SLEEP

Although sleep is a personal and individual matter, research shows workplace issues and organizational culture are affecting how people sleep. Plus, organizations suffer the costs of sleep deprivation.

Research shows that persons getting more sleep are able to focus better, get sick less frequently, experience fewer accidents, get along better with others, and have better health outcomes.

Altering the culture surrounding sleep and rest in the workplace can help create an environment in which people feel well-rested and ready to do their best work.

TIPS FOR HEALTHY SLEEPING HABITS

Keep a consistent evening routine and try going to bed at the same time every night.

Allow at least an hour before bedtime to unwind and try to relax before going to sleep.

Screens before bed can keep us up longer - try reading a book or listening to music to unwind.

Avoid naps before bedtime - try going on a light walk outside with a friend or family member.

Keep your sleeping environment dark and quiet for minimal distractions.

Eat your meals at consistent times throughout the day to keep in a routine.

Try journaling or meditating to gather your thoughts and calm your mind.

Avoid caffeine before bed - try cutting it out by early or late afternoon.

Put your phone on silent mode - disconnecting from the world allows your brain to relax.

Wear something comfortable - don't go to bed in something that you won't fall asleep in.

Keep your environment at a comfortable temperature.

Exercise regularly for deeper sleep - just 30 minutes of physical activity a day can help you sleep better.
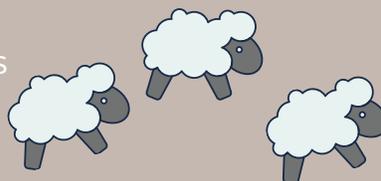
Trouble Falling Asleep? Try the 4-7-8 Method

Here's how it works:
- breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds
- hold your breath for 7 seconds
- exhale for 8 seconds

Repeat this a few times and you should fall into a relaxed state.

TOGETHER WE CAN *build a better future!*

POLK NORMAN MAHNOMEN
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5 PRACTICES FOR
SLEEP-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES

PROVIDE SLEEP EDUCATION

Create a "sleeping awareness" program or campaign to challenge the cultural notion that sleep is a waste of time or a weakness. The effort could stand on its own, or be a component of an employee wellness program or larger initiative.

- Introduce the idea that more work isn't better work - *look for ways to question practices that value hours worked more than impact and results, and let people know that when they're tired, they are less effective as leaders and managers. Have them see sleep as a simple, easy, and cheap way to boost productivity and efficiency.*
- Share the science - *people like knowing there is research behind these recommendations, show it!*
- Acknowledge the reality that people are overextended at work and in other areas of life - *life's challenges outside of work can have a massive impact on employee's sleeping habits. One leader cannot change this on their own overnight, but they can play an important role in shifting the culture.*

ENCOURAGE ROLE MODELS TO PUSH BACK ON THE 24/7 CULTURE

Enlist senior executives to support your efforts and help communicate the message that sleep supports the performance and wellbeing of leaders and the organization as a whole.

- Ensure leaders model desired behaviors - *don't brag about how little sleep you got last night or respond to emails late at night or over the weekend. This negatively influences the organizational culture and sets unhealthy expectations for others (and it's not healthy for the leader).*
- Meet with managers whose teams are prone to long hours or travel - *help them see the value of sleeping more for their own health. Encourage them to discuss sleep as a way to be more effective and support their employees in getting more rest.*
- Encourage senior leaders to bring up the sleep challenges the teams face and discuss possible solutions - *be transparent with your team about your choices to get more rest. Be candid when bringing up the issue and create a space for teams to discuss it openly.*

SUPPORT BOUNDARIES BETWEEN TIME FOR WORK AND LEISURE

Try to factor sleep into policies and schedules. Alongside the culture and awareness messages, take a look at organizational policies and norms that may discourage rest and recovery time and consider how to change them.

- Allow for transition times between home and work - *review schedules, break times, and limits to hours or shifts. Encourage employees to take time off for their personal wellness.*
- Support employee unavailability during vacations - *put the spotlight on outcomes and impact, rather than hours worked, and emphasize the value of truly "unplugging". Encourage employees to not answer their emails when they are on vacation time or outside of working hours.*

ENCOURAGE SLEEP AT WORK. *REALLY!*

Forget the notion of "don't sleep on the job." Instead, send the message that sleep is truly valued and leads to optimal performance at work.

- Provide nap rooms, energy pods, and comfortable chairs in your workspaces - *this reinforces that your organization is serious about creating space for rest.*
- Educate employees about how best to leverage such resources - *just providing a nap room isn't enough, communicating about the available resources is also important. If you don't actively encourage employees to take advantage, you'll likely find such resources unused!*

ACCOMODATE EMPLOYEE'S SCHEDULES

When possible and practical, consider offering flexible hours and telecommuting to allow employees to work when they're most likely to function at their best.

- Consider time off after travel, and work with teams or departments to set norms for availability across time zones and technology or accessibility expectations - *this is especially important for leaders who are managing remote employees.*
- Let departments pick a week each month to power down and get more rest — *some of the habits may stick, and positive changes may catch on and cascade throughout the organization.*

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