Slumber Sessions

Poor-quality zzz's can affect your mental health.

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Not sleeping or having one's rest disrupted can wreak havoc on the brain's chemistry, which, in turn, can negatively affect a person's ability to think and regulate emotions.

Although doctors don't fully understand the role the brain plays with regard to sleep and mental health, findings suggest that getting plenty of shut-eye supports mental and emotional resilience. Conversely, chronic bouts of sleeplessness may boost a person's risk of developing a psychiatric disorder or aggravate existing mental health issues, such as depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The good news is that treatments for insomnia are effective for folks with or without mental illnesses. These therapies include lifestyle changes that help individuals fall asleep, such as ditching alcohol and nicotine, adhering to a regular sleep-and-wake schedule, practicing calming techniques (e.g., deep breathing exercises and muscle relaxation) and cultivating positive thoughts, which can help folks snooze peacefully through the night.

But if these methods don't work, folks ought to consult with their doctors about prescription meds for sleep.

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