



This tool was created by one of our senior clinical team members, Kate McPhee, Learning & Organisational Development Consultant at AccessEAP.

There is a great deal of research already in existence about the positive health benefits and impact on performance about a good night's sleep. What is now becoming more apparent is that those who want to lead better – need to sleep better. Of course, incidents and emergencies happen, but from an everyday account - do yourself, your team, and your loved ones a favour and get some sleep.

The reason that sleep is so important for leadership is to do with the prefrontal cortex. This is the executive function of the brain, and it cannot go on and on. Like our laptops, phones and watches, our brain also needs to recharge. At times when things are going well, we are in flow and getting things done; it can be tempting to just keep going. Similarly, when things are tough, we can just keep going too. Research indicates that leaders who get through the tough times and fair better are the ones who sleep.

Good sleep, like good health, is no accident. High levels of physical activity, reducing time on blue screen devices and avoiding caffeine in the afternoon are all things that can contribute. So, how can you support good sleep in your people? Here are a few ideas:

- Where it is possible, maintain consistency of work schedules. This is mainly a need for those on shift and rotating work cycles, but for those who are not – consistency is the key.
- Have adequate resourcing levels to avoid one person (or a select few) being the only people in the organisation who can do a task.
- Working flexibly (especially when doing so remotely), particularly at the beginning and end of the day, can promote greater physical activity. This may mean employees are able to ride or walk into the workplace.
- As leaders, talk (and talk and talk) about sleep and how important it is for staying well and strong.
- Discourage those who are often working late. When hearing employees use out of hours working as a status tool, diffuse this illusion.
- Regular reviews of job roles and responsibilities to ensure that the role can be successful within the timeframes set.
- Encourage healthy food options when onsite and have decaffeinated drinks available.
- Organisations who have benefits that include physical activity (gyms and step challenges) tend to have more engaged and reportedly satisfied employees.
- Regularly informing, through newsletters or intranets, the importance of a good night's sleep can help as timely reminders around time management and self-care.
- Encourage everyone, from leadership down, to take their allocated leave. This promotes rest and recuperation.

In thinking about sleep being a workplace issue, what does your workplace do well? What would you add to the list? If you need some support in achieving any or just some of these, please reach out to us here at AccessEAP. 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**.

