



# TheLexLine

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

**WINTER 2019**

## 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

Make time for each other. Scheduling time together on a weekly basis, can help keep you close and help alleviate stress in your relationship.

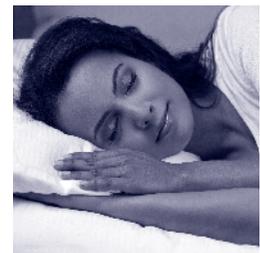
### WEIGHT LOSS TIP

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 1995, 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.

## WELLNESS

### 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 recent study 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 an additional 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 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.

Another study has found that when people slept less than six hours a night on average, their risk of adult-onset diabetes doubled. Researchers suspect that in an effort to give you more energy when you're tired, your body may raise your blood glucose levels – a condition that, if it persists, is a major risk factor for diabetes.

#### Depression and mood disorders

It is well-known that sleep problems can be a key sign of depression. At least 80% of depressed people experience insomnia – difficulty falling asleep or, most often, staying asleep. 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

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### Sleep more important...

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brain and nervous system that can result in a depressed mood, major depressive episode or other mood disorder.

### Memory, learning and job performance

In a recent study, adults who were allowed just five hours of sleep a night for a week continuously scored poorly on tests.

Only after they slept eight hours for two nights in a row did their scores improve.

Researchers say by cutting your sleep short, you miss out on REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, which helps consolidate information and enhance memory.

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.”

### 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 (NHTSA) reports you're three times more likely to be in a car accident caused by poor sleep than by drunk driving. The NHTSA 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.

### What to do

According to the latest research, the human body still needs 7-8 hours of sleep per night. Quality sleep is vital to your health, happiness and productivity. If sleep is a problem for you or one of your dependents, contact an EAP Professional for confidential counseling, referrals or information. We're here to help you.

## RELATIONSHIPS

# Forgiveness – Good For Your Health and Happiness



If you find yourself unable to forgive those who have hurt you – no matter how small or major the offense – think again about what you are actually doing to yourself. Holding onto bitterness, pain, blame, anger or hostility is a form of internal stress that can undermine your health and quality of life. When we're unforgiving, we are the ones who pay the price over and over.

### Forgiving lowers stress

In a 2001 study of college students, study subjects were instructed to either dwell on the injustices done to them or imagine themselves forgiving their offenders. Those who focused on unforgiving responses showed signs of increased stress – their blood pressure surged, heart rate increased, facial muscles tensed, and their negative feelings escalated. Conversely, forgiving responses induced calmer feelings and physical responses. According to the latest medical research, forgiveness can lead to:

- reduced stress and hostility
- fewer symptoms of depression, anxiety and chronic pain
- lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse
- improved heart function / lower blood pressure
- improved relationships
- improved sleep

### Learning to forgive

Forgiveness is not excusing someone else's wrong behavior, nor does it necessarily include reconciliation with the person who wronged us. Forgiveness means no longer dwelling on the wounds that keep us tied to the past. By learning to forgive, you take responsibility for how you feel and take back the power from others to keep hurting you.

The process of forgiveness begins by recognizing, accepting and working through angry and hurt feelings. Journaling, writing letters (even if they are un-mailed), or talking with a trusted friend can be helpful. Seek out information or books about “how to forgive” or seek the help of a therapist or other mental health professional to help you through the process of forgiveness.

# 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:

United States	1-800-676-HELP (4357)	Marshall Islands	1-800-676-4357
Canada	1-800-567-4343	Mexico	001-888-819-7162
England	0-800-169-6706	Puerto Rico	1-800-676-4357
Cayman Islands	1-855-328-1185	TTY	1-800-955-8339
Ireland	1-800-812-411		