MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

DECEMBER 2023

Healthy Habits That Can Lower Your Risk of Depression

A recent international study published in the Nature Mental Health journal found that certain lifestyle factors can reduce the risk of depression by 57%. This study, which examined data from nearly 290,000 people over a nine-year period, found that there are seven lifestyle factors associated with a lower risk of depression, and sleep was at the top of the list.

The study found that getting between seven and nine hours of sleep each night could reduce the risk of depression, including single depressive episodes and treatment-resistant depression, by 22%. Furthermore, the study revealed that participants with the lowest genetic risk for depression were 25% less likely to develop depression than those with the highest genetic risk, representing a much smaller impact than lifestyle factors.

The seven lifestyle factors that were linked to lower rates of depression included the following:

- Limiting alcohol consumption
- Keeping a healthy diet
- Engaging in regular physical activity
- Maintaining a healthy sleep schedule
- Avoiding smoking
- Minimizing sedentary behavior
- Having frequent social connections

Adopting a Healthy Lifestyle

You can reduce your risk of depression and boost your mental and physical health by altering your lifestyle. This may include eating a diet that's high in lean proteins and vegetables, reducing your alcohol intake and getting 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

Additionally, you can encourage healthy sleeping habits by going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, avoiding caffeine and nicotine before bed, putting your technology away prior to bedtime and ensuring you have a dark, quiet place to rest.

Conclusion

As evidenced by the previously mentioned study, you can reduce your risk of depression and boost your mental health with healthy lifestyle choices, such as getting adequate sleep and eating nutritious foods.

Preventing Burnout With Boundaries

Burnout is a chronic form of work-related stress, resulting in a state of physical or emotional exhaustion and a reduced sense of accomplishment. Left unaddressed, burnout can lead to fatigue, frustration, substance misuse, increased vulnerability to disease and insomnia. Fortunately, you can combat burnout by setting boundaries.

Overworking is one of the most common boundary problems contributing to burnout. This can lead to mental, physical and emotional fatigue, and is not sustainable over the long term.

Burnout is especially common among people pleasers or perfectionists, as these individuals are more likely to sacrifice their well-being to meet certain goals or impress their supervisors. It is also common among individuals who have a heavy workload, struggle with work-life balance and feel they have limited control over their work.

Setting boundaries is crucial to prevent and reduce burnout. This refers to the act of setting limits for others regarding how you're willing to be treated and what tasks you're willing to do. Specifically, setting boundaries can help you assert your needs and rights and prevent you from being mistreated.

Consider the following practices for setting boundaries at work:

- Reach out to your boss or manager if you need more time to complete an assignment.
- Ask for help if you begin feeling overwhelmed.
- Close your office door or schedule meetings with yourself to avoid unnecessary interruptions.
- Stand up for yourself if you see a fellow employee taking credit for your work.
- Speak to your boss or the HR department if you need help handling your workload or managing a workplace relationship.
- Understand what's included in your job responsibilities and what isn't.

Setting boundaries can help you reduce the risk of burnout and foster a healthy, sustainable working environment.

fifs Franconia Insurance & Financial Services

KEYSTONE