HELPING PARENTS DEAL WITH LACK OF SLEEP

Questions to Ask

- How many times does the baby wake up per night?
- How much does the baby sleep during the day?
- Where does the baby sleep?
- What else is in the room with the baby (noise, TV, lights, etc)?
- Has the baby been sick?
- Has any thing changed in the baby's routine?

It may be helpful to remind parents that the sleepless nights won't last forever

Average number of times babies wake up between 10pm and 6am

1 month	3 - 4 times
2 months	2 - 3 times
4 months	1 - 2 times
6 months	0 - 1 time

Things to Try

- Explain how infants' sleep patterns change
- Ask parents to keep a sleep diary for a couple of nights
- Use light/dark cycles (no TV, lights, etc)
- If baby falls asleep in arms, wait a few minutes to put the baby down
- Encourage parents to get help with other responsibilities in the early weeks
- Encourage tired parents to take the time to wake up fully before getting a crying baby (to prevent abuse)
- Encourage resting as much as possible
- Encourage parents to get someone to watch the baby while they nap

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WARNING SIGNS: WHEN TO REFER

You may come in contact with a mother or baby who needs extra help. The situations below may indicate the need for a referral to a doctor or other qualified health professional.

Newborn

- Mother reports very loose stools for 6 –8 diaper changes
- Mother reports that the baby has no wet diapers for 6 hours or more
- Changes in the baby's skin coloration
- Noticeable changes in infant temperament
- Baby is refusing to feed, or has missed several feedings

3 Months and Older

- Significant changes in appetite
- Dramatic changes in sleep patterns
- Baby falls below 20% of ideal weight-height ratio
- Baby is rarely or never interested in interaction with caregivers
- Baby has a barking seal like cough
- Baby appears to be ill or in pain
- Baby cries excessively or cannot be consoled
- Baby will not look at or respond to faces

When in doubt, ask your supervisor or an appropriate staff member

Mother

- Mother displays lack of interest in baby
- Mother has bouts of prolonged inexplicable crying
- Mother expresses fear or feelings that she will harm the baby
- Mother reports excessive anger or irritability
- Mother expresses guilt regarding presence of the baby