

Sleep difficulties: GP information sheet

Many people go through times when sleep feels harder to come by. Nights might feel long, and days could feel more tiring as a result. Sleep difficulties are common, and support is available.

About this sheet. We have written this sheet as psychologists, in the hope that GPs may find some of it useful. It offers general information only and is not a clinical tool.

How it may show up in everyday life

Some people, or the people close to them, may notice things like these. They can look quite different from one person to the next.

At night

- Falling asleep might take a while
- People may wake and lie awake
- Thoughts could feel busy

In the morning

- People might wake earlier than hoped
- Getting going could feel slow
- Sleep may not feel refreshing

During the day

- Energy might feel low
- Concentration may drift
- Patience could feel shorter

At work or study

- Busy days might feel harder
- Some tasks could take longer
- People may feel less like themselves

Around bedtime

- Bed might start to feel unsettling
- People may worry about the night ahead
- Routines could become irregular

In relationships

- Partners might notice restlessness
- Plans may feel harder to keep
- Loved ones could want to help

What the person might be bringing

People may have been living with tiredness for some time. They might feel frustrated, worn down, or unsure whether their sleep is worth raising.

A warm, curious conversation may help it feel easier to talk. Feeling heard can be a meaningful first step.

What GPs **already do well**

Opening gently

GPs are often the first person someone mentions their sleep to. A calm, gentle opening can help people share what their nights and days are like.

Listening to the story

GPs often know the person, and sometimes their family, over many years. That wider view of someone's life can be very valuable.

A steady point of contact

GPs can offer a calm, familiar presence as people explore their options, working alongside other professionals.

Seeing the whole person

GPs often hold the bigger picture of someone's health and wellbeing, which can be very reassuring.

What psychology **may offer**

Understanding

- Time to make sense of sleep patterns
- Learning about how sleep and worry connect
- Recognising strengths as well as challenges
- A safe space to talk

Practical support

- Gentle ideas for settling the mind
- Approaches that focus on sleep habits
- Online programs, where they suit
- Working alongside the GP and other professionals

Everyday things **some people find helpful**

These are simply possibilities. What helps one person may not suit another.

- A regular wake up time
- A wind down period before bed
- Dimmer light in the evening
- Less caffeine later in the day
- Time outdoors in daylight
- Being patient with themselves

Trusted **Australian resources**

Sleep Health Foundation sleephealthfoundation.org.au

THIS WAY UP thiswayup.org.au

Medicare Mental Health 1800 595 212

Referring to **Strategic Psychology**

Our psychologists work with children, adolescents and adults. If a client would like to see one of our team, they can call us on 02 6262 6157 or visit strategicpsychology.com.au. Medicare rebates may be available with a GP referral.

This sheet offers general information for GPs to consider. It does not replace clinical judgement.