Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by Franconia Insurance & Financial Services.

THE IMPACT OF SLEEP ON MENTAL HEALTH

Not only is your physical health affected when you don't get enough sleep, but it also takes a toll on your mental health. In fact, mental health and sleep are so closely related that a lack of sleep can often lead to issues such as anxiety or depression.

Unfortunately, studies consistently show that Americans struggle to get a good night's sleep. According to the Institute of Medicine, insomnia—a common sleep disorder that causes one to have trouble falling or staying asleep—occurs in 30 million Americans.

This article explores the relationship between sleep and mental health and provides tips for getting a better night's sleep.

Side Effects of Lack of Sleep

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, you should get at least seven to eight hours of sleep per night. Lack of sleep or poor quality sleep can increase the risk of mental health disorders.

According to a study published in Sleep Medicine, sleep disturbances were linked to higher levels of psychological distress. Further, sleep sharpens cognitive skills such as attention, learning and memory. As a result, inadequate sleep can impact a person's ability to respond to minor stressors and events properly.

Notably, depression and anxiety are some of the most common mental health issues linked to lack of sleep. Depression is a depressed mood or loss of interest in activities, causing significant impairment in daily life.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, nearly 50% of people with depression are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder. Anxiety refers to feelings of tension, worried thoughts and sometimes even physical changes such as increased blood pressure or heart rate. Generally, these or other types of symptoms are recurring with anxiety.

Tips For A Better Night's Sleep

Sleep is important to your mental health and overall functioning. Consider the following tips for better sleep:

- Keep a consistent sleep schedule.
- Set a bedtime.
- Only go to bed when you're tired.
- Establish a bedtime routine.
- Make your bedroom quiet and relaxing.
- Limit exposure to bright light in the evenings.
- Turn off electronic devices at least 30 minutes before bedtime.
- Don't eat a large meal before bedtime.
- Exercise regularly.
- Maintain a healthy diet.

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- Avoid consuming caffeine in the afternoon or evening.

- Avoid consuming alcohol before bedtime.

- Reduce your fluid intake before bedtime.

Takeaway

Getting proper sleep is extremely important to improving and maintaining good mental health. For more information on how to improve your sleep habits or to address sleep issues, contact your doctor today.

Additionally, if you're concerned about your mental health, talk to your doctor, a licensed mental health professional or contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Helpline by calling 800-662-HELP (4357).