

A Wake Up Call: Why you might have trouble sleeping

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Free anonymous mental health screenings available October 5

An undetected mood or anxiety disorder may be affecting your sleep -- take a free, anonymous mental health screening on October 5, 2006. We all know the old saying, "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." But for the nearly 57 million affected by a mental health disorder, getting a good night's rest is no easy task. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, sleep disturbances figure prominently in many psychiatric disorders. In fact, of the estimated 30 million Americans who have chronic insomnia, 40 percent also have a psychiatric disorder, most often depression or anxiety. If you have been feeling anxious or depressed lately and as a result, have been having difficulty sleeping, you can take a free, anonymous mental health assessment at one of more than 1,500 sites participating in an NDSM Mental Health Screening (National Depression Screening Day) event on October 5. As part of the program, you will have the opportunity to take a brief, written questionnaire and talk to a health professional about your results. Those who score positive will be referred to local treatment resources. "Sleep problems are a common symptom of depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders. There is also evidence that sleep disorders can be a contributing cause of mood and anxiety disorders. For those who are experiencing issues with sleep, it is important to talk to a health care provider about the possible causes. By taking a screening and talking to a health professional, individuals can take the first step in figuring out whether their issues are linked to underlying mental health issue," says Douglas G. Jacobs, MD, President and CEO of Screening for Mental Health, the organization that sponsors NDSM. NDSM Mental Health Screening, now in its sixteenth year, is a program of the nonprofit Screening for Mental Health, Inc. The free program provides a non-threatening way for the public to be screened for depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. For more information or to find a screening site near you, visit www.MentalHealthScreening.org.

If there is not a screening site in your area, a free, anonymous online screening is posted on www.MentalHealthScreening.org until October 15, 2006. Tips for getting a good night's sleep: * Go to bed and wake up the same time each day. Having a sleep routine can help train your body to know when it is time for sleep. * Don't lie in bed awake for more than 20 minutes. Get up and go read, watch TV or listen to music, until you feel sleepy. The anxiety of being unable to fall asleep can actually contribute to insomnia. * Exercise early in the day. Working out too close to bedtime causes wakefulness. * Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol before bed. Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants and can make falling asleep difficult. Alcohol affects REM and deep sleep. * Create a sleep sanctuary. Your bedroom should be quiet, dark and cool and should be used for sleep and sex. Avoid working, eating or watching TV in bed. * Invest in a good bed/mattress. You spend about a third of your life in bed so make sure yours is comfortable. * Try and relax before bed. Take a warm bath or meditate. If you are anxious or worried about something, talk about it with a friend or partner earlier in the day. * If you continue to have trouble sleeping, talk to a health professional to rule out a physical or mental illness.

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