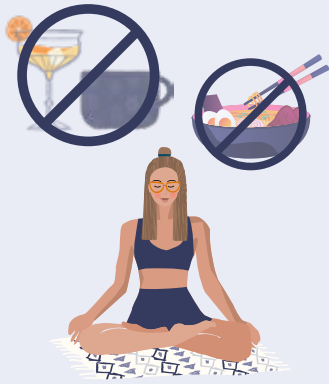


# Sleep and mental health: It's all connected

This Mental Health Awareness Month, we're thinking about the cycle of sleep and mental health. One of the basic tenets of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is that your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors all influence each other. This concept applies to many different situations in life, but it can also be a helpful way of thinking about our sleep habits.

We know that one behavior can quickly lead to another. Maybe you're having a bad day at work and dealing with a lot of negative thoughts. When you finally get home, you feel so overwhelmed that you decide not to hang out with your friends. When it's time for bed, you start to feel sad about missing time with your friends, and you stay up late worrying. The next day, you feel extra exhausted. And so the cycle continues.

If this sounds familiar, worry not! Here's how you can break the cycle and strike a harmonious balance between your sleep and mental health.



## Make sleep a priority.

If you're extra busy with work or other responsibilities, sleep might feel like the very last thing on your to-do list. But ensuring that you're getting enough sleep can help give you the energy and mental clarity you need to tackle tasks more efficiently while you're awake. After all, sleep is essential for learning, memory, and other key brain functions.

### Do you struggle to fall asleep? Try these:

- Avoid heavy meals, alcohol, and caffeine 3-4 hours before bed to reduce your chances of tossing and turning.
- Practice deep breathing techniques to slow a racing mind or reduce anxiety.
- If you find yourself still awake after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do a simple task (such as folding laundry or light stretching) before laying back down to try again.



## Spot the signs.

Sleep disturbances can negatively impact your mood, and high levels of stress and anxiety can make it difficult to sleep. When either your mental health or sleep is off-balance, your whole world can feel topsy-turvy. Pay attention to when you're consistently not getting enough sleep (less than 7 hours for adults) or having trouble getting through the day due to stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns.



## Don't be afraid to ask for help.

You don't have to do it all on your own. Reach out to loved ones, doctors, and mental health professionals who can help you troubleshoot your sleep and your mental health. SleepCharge can connect you to whole-person care.

### Take the Sleep Checkup to get started.

To learn more go to [sleepcharge.com/ascip](https://sleepcharge.com/ascip) or scan the QR code.

