

Sleep and Young People's Mental Health



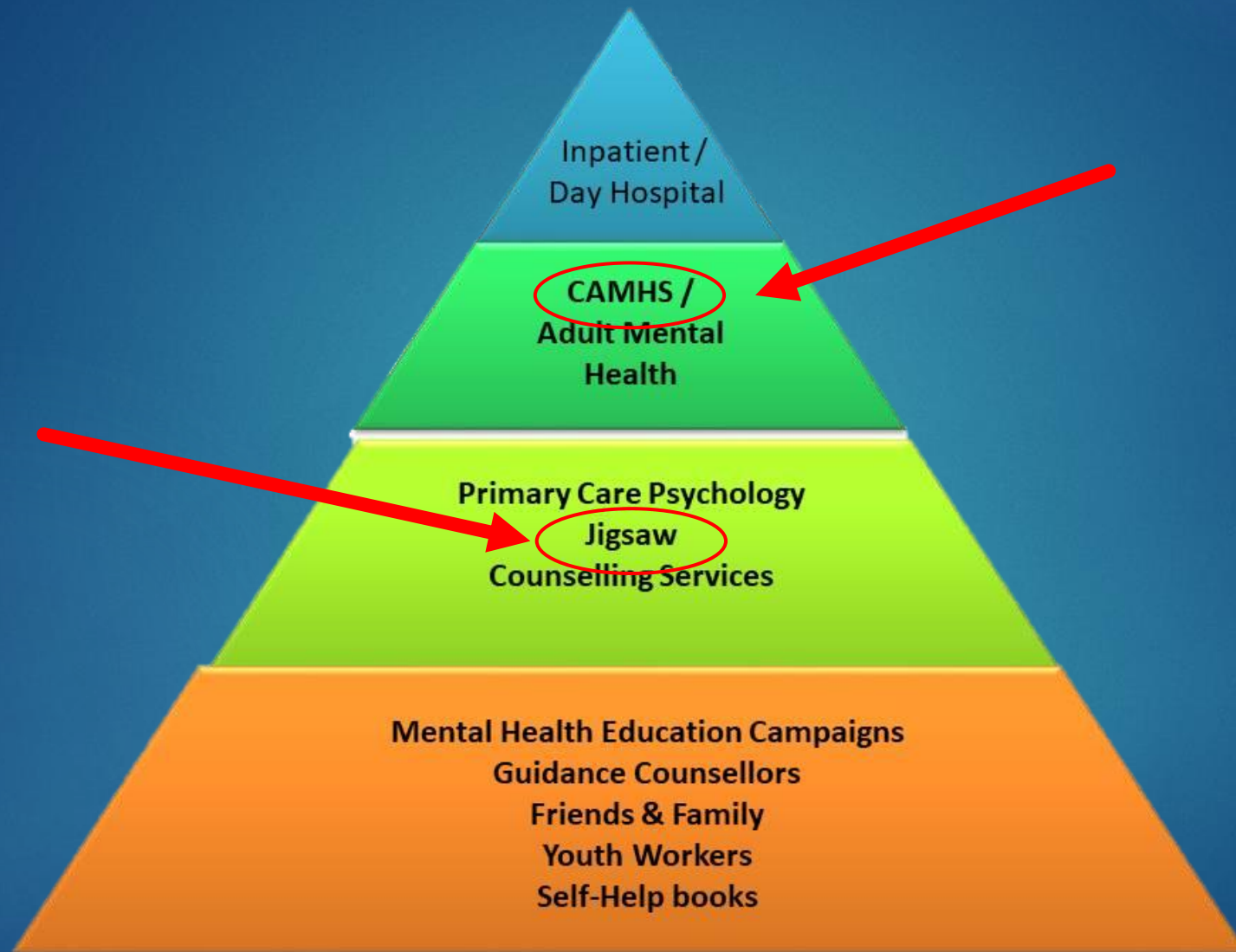
Who are we?

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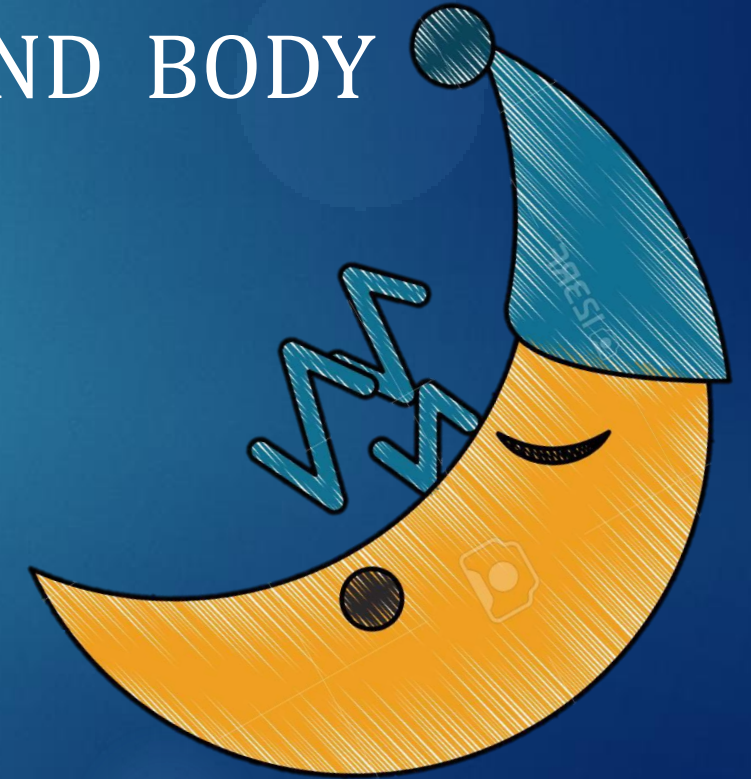
Occupational Therapists utilise meaningful occupations to empower young people with mental health difficulties to engage in things they want, need, and are expected to do in their lives.



Why focus on sleep?

“ SLEEP IS THE SINGLE MOST EFFECTIVE THING
WE CAN DO TO RESET OUR BRAIN AND BODY
HEALTH EACH DAY ”

-Professor Matthew Walker, neuroscientist and author of 'Why We Sleep'



Why focus on sleep?

- ▶ Sleep is an activity we all need to engage in everyday in order to live healthy lives.
- ▶ Sleep is vital to your wellbeing. It is as important as the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat.
- ▶ Sleep difficulties are common in most mental health difficulties we see in young people attending CAMHS and Jigsaw.

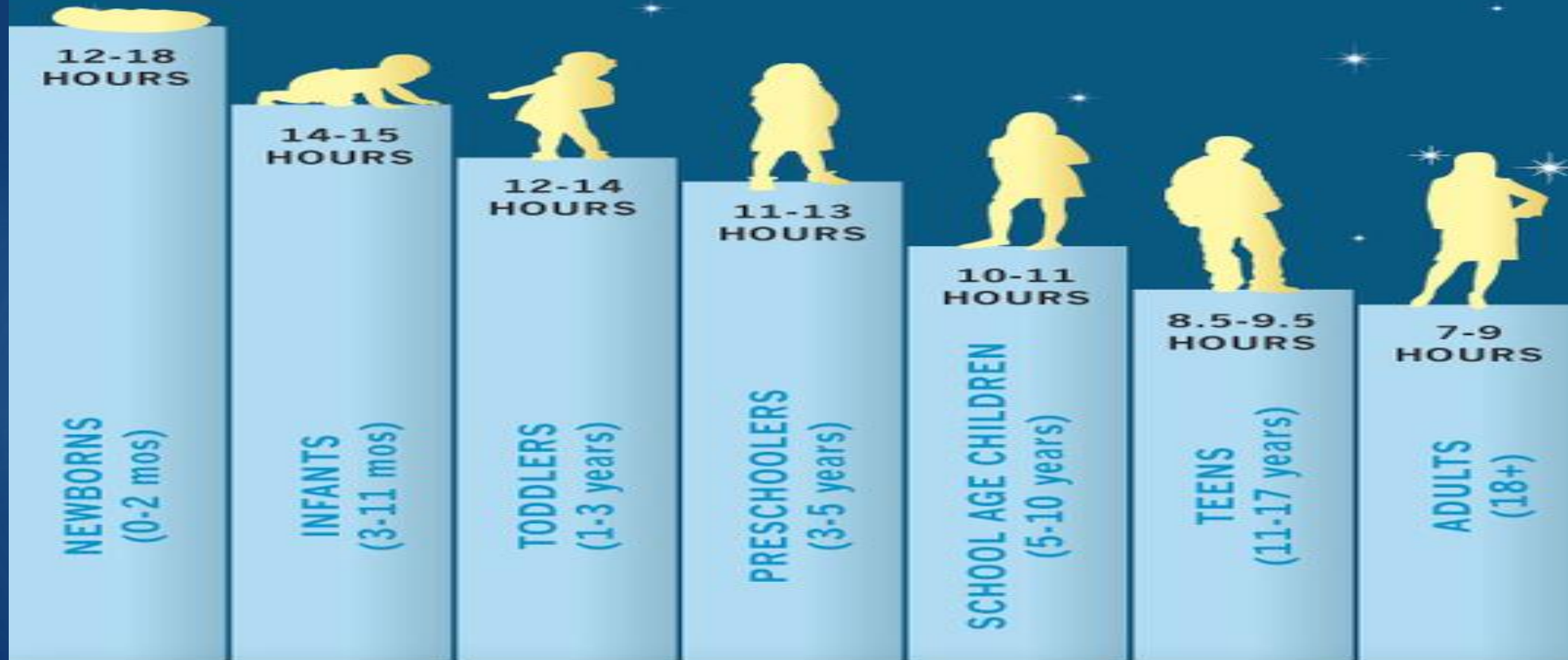


Sleep difficulties we see with Young People:

- ▶ Difficulty falling asleep
- ▶ Inconsistent sleep routines
- ▶ Restlessness
- ▶ Poor sleep quality
- ▶ Difficulty staying asleep/ frequent waking during the night
- ▶ Waking too early in the morning



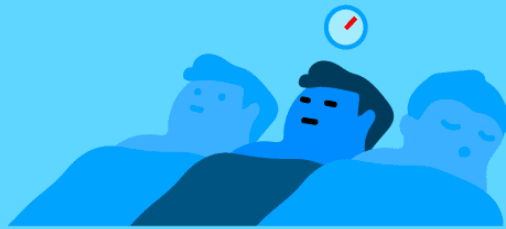
HOW MUCH SLEEP DO WE REALLY NEED?



SLEEP NEEDS VARY
FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

What happens when we sleep

The 4 Stages of Sleep



NREM Stage 1

- transition period between wakefulness and sleep
- lasts around 5 to 10 minutes



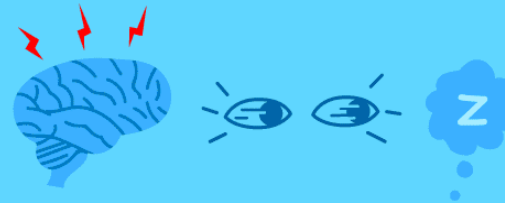
NREM Stage 3

- muscles relax
- blood pressure and breathing rate drop
- deepest sleep occurs



NREM Stage 2

- body temperature drops and heart rate begins to slow
- brain begins to produce sleep spindles
- lasts approximately 20 minutes



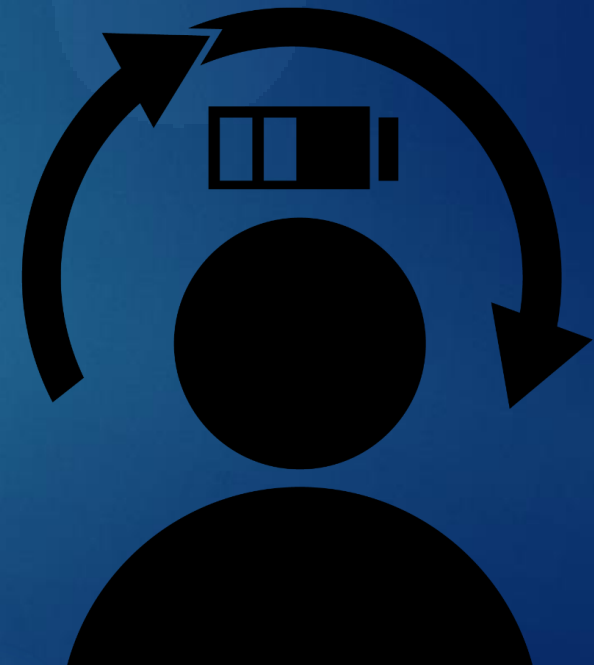
REM Sleep

- brain becomes more active
- body becomes relaxed and immobilized
- dreams occur
- eyes move rapidly

Why is sleep so important for young people?

Getting the right amount of sleep helps young people to function optimally in their day to day lives


- ▶ Helps regulate emotions – boosts mood and stress management
- ▶ Brain development – helps your brain learn new skills and retain information
- ▶ Physical development and growth – muscle repair, boosts immune system, regulate hormones
- ▶ Increases energy levels



Sleep and young people's mental health

- ▶ Mental health disorders have been linked to poor sleep.
- ▶ Sleep deprivation in teens can increase the risk of anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and school refusal.
- ▶ Improving sleep in adolescents may play a role in preventing mental health disorders or reducing their symptoms.

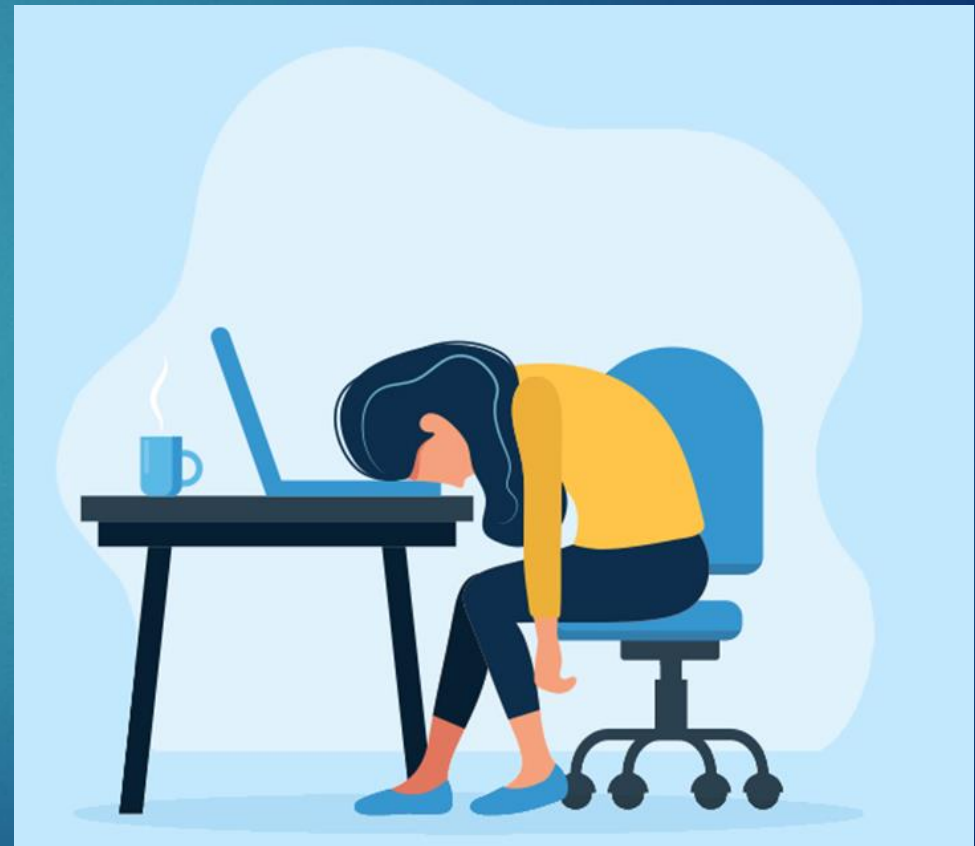


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- ▶ A research study found that teens who went to bed late and got up early had poorer mental health overall than their well-rested peers, and were also at increased risk of developing emotional, behavioural, or other mental health issues.
 - ▶ The study on sleep and ADHD showed that teens who got more sleep performed better in tests that measured working memory, emotional control, impulse control, and planning/organizational skills.
 - ▶ The study on sleep and anxiety that found: “A lack of sleep amplifies anxiety in a dose-response manner.” That means exactly what you think it mean: less sleep, more anxiety.

Common adolescent sleep cycle problems

- ▶ Becoming nocturnal: sleep cycle reversed
- ▶ Adolescents: body clock changing- wanting to stay up later and get up later
- ▶ Social jetlag –compensating at the weekend and throwing off the body clock
- ▶ Sleep deprivation
- ▶ Oversleeping

Too much vs too little



What influences our sleep during adolescence?

- ▶ Developmental stages – feel tired at a later time.
- ▶ Stress/ mood
- ▶ Mental or physical health difficulties
- ▶ Transitions
- ▶ Lack of exercise
- ▶ Social life
- ▶ Developing brain



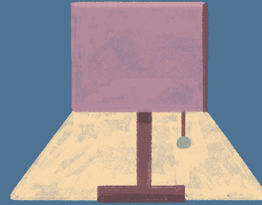
So what now?



Establish a
nighttime routine



Get up and go to
sleep at the same time



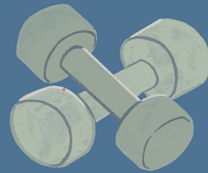
Create a healthy
sleep environment



Turn off electronics
an hour before bed



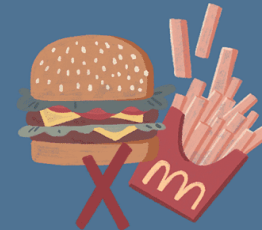
Limit caffeine



Exercise



Reduce stress



Avoid large, fatty
meals prior to sleeping

Impactful Sleep Hygiene Practices

Sleep and technology

- ▶ Use of technology before bed - watching TV, using a mobile phone, and browsing the internet before bed keep our brains stimulated and alert.
- ▶ Body clock/Circadian rhythm is influenced by light from technology, even the smallest amount, can prevent melatonin (sleep hormone) from being released, keeping us awake for longer.



Sleep environment



Diet and sleep



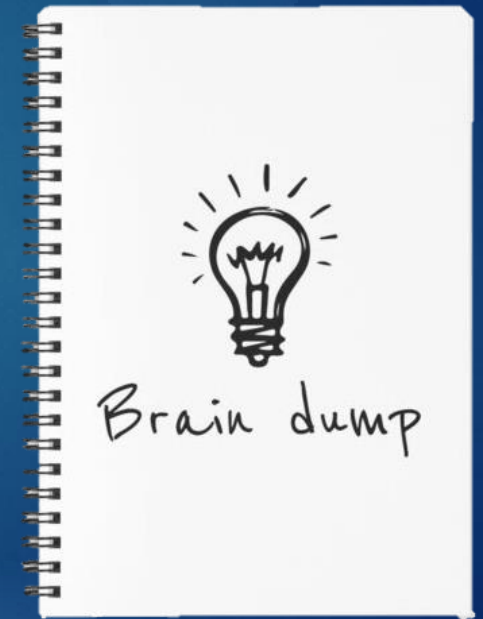
Exercise and sleep

- ▶ Exercise has been proven to help teens have longer and better quality sleep
- ▶ A research study found that:
 - ▶ On days when teens were more physically active than usual, they went to sleep earlier and slept longer.
 - ▶ On days when teens were less physically active than usual, they went to sleep later and didn't sleep as long.



Winding down for sleep

- ▶ Routines
- ▶ Relaxing activities



Can't drift off?

Think “20-minutes” – get out of bed

- ▶ Relaxing activities can help to calm your body to get ready for sleep such as:
 - ▶ Reading something boring
 - ▶ Colouring
 - ▶ Deep breathing (needs practice)
 - ▶ Gentle music
 - ▶ Podcast



How Can Parents Help Teens Get Better Sleep?

- ▶ Parents can work with their teens to avoid overscheduling and commitments that can generate stress which can impact sleep.
- ▶ Prioritise sleep as a family.
- ▶ Chat with young person about sleep times (consistency is important).
- ▶ Checking in about technology at night time e.g. a chat with them about use of phone/screens at night. Negotiation is important!
- ▶ Set a worry time – set aside time in the day to check in around worries. This can free young people of the need to dwell on worries before bed

Tips to aid sleep:



✓ Get 8-10 hours of sleep each night (paruthi et al., 2016).



✓ Make sure your wake times and bedtimes are consistent.



✓ Have a bedtime routine to help your body be ready to sleep when it is time to go to bed.



✓ Look ahead to what you need to do in the morning.



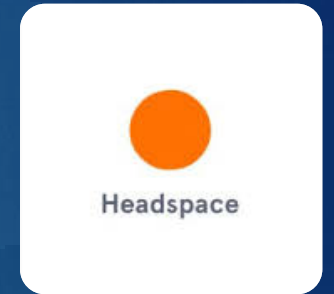
✓ Avoid things that can interfere with good sleep like electronic devices and caffeine.



✓ Set alarms or reminder alerts to help you follow your sleep schedule.

Resources

- ▶ Jigsaw online
- ▶ <https://jigsaw.ie/sleep-and-mental-health/>
- ▶ <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/problems-sleeping.html>
- ▶ Link in with GP if ongoing concerns around sleep
- ▶ Sleep apps
 - ▶ Calm
 - ▶ Headspace
 - ▶ Sleep cycle- track your sleep
 - ▶ Phones and watches e.g., Fitbit can track your sleep to give sleep insights





*As the night gets
darker, let your
worries fade.
Sleep peacefully,
knowing you've done
all you can do for
today.*

lessonslearnedinlife.com



Questions?