WHY IS SLEEP IMPORTANT TO ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

Sleep is essential to academic success. Sleep affects your brain, emotional functioning, health, and safety.

Inefficient sleep can cause stress, difficulty concentrating, and the inability to accomplish daily tasks. Sleep deprivation can impair memory, learning and logical reasoning, lead to mistakes at school or work and overreacting to minor irritations. Not sleeping can negatively impact personal relationships.

CAFFEINE, ALCOHOL, AND SLEEP

Caffeine, stress, alcohol and drugs interfere with your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep.

Caffeine is a stimulant (found in soda, tea, chocolate and some prescription medications), which can make you jumpy and disturb your ability to fall asleep even hours after consumption.

People think of alcohol as relaxing, but it inhibits cognitive and physical performance. Alcohol interferes with the deepest sleep cycles, REM sleep, which is when our bodies rejuvenate.

TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT’S SLEEP

DO

• Try to keep a fixed time daily for waking up, and bedtime.
• Remove tablets and smartphones from your bedroom. Turn alarms away from the bed.
• If you wake up at night, relax in bed for a while. If necessary, get up and do a quiet activity until you’re ready to go back to sleep.
• Complete workouts hours before bedtime.
• Limit caffeine, alcohol, smoking, heavy/spicy food, as all can interfere with sleep quality.
• Reserve your bed for sleeping and sex.
• Make sure your room is dark, quiet, and cool.
• Try muscle relaxation, meditation, and/or deep breathing techniques.

DON’T

• Go to sleep unless you are tired. Delay your bedtime until you are ready to fall asleep.
• Read, watch TV, eat, study, use your tablet or smartphone in bed.
• Stay in bed if you aren’t asleep after 30 minutes. Get up and do something relaxing until you feel tired.
• Exercise close to bedtime.
• Drink caffeine-containing beverages after dinner.
• Take naps in the late afternoon or evening or for more than 30 minutes at any time.
• Eat a large meal right before bedtime.

WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

Try the above advice for a week before giving up. If you still can’t fall asleep or stay asleep, despite these efforts, you may need professional help. CALL OR STOP BY CAPS.

SLEEP PROBLEMS

Reasons for poor sleep include inadequate environmental comfort (mattress, light, room temperature), medical problems (such as sleep apnea) and psychological problems (including depression and anxiety). Shifts in circadian rhythms also affect sleep.

Sleep needs differ per person. On average, a healthy adult needs approximately 8 hours of sleep each night, which can be challenging for college students.

Most college students have erratic schedules, go to sleep late and wake up late, disrupting the normal sleep cycle. Students also report using weekends to "make up" for sleep lost during the week. These disruptions can impair academic performance.

ARE SLEEP ISSUES A PROBLEM in your life?

• Do you feel sleepy throughout the day?
• Do you take naps consistently in the week?
• Do you repeatedly have difficulty waking up?
• Do you have ongoing difficulties staying awake during lectures?
• Do you typically feel tired and lethargic?

RESOURCES

CAPPs (including nights/weekends & over CAPPs can also assist) 215-896-7021
OFFICE OF THE CHAPLAIN 215-896-8456
HELP LINE 215-896-HELP (4357)
RAP LINE (Reach A Peer, 9PM – 1AM) 215-573-2897 (2727)
SPECIAL SERVICES 215-896-6600
STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE 215-746-3535
OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR UNIVERSITY LIFE/ STUDENT INTERVENTION SERVICES 215-573-2935
WEARINGHAM LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER 215-573-9235

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