**Sleep Sound, Mental Health Rebounds!**

Sleep. It rejuvenates our every mood, thought, and overall health. Although it’s important, many Americans get less than the required rest, between 7 and 9 hours each night. So, what does this mean? It could create some issues in our everyday lives.

Getting enough sleep is especially crucial for mind and body wellness. Without sleep, we can experience negative emotions such as irritability and anger. Similarly, sleep deprivation can affect our coping with everyday life stressors.

When it comes to the art of sleeping, there are two phases: the non-Rapid Eye Movement (non-REM) and the Rapid Eye Movement (REM). Each stage of sleep is distinct:

Category 1 is considered light sleep, and it occurs when we start falling asleep or dozing off. Muscles start relaxing, and our heartbeat slows for several minutes.

Category 2 is also considered light sleep, and it occurs when we enter a phase of transition in which our bodies’ temperature decreases.

Category 3 is considered deep sleep, in which our bodies engage in physically repairing themselves by boosting our immune system and restoring our bones, muscles, and tissues.

Category 4 is considered REM sleep, in which we dream, consolidate memories, and engage in emotional processing. Another important function of REM sleep is that it aids in learning and brain development.

**So how does sleep coincide with behavioral health?**Ms. Ruth Delva, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with Central Florida Health Care, says mental health is about your emotional, physical, and social well-being. Sleep patterns can affect how we think, feel and act. Deep sleep is especially important because our bodies can relax and take a break from solving the many stressors that arise daily. For example, the National Institute of Health says getting the recommended 7-8 hours of sleep helps us feel energized, improves mood, and generates better mental health.

**How can we make sure we get enough sleep, especially deep sleep?** Dr. Ingrid Atiles, Licensed Clinical Psychologist at Central Florida Health Care, says the answer is simple, and it involves making small yet pivotal changes in our everyday use of technology. She recommends that we set a time to commit to turning off cell phones, tv, and other technology. When it comes to the room in which we sleep, she recommends finding an environment where we feel safe and comfortable. Possible strategies for creating a peaceful atmosphere before our bedtime include listening to soothing music, reading, and engaging in stretching while meditating. If readers feel that they need added support after trying the provided recommendations, Ms. Delva and Dr. Atiles encourage them to seek care from a qualified health provider.

Central Florida Health Care provides medical and behavioral health services to improve the overall wellness of the people they serve, which includes getting adequate sleep and much more. At our Dundee Annex clinic, CFHC has trained mental health providers who assess, provide quality evidenced-based practices, and prescribe medications to ages six and older, all genders and cultures on numerous issues.

If you or anyone you know are going through a difficult time, please schedule an appointment with one of our highly trained mental health professionals to help you on your path of wellness and healing. For more information, you can call 863-234-8534 or visit [www.cfhconline.org](http://www.cfhconline,org).