

Sleep Advice Home Pack

Green Lane School & Shine Therapy

Sensory Processing

Some young people experience difficulties with their sleep due to them receiving lots of 'alerting' sensory input throughout their day. Vestibular sensory input is alerting to our central nervous system and can stay within our body for up to 8 hours. Some young people are unable to recognise when they have recruited enough vestibular input throughout their day and will seek excessive amounts of this. These young people often present as 'high' immediately or later on in the day e.g when trying to settle for bedtime. Because their central nervous system is in a highly aroused state, reaching a calm and regulated state ready for bedtime can be challenging.

However ...

Other young people may experience difficulties with their sleep due to factors that are not necessarily sensory derived.

Strategies to support sleep

- Consider the young person's arousal levels several hours before the start of the bedtime routine (reduce movement, dimming of lights, turning off screens at least 1 hour before bedtime).
- Consider what your young person is eating / drinking before bedtime (avoid crunchy, sugary and fizzy snacks and drinks as these are alerting).
- Try activities that provide calming tactile, proprioceptive, and olfactory input (warm baths, massage using scented oils, scent diffuser, vibrating massage tools – no more than 40 minutes).
- Read a bedtime story in a quiet & calm voice whilst cuddling up between cushions & beanbags.
- If your young person wakes during the night, provide them with deep pressure massage or other proprioceptive input before redirecting them back to bed e.g tight squeezes, wrapping up in a blanket.

- When entering the bedroom to tend to your young person do not engage them in conversation as this may accidentally reward the behaviour of not going to sleep. Instead, calmly prompt them with a key phrase.
- If there is excessive noise in the environment play calming music.
- Trial the use of black out blinds/curtains.
- Adopt the EXACT same routine every night to help reassure your young person so that they know what is required of them.
- It may be beneficial to discuss the young persons difficulties with sleep with their paediatrician / GP. If on medication for sleep, ensure this is reviewed frequently.
- Trial the use of a 'gro' clock to support the young person in understanding when to get up / out of bed.