Haringey Educational Psychology Service

Tips for helping teens with sleep

With schools closed, it can be very hard for teens to keep to a regular routine and this can easily affect sleep patterns.

When teens reach puberty, their sleep pattern often shifts up to 2 hours later and they are often no longer tired at the time they used to be (eg. 8/9pm). In addition, based on the current situation (being at home all the time) it is likely that they are going to bed and getting up later than they were before.
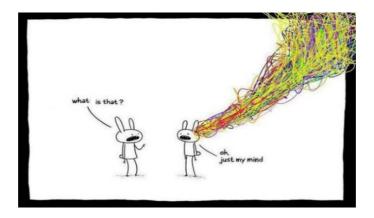
DID YOU KNOW?
- ➢ Teens need exposure to light in the day-time more than ANY other age group – they are the age group that are most responsive to the release of the melatonin (the sleepy hormone which makes us tired at night-time) and the most melatonin is released if they get daylight in the morning
- ➢ They typically need 8.5-9.5 hours sleep per night
- ➢ Things that can release melatonin: dimming lights at night, warm bath
- ➢ Things that stop melatonin from being released: screens
- ➢ Caffeine stays in your system for up to 6 hours
- ➢ Alcohol often makes you fall asleep easily but disrupts your sleep

Some key TIPS for teens….

- ➢ **LIGHT:** get out into the natural light as much as possible
- ➢ **EXERCISE** but not near to bed-time
- ➢ **AVOID caffeine (and alcohol!)** well before bed-time
- ➢ **TIMINGS** make a huge difference to sleep – if you are having trouble with sleep, try your best to keep the timings of going to bed and getting up the same (or at least within an hour) in the week and the weekends
- ➢ **SCREENS:** no screens an hour before bed and move your phone to another room
- ➢ **ROUTINE:** create the same relaxing bed-time routine daily (no more than half an hour before going to bed) eg. bath, low lights, reading
- ➢ **AVOID** napping during the day

BUT I CAN'T GET TO SLEEP?

KEY TIPS

➢ If you generally can't get to sleep at night **DON'T** get into the habit of going to bed earlier than you usually do, lying in bed for hours hoping that an early night will make you fall asleep… if you want to make your bed-time earlier, gradually reduce your bed-time every 15 minutes (every 3 days)

➢ If you can't sleep, **DO** an activity like reading or drawing until you get to the point of yawning or feeling slightly tired or sleepy again… then try and sleep

➢ **DO** become aware of thoughts and label them then let them drift off rather than fighting them or pushing them away eg. **I'm aware I'm having** the thought 'I will never fall asleep and tomorrow is ruined'…