



# TheLexLine

A newsletter from The **Lexington** Group, Inc.  
Employee Assistance Program

**SUMMER 2007**

## For Your Information

### ◆ TAKE A BREAK

Block out time in your daily schedule to take a break. A Harvard Medical School study says as little as 10 to 15 minutes a day of private time can cut down on stress, headaches, colds, poor sleep and increase your productivity.

### ◆ BETTER COMMUNICATION FOR COUPLES

For better communication, do not be "invested" in having to be right all of the time. Being right is not the point. If you must be right, you are not able to listen nor communicate because you have set up a barrier already. If you are always right that means the other person is always wrong. This cannot be true.

### ◆ WEIGHT LOSS TIP

Don't rely on exercise alone to lose weight; combine exercise and diet. According to a review of 43 weight-loss studies dating back to 1985, exercise alone won't help you lose weight if you continue eating an unhealthy diet. The review concluded that a healthy diet actually does more to promote weight loss than exercise. Exercise, however, is a key factor in keeping weight off once it is lost.



## Sleep: More Important Than You Think!



Everyone knows the difficulty of dragging through a day after getting too few hours of sleep the night before. But do you know why 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night is the recommended amount for most adults?

Recent advancements in medical science have given us the ability to learn more about sleep (and sleep deprivation) and its relationship to our physical, mental and emotional health. Here's what the most-recent research is reporting:

### **Weight gain and obesity**

A study from the University of Chicago found that lack of sleep makes you want to eat more. The reason? Sleep loss appears to trigger changes in hormones that regulate appetite and stimulate hunger for high-calorie foods like cookies and chips. Researchers believe that we crave high-calorie foods when we're tired because they offer up instant energy. According to a Columbia University study, people who get less than the recommended seven to eight hours of sleep a night are up to 73% more likely to be obese.

### **Cardiovascular health, cancer and diabetes**

According to the Harvard-run Nurses' Health Study, failing to get enough sleep or sleeping at odd hours heightens the risk for a variety of major illnesses, including heart disease, cancer and diabetes. A report from the study summarizes that a sleep deficit may put the body into a state of high alert, increasing the production of stress hormones and driving up blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart attacks and strokes. Additionally, people who are sleep-deprived have elevated levels of substances in the blood that indicate a heightened state of inflammation in the body, which is now also recognized as a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes.

### **Depression and mood disorders**

It is well-known that sleep problems can be a key sign of depression. However, the latest medical research now reports that the reverse is also true – sleep disorders can actually trigger depression or other mood disorders. The explanation? Sleep, mood and mental/emotional behaviors all share a complex mix of chemistry in the brain. Disordered sleep appears to set off an array of forces in the brain and nervous system that can result in a depressed mood, major depressive episode or other mood disorder.

### **Mental function and job performance**

According to a Better Sleep Council survey, sleep-deprived workers reported the following as work-related consequences from lack of sleep:

- 31 percent reported a decline in quality of work
- 31 percent reported impaired thinking or judgment at work
- 30 percent reported trouble retaining information

The survey summarized that "sleep deprivation impacts your alertness, your productivity and your ability to socially interact with co-workers."

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## SLEEP: MORE IMPORTANT

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### Safety at work or while driving

Researchers say that excessive sleepiness contributes to a greater than twofold-higher risk of sustaining a workplace injury. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration conservatively estimates that there are 100,000 car accidents each year caused by drowsiness, and these crashes result in 71,000 injuries and 1,500 deaths.

### How much sleep should you get?

Despite the growing scientific evidence that suggests that too little sleep or erratic sleep may harm your health, many people remain indifferent to the importance of sleep. Forty-one percent of women in a nationwide poll conducted by the Better Sleep Council didn't think cutting back on their sleep would harm their health. These women reported getting six hours of sleep or less each night, which is an insufficient amount of sleep for most adults. According to the latest research, the human body still needs 7-8 hours per night (the recommended average for adults).

### What causes sleep deprivation?

The causes of sleep loss include:

- Not allowing enough time for sleep
- Anything that causes insomnia or poor quality sleep
- Excessive worry, depression
- Sleep disorders
- Repeated awakenings from noise
- Working at night, shift work
- Medical illness causing pain, difficulty breathing, etc.

### What to do

If you have difficulty with your sleep for any reason, take action. Most sleep difficulties are either caused or reinforced by lifestyle habits or behaviors that are antagonistic toward good, restful sleep. Start by learning more about sleep and good sleep habits. There are many resources at your local book store, library or online (National Sleep Foundation website: [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)) that are filled with information and tips about how to get a better night's sleep.

If you make changes, have done all you can, and still are not getting good, quality sleep, talk to your doctor. You may have a sleep disorder that is resulting from a physical problem such as diabetes, Sleep Apnea or Restless Legs Syndrome. Or an emotional problem like anxiety or depression may be disrupting your sleep. Your doctor can recommend appropriate treatment.

## How To Build A Better Relationship With Your Boss



Below are some ideas that can help you develop a more effective relationship with your boss:

- Schedule time to talk with your boss one on one. Try to get a sense of your boss' personality and when it's best to approach your boss to talk. Make an effort to learn how to best communicate with him/her. Remember, bosses are people doing their job just like you.
- Bring problems to your boss in person and in private. Don't challenge him/her openly, in front of co-workers or other management.
- Let your boss know that you appreciate the things he/she does and how difficult many of his/her decisions are.
- If you disagree with a new procedure or rule, go to your boss with alternatives and solutions, not recriminations and a bad attitude.
- Do your job as a professional and build a reputation as someone who gets things done without complaint or problems. This type of reputation will give you credibility with your superiors that you cannot achieve in any other way. It also allows you to disagree sometimes, without coming off as a trouble maker.
- Learn to pick your battles. There are times when it is just better to keep quiet and do what you are told. Not every battle is worth fighting and winning can cost you more in the end than the battle was worth.
- Take responsibility for your mistakes and show your boss that you are big enough to admit when you are wrong.
- Be a team player. Bring positive information to your boss about co-workers or jobs well done and not always complaints and difficulties. Commiserate with him/her about a tough day or reminisce about common experiences that you shared on the job.
- Don't go over your boss' head with an issue or problem without talking to him/her about it first. No one likes it when people go behind their backs.

**Your EAP is here to help:** Remember, your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help you with workplace issues. If you need help, why not contact a professional EAP counselor today? We're here to help you.

## The Lexington Group

### EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Caring and individualized help for personal and family concerns is only a phone call away.

For confidential help 24 hours a day, call The Lexington Group, an international Employee Assistance Program provider at:

<b>United States</b>	<b>1-800-676 HELP (4357)</b>
<b>Canada</b>	<b>1-800-567-4343</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>0-800-169-6706</b>
<b>Mexico</b>	<b>001-888-819-7162</b>
<b>Puerto Rico</b>	<b>1-800-676-4357</b>
<b>TTY</b>	<b>1-800-955-8339</b>
<b>website</b>	<b><a href="http://www.the-lexington-group.com">www.the-lexington-group.com</a></b>