

The Key topics this month are:

- Depression in men and how to help
- Good sleep habits



EVERYONE CAN TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN IMPROVING THE MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

2015
No:12

Men suffering from depression sometimes struggle to ask for help as this may be perceived as a sign of weakness

We all need to encourage men to be more proactive about seeking support. Asking for help and support should be seen as a sign of strength rather than a sign of weakness. Statistics show that 1 in 8 men will suffer from depression or anxiety during their lifetime. Of greater concern is the fact that of the 549 suicides reported in New Zealand in 2014, 75% of those who took their own lives were men!

Helping a male relative or loved one with depression

It often takes a wife, partner, or other family member to recognise a man's symptoms of depression. Even if a man suspects he's depressed, he may be ashamed that he's unable to cope on his own and only seek help when pressured to do so by a loved one.

Talking to a man about depression

The first step is to let him know that depression is common among men and is no way a negative reflection on his manhood. Many men don't exhibit typical depressive symptoms—but rather anger and reckless behaviour—so you may want to avoid using the word “depression” and try describing his behaviour as “stressed” or “overly tired.” It could help him to open up.

- Point out how his behaviour has changed, without being critical. For example, “You always seem to get stomach pains before work,” or “You haven't played tennis for months.”
- Suggest a general check-up with a doctor. He may be less resistant to seeing a family doctor than a mental health professional at first. A regular doctor can rule out medical causes of depression and then make a referral to someone trained in mental health for therapy or medication. Sometimes, this “professional” opinion makes all the difference for a man.
- Offer to help direct him to EAP and go with him on the first visit. Some men are resistant to talking to a stranger about their feelings, so try to remove roadblocks to him seeking help.
- Encourage him to make a list of symptoms to discuss. Focus on his feelings as well as physical ailments, and to be honest about his use of alcohol and drugs.

How to offer support to a man with depression

Supporting a man with depression requires understanding, patience, affection, and encouragement.

- Engage him in conversation and listen carefully. Do not disparage the feelings he expresses, but do point out realities and offer hope.
- Do not ignore remarks about suicide. Call your local mental health crisis assessment team or take them to the emergency department (ED) at your nearest hospital. If they are an immediate physical danger to themselves or others, call 111.
- Invite him for walks, outings, to the movies, and other activities. Be gently insistent if your invitation is refused.
- Encourage participation in activities that once gave pleasure, such as hobbies, sports, or cultural activities, but do not push him to undertake too much too soon. He needs diversion and company, but too many demands can increase his feelings of failure.
- Do not accuse him of faking his feelings, or expect him ‘to snap out of it.’ Instead, keep reassuring him that, with time and help, he will feel better.
- You may need to monitor whether he is taking prescribed medication or attending therapy sessions. Encourage him to follow instructions about the use of alcohol if he's prescribed antidepressants.
- Remember, you can't “fix” someone else's depression. You're not to blame for your loved one's depression or responsible for his happiness. Ultimately, recovery is in his hands.

GETTING PLENTY OF SLEEP BUT STILL EXHAUSTED?

BEFORE YOU BLAME YOUR BUSY LIFESTYLE, BURNING THE CANDLE AT BOTH ENDS, SPEAKING TO YOUR EAP PROFESSIONAL MAY BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE CAUSE OF YOUR UNEXPLAINED FATIGUE.

Sleep is a crucial building block for wellbeing and a key pillar of health, but its importance is frequently overlooked. Many people have issues with a lack of energy and motivation, and around 1/3 of all adults in the Western world report symptoms of insomnia. Poor sleep quality is related to many common health problems and can significantly affect work performance due to poor concentration and memory.

Research has shown disturbed sleep even more than workload is linked to fatigue!!

Sleep deprivation can cause work and road accidents.

Sleep deprivation can also impact the brain. It inhibits our ability to regulate moods or cope with emotional challenges – we revert to a more primal state.

Fatigue is described as:

“Lack of energy and motivation that can be physical, mental or both.”

Lack of sleep also ages us – lack of sleep causes the body to release cortisol which breaks down skin collagen.

Not only does sleep loss appear to stimulate appetite, it also stimulates cravings for high-fat, high-carbohydrate foods.

Sleep disorders and chronic sleep loss can put you at risk of:

- Heart disease
- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Irregular heartbeat
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Depression



GOOD SLEEP HABITS

Below are some tips on how to improve the quality of your sleep

- Reduce light, noise and extremes of temperature in the bedroom.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol before bedtime.
- Regular exercise late in the afternoon or in the early evening may deepen sleep but do not exercise vigorously within three hours of bedtime.
- In order to achieve relaxation at bedtime, allow about one hour of quiet activity prior to bedtime, such as reading, watching television or listening to music.
- Develop a bedtime ritual such as reading or listening to relaxing music, clean your teeth etc. so your body knows that you are getting ready to go to sleep.
- Don't go to bed too early. If you try to go to sleep too early before feeling sleepy you will have difficulty getting to sleep. This may make you feel irritated and frustrated about not falling asleep and anxious about how you will cope the next day.
- Avoid a heavy meal within two hours of bedtime; however, a light snack may help if you're hungry.
- Do not stay in bed if you are awake. If you go to bed when you are feeling tired and sleepy but do not fall asleep within about 20 minutes (estimated time only, do not use a clock), get out of bed, go to another room and do something mundane for a while. Repeat this procedure until you fall asleep quickly.
- Get up at the same time in the morning as this will help train your body clock. Try not to sleep in on weekends or after a late night.
- Try not to nap during the day too close to bedtime as this tends to reduce your sleepiness at night.

Through your Employee Assistant Programme you can speak to a Professional and explore possible strategies that will help and assist you.

REMEMBER, your EAP Programme is a confidential and professional service.

Your EAP Professional will work to assist you develop a plan for you to achieve a positive outcome.

HOW DO I ACCESS EAP?

To make a confidential appointment via Telephone, Face to Face, Video or WEB e-counselling

SCAN QR

📞 NZ 24/7 0800 327 669

📞 AU 24/7 1800 726 474

📞 Intl 24/7 +64 9 353 0906

@ www.eapservices.co.nz/booking

