



Leader Tool Recognising Fatigue

It's important as leaders to help great conversations about mental health and wellbeing happen frequently in the workspace. These conversations can help buffer the impacts of stress on our people. One of the first things to decline when stress increases is sleep. Sleep is a powerful support for positive wellbeing and can be achieved by emphasising self-care. How we talk about and role model self-care is a critical skill for leaders to allow our people to also feel and believe that it is ok for them to look after themselves. It's a way of saying I am taking responsibility to be the best I can be. Recognising when your people are no longer prioritising self-care isn't always easy, but there are often signs if you know what you are looking for. To assist your people in remaining focussed and sleeping well, here being some tips to help your people address the need for self-care and how they can proactively build positive mental health through prioritising sleep:

The future looks bright, but still, we can't sleep: While stress and anxiety are the enemies of slumber, so too are the lack of daily schedules, reduced exposure to sunlight (particularly in the morning), and excessive use of electronic media (particularly near bedtime). All of these are associated with working from home or remotely.



Show that it is ok to stop work. Be mindful of the ways that we as leaders unintentionally promote working behaviours. Do you step away from your desk to have lunch? Do you regularly schedule back to back meetings on multiple days every week? Do you find yourself sending emails or making calls to your people outside of work hours?

Sleep and cognition. Lack of sleep negatively affects our ability to think clearly, learn, concentrate and retain important information, which affects efficiency in the workplace. In a recent study, people who reported 'almost always' feeling tired during the day had 4.4 times more productivity loss than those who reported 'almost never' feeling tired¹.



Sleep and mood. Insufficient sleep also impacts our mood and emotional wellbeing. Whilst extreme lack of sleep can induce serious psychological effects such as paranoia and memory loss, more subtle consequences such as anger and impatience can also be present. Teamwork and cooperation play an essential role in commercial success, so when tempers flare, relationships become strained. 84% of people feel more irritable as a result of poor sleep², and with a volatile work atmosphere, your people can lose trust and become disengaged, which contributes to poor team dynamics and lowers motivation. Talking about these side effects openly may help those affected to seek support.

Start the conversation with sleep. We can all relate to sleep deprivation. Sleep can be a very easy and comfortable way to start the discussion around mental health and wellbeing with your people. Almost everyone can recall a time when lack of sleep has been a problem. Most people recognise that stress and anxiety have a relationship to sleep, and addressing the causes of stress and anxiety could be the best way forward. Your EAP session entitlement provides access to clinical professionals who can assist in this process.

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss a specific concern contact our Manager Support Hotline or your Relationship Manager. As always, as your EAP we are here to support your people whatever the nature of their concerns, please contact AccessEAP on **1800 818 728**.

[1] American Journal of Health Promotion 2018 - [2] Hult International Business School 2016

