



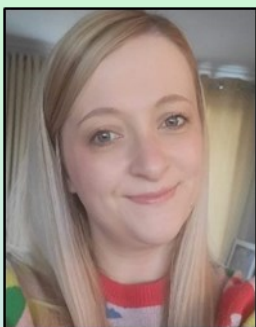
Sleep

Welcome back after the Christmas break! I think both students and staff can agree that it can be quite difficult to get back into a routine again following a period of time away from college—especially a good sleep routine!

Mental health and sleep are strongly linked. Those with mental health problems often have difficulty sleeping, but sleep problems can also cause low mood and make mental health symptoms worse. Sleep is important, it revitalises us and prepares us for the day ahead. However many of us experience poor sleep at one point or another in our lives. There are many different ways in which our sleep can be affected—it might be not getting enough sleep, finding it hard to drift off, waking frequently, sleeping excessively (and not feeling refreshed) or just having poor quality, light sleep; or a whole mix of all of this and more.

This newsletter aims to support you with strategies to help to improve your sleep quality and sleep hygiene and offer some helpful and interesting facts too. If you need any further support you can get in touch with the TRConnect team.

The TRConnect Team



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Sleep and your mental health

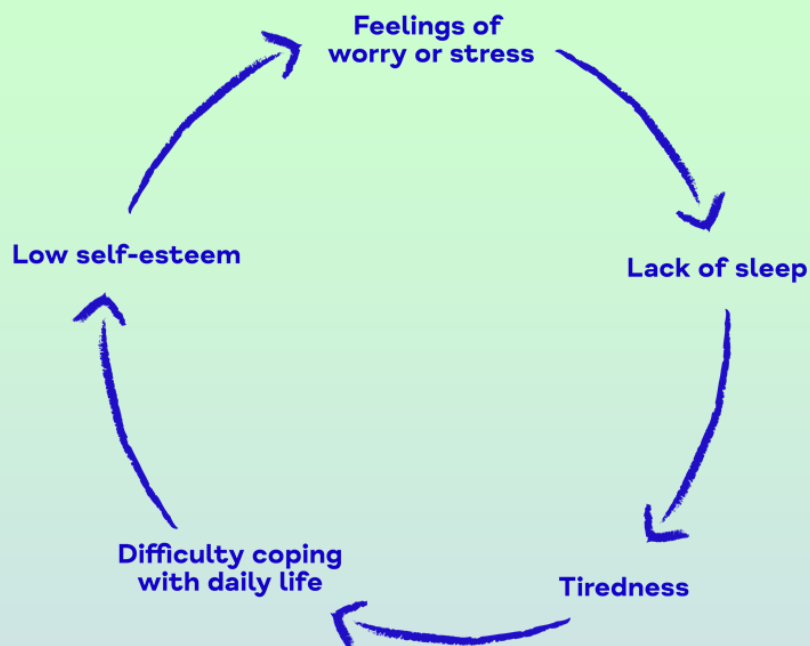
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There's a close relationship between sleep and mental health. Living with a mental health problem can affect how well you sleep, and poor sleep can have a negative impact on your mental health.

If you're having problems sleeping, you might:

- be more likely to feel anxious or depressed.
- feel lonely or isolated – for example, if you don't have the energy to see people or they don't seem to understand.
- struggle to concentrate, or make plans and decisions.
- feel irritable or not have energy to do things.
- have problems with day to day life – for example, at work or with family and friends
- be more affected by other health problems, including mental health problems.

Adhering to sleep hygiene practices can improve sleep quality and mental well-being.



Poor sleep leads to worrying. Worrying leads to poor sleep. Worrying about sleep is like your mind trying to fight itself. That's a horrible place to be.



Sleep Hygiene

Tips for a better night's sleep

Set a schedule

For a better night's rest, make a habit of going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Sleeping in is tempting, but can throw off your schedule.

Avoid caffeine later in the day

Caffeine—even decaf coffee—can stay in the body for up to 10 hours, and can negatively impact your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep.

Avoid napping

Napping during the day can make sleep more difficult at night. Naps over an hour long or later in the day are especially harmful to sleep hygiene.

Use your bed only for sleep

When your body associates your bed with calming activities, you're more likely to feel tired when you lie down. Using your phone, eating, or working in bed can have the opposite effect, causing your body to associate your bed with wakefulness or even stress.

Make your bedroom comfortable

Ensure your room is adequately quiet, cool, and dark. Use whatever you need to achieve this (eye mask, fan, white noise, thick curtains, etc.).

Turn off screens

The blue light emitted by phones, computers, TVs, and other screens can disrupt the body's natural sleep rhythm, and make you feel more awake. An hour before going to bed, switch to screenless activities.

Don't force yourself to sleep

If you haven't fallen asleep after 20 minutes, get out of bed and do something calming, like reading, journaling, or drawing. But remember, avoid screens and anything stimulating.

Eat your fruits and vegetable

Research shows that a balanced and varied diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat proteins can improve sleep.

Start your day positively

Start with sleep.

Make sleep a priority.

Even when life gets busy, don't sacrifice your sleep. A good night's rest will make your morning much easier.

Practice sleep hygiene.

Exercise regularly, avoid caffeine at night, power down electronics an hour before bedtime, and do a calming activity (reading a book, journaling) before going to bed.

Stay on schedule.

Though it's tempting to sleep in, keep a consistent bedtime and wakeup time, *even on weekends*.

Rise and shine.

Wake up to good music or a pleasant alarm sound.

Research has shown it is better to wake up to sounds that make you feel good, rather than startled.

Don't hit snooze.

Set your alarm before bed, then put it out of arm's reach. When you wake up in the morning, stay up! Interrupted sleep isn't as restorative anyway.

"Feet on the floor."

As soon as you wake up, get out of bed! Try using the mantra "*Feet on the floor.*" This will help you avoid rolling over for a few extra minutes of sleep.

Let in natural light.

Getting some sunshine in the morning will help you feel more awake. Open the curtains before you go to bed, or step outside for a few minutes before starting your morning routine.

Make your mornings pleasant.

Wake up earlier.

It might seem counterintuitive, but waking up *earlier* may be one of the keys to waking up *better*. Having more time will let you move calmly and peacefully through your morning, rather than rushing.

Have something to look forward to.

Find something that will motivate you to get up and get going in the morning. It might be as simple as a good cup of coffee or a new podcast for your morning commute.

Eat a good breakfast.

Consistently eating a healthy breakfast can help you feel more alert in the mornings, and may even put you in a better mood.

Sleep and exercise

Exercising regularly helps us to fall asleep and have deeper, better quality sleep. The best time to exercise is the morning or afternoon; for lots of us exercising too close to bedtime can disrupt sleep. The advice to improve sleep quality is to do around 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise a week (that sounds like a lot, but its actually only 30 minutes 5 times a week!).

If you think that you would like to start exercising, the Sports Centre is open to all students and membership is £50 for an unlimited yearly membership or £10 for term time only membership. Your parent or guardian must complete the relevant online membership agreements and give consent for students to attend the gym. Opening times are displayed in the Sports Centre or you can find more information at www.inspirelearningtrust.uk/inspire-sports/ or you can call [01709 300700](tel:01709300700) or email sports@trc.ac.uk.

Exercise to Improve Sleep

Find the Best Time of Day for Your Workout Routine.



Aerobic or resistance exercise in the morning
may stimulate earlier melatonin release in the evening.



High-intensity exercise in the afternoon
may promote sound sleep by reducing wakefulness.



Light resistance or aerobic exercise in the evening
may help reduce nighttime awakenings.

Sleep Diary: Morning

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Day of the week:						
I went to bed at:						
AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM
I woke up at:						
AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM	AM / PM
Last night, I slept for ___ hours:						
Last night, it took me about ___ minutes to fall asleep:						
I felt that the quality of my sleep was: e.g. very good, good, bad, very bad						
This morning, I feel: e.g. refreshed, tired, groggy, alert						
My sleep was made more difficult by: e.g. temperature, noise, dreams, thoughts, not feeling tired, discomfort						
During the night, I woke up ___ times:						

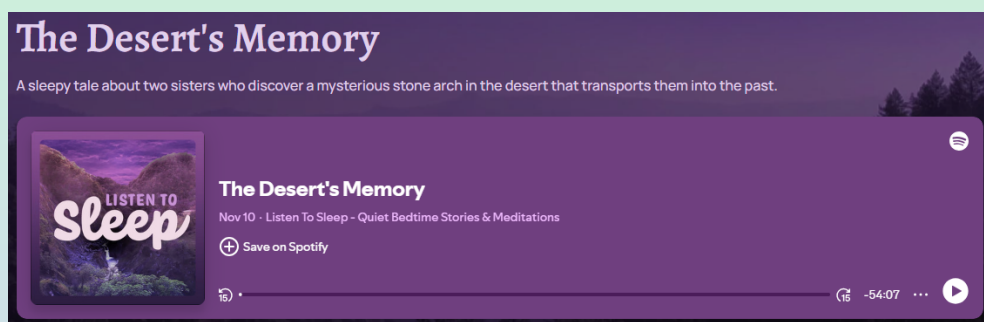
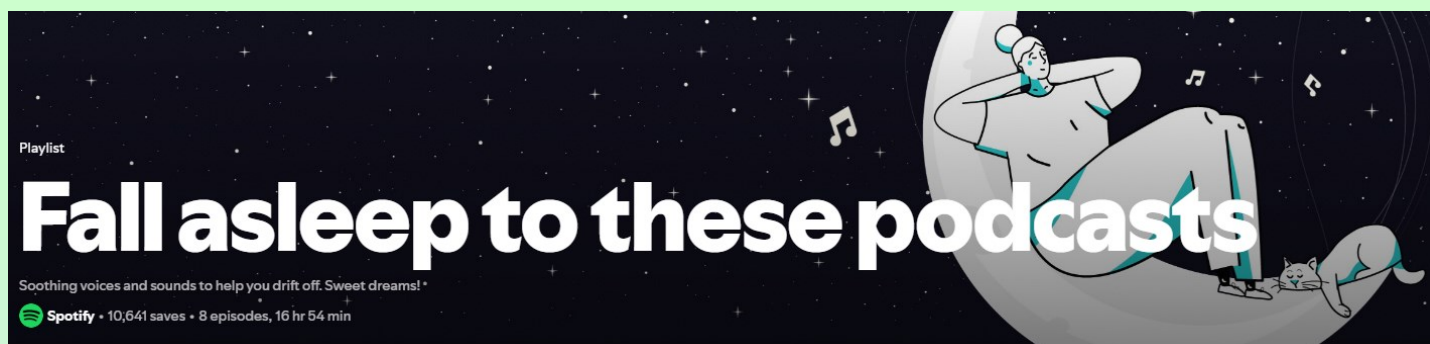
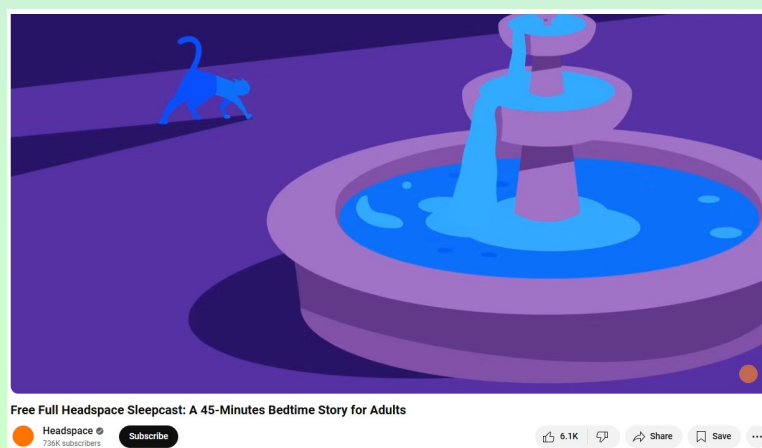
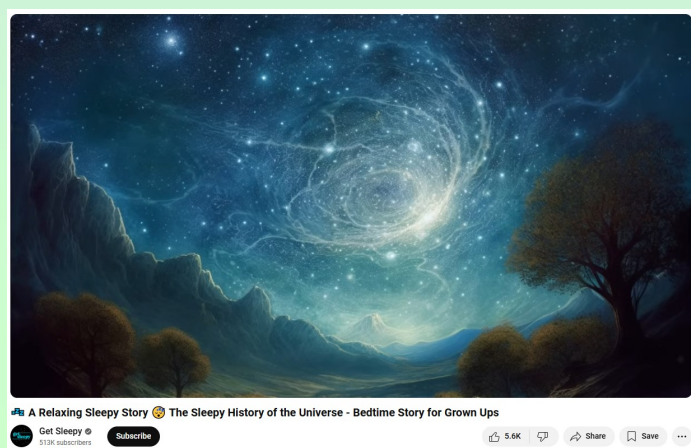
If you're having trouble sleeping and can't understand why, keeping a **Sleep Diary** can help identify what's keeping you awake. Sometimes your sleep troubles are a result of bad sleep habits for example drinking too much caffeine before bedtime, not exercising or poor sleep hygiene. Start keeping a sleep diary as soon as you begin to recognise a problem and complete over a two week period. If you need to see a GP or healthcare professional about your sleep issues you will have evidence of your sleep-wake pattern which can help with a diagnosis and treatment.

Sleep Diary: Night

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
I took a nap:						
yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no	yes / no
I had caffeine:						
# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks	# of drinks
☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening	☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon ☐ Evening
I exercised for ___ minutes:						
Medications or drugs I used today:						
Throughout the day, I felt drowsy:						
☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often	☐ Never ☐ Sometimes ☐ Very Often
Overall, my mood today was: e.g. positive, negative, neutral						
In the hour before bed, my activities included: e.g. reading, computer, TV, showering, phone, eating, spending time with partner						

Sleep videos & podcasts

Click the images below for links to brilliant videos and podcasts to help you fall asleep easier at night.



Sleep Facts

We spend about one-third of our life (about 25 years) either sleeping or trying to, which is quite a lot when you think about it. But did you know that a giraffe only needs 1.9 hours of sleep a day, compared with a brown bat that needs nearly 20 hours per day.

The record for the longest period without sleep is 11 days. This is not recommended!

People's favourite sleeping positions and their personalities are linked.

12% of people dream entirely in black and white, whereas before colour television was introduced 85% of people did.

Those born blind experience dreams involving things such as emotion, sound and smell rather than sight.

Man is the only mammal that willingly delays sleep.

Dolphins fall half asleep. They rest one half of their brain at a time (known as unihemispheric sleeping) so they can come up for air.

Research shows that in the days leading up to a full moon, people go to bed later and sleep less, although the reasons are unclear.

Pain tolerance is reduced by sleep deprivation.

People who have learned sign language may use it in their sleep.

Sea otters hold hands when they sleep so they don't drift away from each other.

Ideally, falling asleep at night should take you 10-15 minutes. If you fall asleep more quickly or take longer than this you are more likely to have poor sleep health.

Eating cheese before bedtime doesn't give people nightmares according to research. However, which type of cheese you eat may govern the type of dream you have.

There are 5 stages of sleep in a sleep cycle. Each sleep cycle is around 1.5 hours, and we must experience all stages to feel fully rested when we wake up. A full night's sleep will include 5-6 cycles. During the rapid eye movement (REM) stage of sleep, dreams occur and your eyes continue to move, but the rest of the body's muscles are stopped. This is nature's way of protecting us from acting out our dreams.



Upcoming TRConnect workshops

Workshop	Day	Time
Understanding Anxiety & Worry	Thursday 22nd of January	11.30–12.30
Sleep	Thursday 5th of February	11.30–12.30
Exam Stress	Thursday 12th of March	11.30–12.30

All of the workshops above are extremely beneficial and will offer support and guidance on a range of different topics.

If you would like to sign up to any or all of the workshops or have any further questions please email the TRConnect team on the email below.

trconnectreferral@trc.ac.uk

Students will be authorised to leave the green block lessons early and arrive at purple block lessons late.

You are encouraged to bring your lunch along to the workshop.

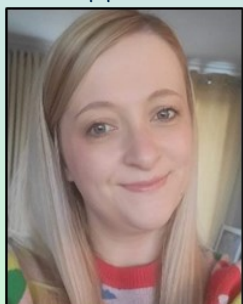
You are more than welcome to come as a group with friends, just please give us all the names so we can add to the list.

The workshops can be popular so we will work on a first come first serve basis so book your place as soon as possible.



Mental Health & Wellbeing Support at TRC

Please find further information about the TRConnect service below. We do advise students to attend the drop in sessions in the first instance, so we can offer advice, signposting and self-help resources. If we feel it is appropriate, we will discuss more about the self-referral to look at the additional enhanced support available.



**Charlotte
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HLTA & Mental
Health Support
Team
Co-ordinator



**Michelle
Rowbotham**

HLTA &
Health &
Wellbeing Coach



**Gemma
Bridgstock**

College
Counsellor



**Jess
Inglis**

College
Counsellor

Drop in sessions

Please find the information about the days and times below. Within the drop-in sessions, you will be able to access signposting from a member of the TRConnect team and access practical self-help resources to gain more strategies to support your wellbeing. These are located in **M102F**, the narrow corridor near the careers team and Student Services.

Day	Time
Monday & Tuesday	8-9 11.40—12.20
Wednesday & Thursday	8-9
Friday	8-8.30

With Me in Mind & Talking Therapies

We can offer and support referrals to With Me in Mind (under 18s) and can signpost and offer advice regarding self-referrals to Talking Therapies (over 16 1/2). Please see the below links for further information about both of the services.

[With Me in Mind](#)

[Talking Therapies](#)

Peer Mentors

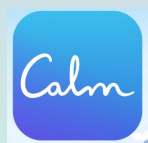
We have a group of Peer Mentors (trained by With Me in Mind) who can offer support sessions with our students with low level support needs. We make sure that we allocate peer mentors by aligning interests, hobbies and future aspirations and goals.

Counselling

The TRConnect team support students who may be struggling with anxiety/low mood, particularly if these are barriers to your learning, however if these issues are impacting on all areas of your life, counselling might be a more appropriate source of support. Counsellors are more likely to work with a student who has been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, but not exclusively.

Please take a look at [A-Z of local Support Services](#) for links to services in the local area.

Useful Apps

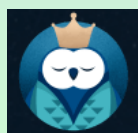


Calm

providing support with sleep, meditation and relaxation.

Breethe

When stress, anxiety, or sleepless nights leave you feeling deflated, Breethe helps you bounce back to your natural, happy state.



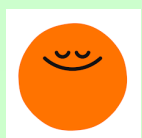
Slumber

The largest sleep library in the app store with over 350 stories.

Noisili

Create your perfect soundscape for work, sleep and relax.

Noisli



Headspace

From guided meditations to one-on-one coaching, our team of clinical experts and trained coaches work together to bring you science-backed care.

Pzizz

Get the world's most advanced app for sleep and power naps. Fall asleep fast, stay asleep, and wake up feeling refreshed.

pzizz

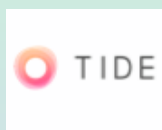


Sleep Cycle

Sleep Cycle tracks and analyses your sleep, waking you up at the most perfect time, feeling rested!

betttersleep

Music, meditations, and stories backed by the science of sleep



Tide

Be calm and mindful with nature

Prime Nap

PrimeNap is a sleep tracker, which records your nightly sleep pattern, allowing you to analyse and understand your sleep cycles.



Awareness Days

<u>Red January (Beat the winter blues)</u>	January
<u>National Hug Day</u>	21st of January
<u>National Compliment Day</u>	24th of January
<u>National Fun at Work Day</u>	30th of January
<u>National Chocolate Cake Day</u>	27th of January
<u>Yorkshire Pudding Day</u>	1st of February
<u>Time to Talk Day</u>	5th of February
<u>LGBT History Month</u>	February
<u>Children's Mental Health Week</u>	9th—15th February
<u>Valentine's Day</u>	14th of February

Take a look at what's coming up in our future TRConnect newsletters

Newsletter issue	Topic	Date
Issue 4	Low mood	26.02.26
Issue 5	Anxiety	19.04.26
Issue 6	Mindfulness / Grounding	04.06.26

The Learning Support team (Thrive)

At TRC, our **Thrive** team is here to help students with additional needs access learning, feel supported and succeed during their time at college.

You can access Thrive SEND support if you

- Have a declared SEND need
- Have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- Have been supported by your teacher and they believe that additional support is required.

If you are struggling in lessons, feeling anxious or overwhelmed with learning tasks or think you might need some extra support please speak to your teacher/s. You're **not alone** - lots of students feel this way sometimes, and it's okay to ask for help. Your teacher will listen to your concerns and work with you on appropriate interventions. If your teacher feels there may be a special education need (SEND) they will begin something called a graduated response, which will help develop a clear understanding of your needs and barriers to learning. This will support your teacher in being able to refer to the Thrive team for additional SEND support.

You don't have to manage things alone. If something is affecting your learning or wellbeing, **talk to someone**— your teachers and the Thrive team are here to help you figure things out, even if you're unsure what support you need.

Careers & Work Placement Team

The **Careers and Work Placement Team** are fully qualified and offer expert informed careers education, impartial advice, and guidance to all students. The team can help you with your current skills and support you to develop new ones, tailored to your future career options. If you have any questions/queries regarding your future career options and work placement opportunities, don't hesitate to get in touch with the team on careers@trc.ac.uk.

Please click [here](#) to see an image which shows how mapping out your thoughts and ideas on your future goals and career can help with your wellbeing.

Safeguarding

The college **safeguarding** team cover multiple issues to ensure all students are kept safe and free from harm. Understandably, we cannot be with our students full time, so we hope to empower them with knowledge and information to build resilience, as well as opening doors to access services outside of college to prepare them for independence. For further information regarding our safeguarding team, [click here](#).

If there is something urgent and you feel there is an immediate risk / danger to you or someone you know contact the police on 999.

If you are under 18 you can contact **Rotherham** MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) on 01709 336080.

If you would like to report a concern about a child or young person via Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, click [here](#).

Safeguarding numbers for the surrounding areas:

Sheffield – 01142 734855

Barnsley – 01226 772423 Out of hours – 01226 78778

Doncaster – 01302 737777 Out of hours – 01302 796000



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