

# IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

How to connect and converse about mental  
health



**National Wellbeing Hub**  
For people working in Health and Social Care

It may be a new year, but many people are still struggling. Some difficulties are easier to talk about than others: Problems at work might be a common conversation topic, and family frustrations are often shared among friends. But what about mental health?

In the UK, **one in four adults** experience poor mental health conditions<sup>1</sup>, including poor sleep that exacerbates those problems. For example, the Office of National Statistics reported that **9.4 million** people experience anxiety in the UK<sup>2</sup>, and research from an insurance company found that **67% of UK adults suffer from disrupted sleep**<sup>3</sup>.

Anxious feelings and sleepless nights can make for difficult days, weeks, and even months. To make matters worse, it's something that many of us don't talk about due to the stigma around poor mental health. The result? **People who are already suffering may end up feeling ashamed, misunderstood, and isolated, which makes their life even harder — and also keeps them from reaching out for help.**

## Change the conversation

In the spirit of Time to Talk — an event dedicated to ending the stigma around mental health — here are some tips to help you connect and converse about mental health with your friends and colleagues.

### Starting the conversation

Learn how to recognise when a friend or colleague may need help. You don't need to have all the answers, just compassion, concern, and the willingness to listen.

### Listening carefully

Here's how you can make someone feel like it's okay to talk;

- be attentive
- ask questions
- notice their body language
- play back what you've heard.

1. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/mental-health/adults/>

2. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/mentalhealth/adhocs/13844depressionoranxietyinadultsgreatbritain22septemberto3october2021>

3. <https://www.aviva.com/newsroom/news-releases/2017/10/Sleepless-cities-revealed-as-one-in-three-adults-suffer-from-insomnia/>

## Ways to respond

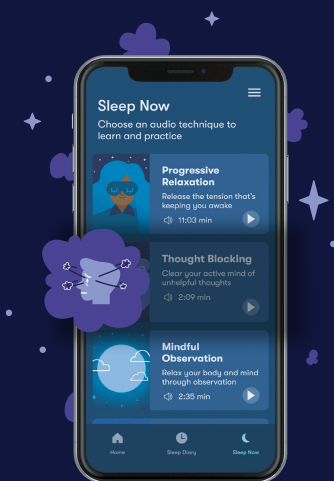
Sometimes just listening is enough. However, it's good to consider checking in again, reassuring the other person that you'll respect their privacy, and asking how you can help.

By normalising these kinds of conversations you can help spread the idea that poor mental health is nothing to be ashamed about, and it's okay to talk about. After all, a small conversation about mental health has the power to make a big difference.

## Help for poor sleep and difficult emotions

If you're personally struggling with poor sleep, or feelings of worry and anxiety, Sleepio and Daylight may be able to help.

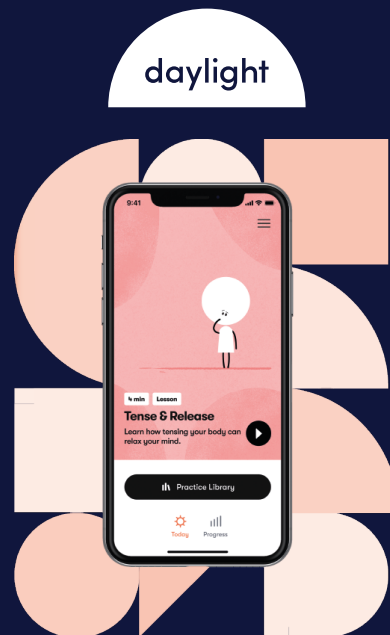
### Sleepio



Sleepio is a digital programme that uses evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy to tackle even the most stubborn of sleep problems.

**Get started at**  
[www.sleepio.com/nhs](http://www.sleepio.com/nhs)

### daylight



Daylight is a science-backed, clinically proven programme built by leading mental health experts that helps people to gain control over their worry and anxiety.

**Get started at**  
[www.trydaylight.com/nhs](http://www.trydaylight.com/nhs)

You can check them out for yourself, or let a coworker know about them — it could be the perfect way to have that first conversation about mental health with someone who might need it.