



WASHINGTON HEALTH SYSTEM
Center for Mental Health and Wellbeing

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



Better Sleep

Sleep may seem like a waste of time. You could instead be answering email, doing the dishes, repairing the deck, or decking the halls. But research shows that you're more likely to succeed at your tasks—and enjoy greater well-being—if you get some serious shut-eye.

Of course, it's not easy to sleep when you're feeling overwhelmed. In fact, nearly two-thirds of Americans say they lose sleep because of stress. That's especially unfortunate because sleep combats some of the fallout of stress, and poor sleep has been linked to significant problems, including:

- greater risk of depression and anxiety
- increased risk of heart disease and cancer
- impaired memory
- reduced immune system functioning
- weight gain
- greater likelihood of accidents

Are You Getting Enough Rest?

Experts suggest that adults get seven to nine hours of sleep a night. Everyone is different, though, and you may need more after a few days of burning the midnight (or 2 a.m.) oil.

To assess your sleep deficit, ask yourself:

- Am I often tired?
- Am I using caffeine to get through the day?
- Do I sleep well?
- Do I wake up feeling refreshed?
- Do I get drowsy while driving or watching TV?
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To sleep longer—and better—consider these suggestions:

- **Set a regular bedtime.** Your body craves consistency, plus you're more likely to get enough sleep if you schedule rest like your other important tasks.
- **De-caffeinate yourself.** Drinking caffeine to stay awake during the day can keep you up at night. Try resisting the coffee and colas starting six to eight hours before bed.
- **De-stress yourself.** Relax by taking a hot bath, meditating or envisioning a soothing scene while lying in bed. Turn off daytime worries by finishing any next-day preparations about an hour before bed.
- **Exercise.** Working out can improve sleep in lots of ways, including by relieving muscle tension. Don't work out right before bed, though, since exercise may make you more alert. If you like, try gentle upper-body stretches to help transition into sleep.
- **Make your bed a sleep haven.** No paying bills or writing reports in bed. Also, if you can't fall asleep after 15 minutes you can try some soothing music, but if you remain alert experts recommend getting up until you feel more tired.

For additional sleep guidelines, see the National Sleep Foundation's [website](#). (But no computer right before bedtime!) To read the full article and get the statistical data and graphs, please visit: [Get Enough Sleep | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#)

March
2024



Week

Brain Awareness Week
(Mar. 11th – 17th)

National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week
(Mar. 18th – 24th)

LGBTQ Health Awareness Week
(Mar. 20th – 24th)

National Sleep Awareness Week
(Mar. 20th – 24th)

Day

World Sleep Day
(Mar. 15th)

Self-Injury Awareness Day
(Mar. 1st)

World Bipolar Day
(Mar. 30th)

To learn more visit: [2024-National-Observances.pdf \(mhanational.org\)](#)



March is National Social Work Month!

If you know a social worker (or are one yourself), you might agree a month isn't long enough to recognize the social work profession and what social workers do.

Social Work Month is in March each year and National Social Work Day is always on the third Tuesday of March.

Social Workers play a pivotal role in offering essential support, guidance and care to those in need, especially Mental Health!

LGBTQ + Communities and Mental Health

Everyone has a sexual orientation and gender identity. Sexual orientation is who you are romantically or physically attracted to. Gender identity is the internal sense of being male, female, both or neither, which is separate from your biological sex. People who have a different sexual orientation or gender identity from most people fall under the umbrella term LGBTQ+. It is really important to know that identifying as LGBTQ+ is **NOT** a mental illness or disorder.

Although being LGBTQ+ is absolutely not a mental illness, many LGBTQ+ people experience mental health struggles. The bisexual and transgender communities have the highest rates of mental health concerns within the LGBTQ+ population. Younger members of the LGBTQ+ community struggle the most with mental health concerns of all the age groups.

Most LGBTQ+ individuals are incredibly resilient and will thrive in the face of adversity, with the help of supportive families, communities, and peers. One study even found that LGBTQ+ people used mental health services at 2.5 times higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts. [1] However, they are also at particular risk for experiencing shame, fear, discrimination, and adverse and traumatic events.

Also, many people who identify as LGBTQ+ are part of second (and sometimes third or more) community that is marginalized. Examples of these groups are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or People of Color), people with a physical disability, people practicing a religion different than their neighbors, and people with low socioeconomic status. These people have complex experiences that cannot be easily addressed in one area of their life.

There are many negative stereotypes about being LGBTQ+ which makes many uncomfortable letting people know this important part of their identity. When people do openly express this part of themselves, they face the potential of rejection from peers, colleagues, and friends can exacerbate feelings of loneliness.

To read the full article and get the statistical data and graphs, please visit: [LGBTQ+ Communities and Mental Health | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](http://www.mhanational.org/LGBTQ+CommunitiesandMentalHealth)

Thank You!
😊

Dear Valued Referral Sources,

Wherever you go and whatever you do, may the luck of the Irish be there with you. Thank you for your continued support and referrals.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Campbell, MSW, LSW

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Greene County Crisis Line: 1-800-417-9460

Washington County 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 1-877-225-3567

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

Greenbriar Treatment Facility: 1-800-637-4673

SPHS, Center of Excellence Opiate Use Disorder Hotline: 1-888-810-8595

STTARS Sexual Assault Hotline (Greene & Washington): 1-888-480-7283