

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

– THE IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP

Have you ever tried to use a television remote when the battery is low? It either doesn't work properly, or at all. The remote needs power to function, and can't be expected to be fully operational while running low on charge. People operate the same way.

Sleep is the brain's fuel and our mind can't function at optimal capacity without a full tank. When our mind isn't in peak condition our body, mood, and overall well-being also suffer. A lack of sleep can be a contributing factor for a variety of mental health disorders including anxiety and depression.

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO SLEEP?

Working in the home building industry can mean long hours, physically demanding labor, and dealing with the pressures of deadlines and delays – which takes a toll on our physical and mental health. Here are some reasons it's also harder to sleep:

- **Constant Stimulation.** Between computers, phones, and televisions, it can feel like there's no escape from technology's gravitational pull. This can interfere with our ability to wind down and sleep.
- **The Blurred Line Between Work and Personal Time.** Constant access to work via your phone and computer means it's hard to know when you are truly off the clock. The lack of distinction between work and life also makes it harder to put the workday aside and relax.
- **Too Many Things to Do.** A cluttered mind is a restless mind. Busy schedules can make it hard to relax and wind down at night.

- **Lack of sleep is linked to a higher risk for accidents on the job** which include operating machinery and decision-making.
- **It can slow reaction times** in dangerous situations.
- **It decreases the ability** to problem solve & recognize warning signs which might prevent an accident.
- **Workers who are highly fatigued are 70% more likely** to be involved in an accident.

THE POWER OF SLEEP

Sleep, or lack of sleep, has an immense effect on our physical and mental health. Restful sleep allows the body and mind to reset and recharge, which has been linked to improvements in overall mood, higher cognitive function, and improved concentration.

In addition, mental health and sleep have a bidirectional relationship in which difficulty sleeping might be both a source and a consequence of mental health issues. While this can produce a negative feedback loop – poor sleep intensifies depression that further disrupts sleep – it also opens a potential avenue for treatments for depression.

For example, increasing the amount you sleep may reduce symptoms of depression. **When people seek treatment for mental health issues, it can make a difference.**

HOW TO SLEEP BETTER

- **Try to always get 7–8 hours of sleep.**
- **Stick to a consistent sleep schedule** to help your body get used to going to sleep when you want it too.
- **Turn off all your electronics.**
- **Establish a wind down routine** to get your body ready to sleep and ease it into a peaceful slumber.
- **If you nap – power nap only** as naps longer than 30 minutes can keep you up at night.
- **Create a relaxing sleeping space.**
- **Avoid caffeine and alcohol at night.**