

How would Sleep and Impact on Mental Health ??

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Mental health and sleep are often so closely in the early parenting phase that it would be incomplete to consider them apart. But there are still many myths that cloud our thinking in this important area. That's why one of my passions is ensuring people, mothers and parents especially understand how important these two areas are and closely interrelated they are so they can learn more about this important subject.

Our mental health and the scale of the issue

As a professional working with parents, it is commonly heard and often-cited figures of mothers who are being diagnosed with post-natal depression being around the 10 - 15% of all new mothers current evidence and my own findings would suggest that, this is in fact a gross under-estimation of the actual true scale of the issue. By this I mean sadly that this 10 - 15% is only merely the representation of those people who have the resources to access the support and help they need with their mental health support. The more realistic figures show and according to up to date studies is close to 40% (Kendall-Tackett, 2017) and it is believed to be even higher if a mother has experienced previous trauma or violence.

What about trauma?

Meta-analysis studies suggest that about 4% of mothers meet the full criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following childbirth, but this figure rises to almost 20% in high-risk groups (Yildiz, *et al.* 2017). However, in a broader context, 30% of all parents would describe their birth as traumatic, even if their symptoms do not meet full criteria for PTSD.

The relationship between mental health and sleep

This leads me onto this question of the relationship between mental health and sleep. I am asked regularly how does depression, anxiety and trauma affect your sleep? And how does it have an impact on your sleep? This is when we find out that new parents, who have already had either pre-existing or new mental health problems cope with the adaptation to parenting and parenthood alongside their own personal distress?

What is the relationship between sleep deprivation and mental health problems? Does sleep make mental health problems worse, or are sleep problems a symptom of an existing mental health problem? These are all questions that I am asked about when I get a client who has been able to find and approach myself.

And is it always as clear-cut as this? What parenting support and interventions help parents who have depression, anxiety, trauma or other mental health concerns. Finding and supporting those parents who are in need of help with their child's sleep and/or even their own after they have been suffering from months of sleep deprivation now find themselves in a situation of previously non-existent sleeping problems.

Why sleep support is part of mental health treatment

In my work with new families, I meet many people who are struggling with either sleep or mental health or both. Sometimes these families approach their health, lactation, or parenting/sleep support professional with an apparent sleep problem. When in actual fact it is a mental health problem that is as yet undiagnosed or identified. Other people have a known mental health concern, which could be improved with holistic sleep support. It is not always about helping infants sleep - sometimes-holistic sleep coaches focus primarily on adult sleep! So often, improving sleep and improving mental health are best addressed simultaneously.

What does emotional health have to do with sleep?

As a Holistic Sleep Consultant, I have decided that the sleep programs I create must show that almost nothing about health, well-being and sleep should be viewed in isolation. I view us as humans that are connected beings: we connect parts of ourselves, and we connect with other humans. While compartmentalising sleep solutions may sometimes yield improvements, it has been proven over and over again that is only when underlying emotional and mental health issues are addressed in tandem is the full benefit realized.

Emotional well-being

Emotional and mental health is something that the scientific community have been studying for decades. However, it is only recently that it has become mainstream. Mindfulness, meditation and emotional intelligence are now part of our everyday language. For me and other professional like myself it's easy to see why. It is easy to experience burnout, depression, or poor self-esteem in our stressed, highly charged and often intense lives.

Achieving a positive sense of emotional well-being includes the experience of a sense of contentment, peace and confidence. Having positive self-esteem, social competence, emotional awareness, and the sensitivity to spot another persons' sense of the same leads to better work, relationship and personal outcomes according to research studies. In fact, emotional well-being leads to better quality of life than economic success. With a very profound study recently done that found that money really can't buy happiness.

Emotional health is also linked with mental health - this being when we have feelings in tune with your emotions leads to a greater sense of optimism, control and confidence. Have you met people who understand not only how they are feeling, but also why they are feeling that way, what the trigger was, and what positive steps they can take to address that feeling? You will notice that these people are calmer, more grounded and less likely to lose their temper.

It is with this well-balanced outlook that we achieve the best results. With great mindset and attention to what is truly important to us as human which is air, sleep, food, love we can thrive to be the best version of ourselves.

To work with myself on how best make and achieve this in your own life then please book a call with me today and we can get you started on the road to self-awareness, fill fullness and gratitude for the ability to appreciate the basics in life to their fullest.

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