ~ Think positive, remind yourself that it is a dream and it isn't really happening. Use words like "I survived" or "I am Safe now"
- ~ If the nightmares are very frightening and you are unable to sleep, let your doctor know. The doctor can get you help

Try this relaxation technique

- Get yourself comfortable either by sitting or lying down somewhere quiet, if you wish, close your eyes
- Become aware of your breathing, its rhythm, depth or shallowness, and its speed.
- Put one hand on your upper chest and one just below your ribs on your belly button.
- Slowly let out your breath.
- Gently breathe in, so that you feel your chest rise slowly under your hand.
- Breathe out again, feeling your chest fall, and make sure you breathe out a little longer than normal
- Pause for a few moments and then repeat the process again.

Or try this one:

- Get yourself comfortable either by sitting or lying down somewhere quiet, if you wish, close your eyes
- Breathe in through your nose slowly
- Breathe out through your mouth slowly
- Do this 5 times
- Curl up your toes really tight and count to 5, now release slowly. Try this again
- This time make a tight fist with both hands and count to 5, now release slowly. Try this again
- Try lifting your shoulders up to your ears as high as you can and count to 5, release slowly. Try this again
- Finally squeeze your face as tight as you can (squeeze your eyes, mouth and nose shut) and count to 5, now release slowly. Try this again

Feeling relaxed?

To make best use of these techniques you need to:

- Practice everyday
- Use the techniques in stressful situations
- Learn to relax your muscles without having to tense them first

Facts about sleep

- How much sleep you need changes as you get older
- People can survive on less than 5 hours sleep
- Losing a nights sleep will not cause you damage
- Tiredness is not always just because you didn't sleep, it can be because of other difficulties like stress or depression
- Worrying about not sleeping can make your sleep worse

AS A REFUGEE

- You may have seen or been involved in traumatic events that have brought you to this country.
- The process of seeking asylum and adapting to living in a new country can be very stressful.

Therefore having sleep problems can be a normal reaction to what you are currently feeling and going through. However if your day to day living is being affected enough to make you worry even more then it is important that you seek help.

Sleep Problems

Advice for Refugees

We would like to acknowledge that other cultures have different ways of dealing with Mental Health issues. The purpose of this leaflet is to provide some of the information that may help you to deal with difficulties you may be having. If symptoms persist please consult your doctor

