

THE ART OF SLEEP: UNLOCKING MENTAL WELLNESS FOR OLDER ADULTS



Did you know improving your sleep quality can greatly enhance your mental health as you age?

As we grow older, quality sleep becomes even more vital for our overall well-being. A good night's sleep helps your brain process emotions, thoughts, and memories, supports cognitive functions, and boosts your mood. Conversely, poor sleep can impair emotional regulation, make handling stress more challenging, and even increase the risk of depression or anxiety.

Research indicates that nearly one-third of adults struggle to achieve the recommended seven hours of sleep each night. A CDC study found that adults sleeping six hours or less were two and a half times more likely to experience mental distress than those sleeping more than six hours. The good news? Small changes in your daily habits can significantly improve your sleep quality and, in turn, your mental health. Here are some helpful strategies:

Check out the next page to learn helpful strategies to improve your sleep.

INTERVENTIONS FOR IMPROVED SLEEP

1. Adopt Healthy Daily Habits.

- Spend time outdoors to soak up natural sunlight, which supports your body's internal clock.
- Stay physically active to promote better rest at night.
- Limit late-night snacks and reduce caffeine intake, particularly in the afternoon.

2. Create a Calming Nightly Routine.

- Dedicate 30 to 60 minutes before bed to unwind with activities like reading, gentle stretches, or deep breathing.
- Avoid screens during this time to prevent blue light from disrupting your sleep cycle.
- Use dim lighting to signal to your brain that it's time to relax.

3. Optimize Your Sleep Environment.

- Make your bedroom a sanctuary by keeping it quiet, dark, and at a comfortable temperature.
- Invest in a supportive mattress and pillows, and remove distractions like TVs or smartphones.
- Cultivate a sense of safety and tranquility in your sleep space.

4. Stick to a Regular Sleep Schedule.

- Wake up and go to bed at the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Limit long naps during the day to avoid disrupting your nighttime rest.

While there are some commonalities between all of us when it comes to sleep, the perfect combination of these common factors is unique to the individual, so it may take several attempts to determine what healthy sleep habits work best for you.

Remember, finding the best sleep habits takes time and experimentation, as everyone's needs are unique. By committing to small changes and prioritizing your rest, you can reap the mental health benefits of better sleep and enjoy a healthier, happier mind as you age.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health challenges, we encourage you to connect with a reputable mental healthcare provider and see how treatment may benefit you. Connect with your provider or reach out to a member of our team today. We are here to help.

Sources: Sleep Foundation

WE CAN HELP.

Our outpatient program is designed to meet the unique needs of older adults experiencing depression and/or anxiety related to life changes that are often associated with aging. Anyone can make a referral to our program, including self-referrals, provider referrals, or community referrals.

Call us today at