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Sleep is Your Superpower Discussion Guide

Often people forget the power sleep can have in improving one's mental and physical wellness. Let's use this poster to explore the benefits of sleep and strategies for getting consistently good sleep.

Discussion question: How much sleep does the average adult need?

Solicit a few participant responses.

The average adult needs seven or more hours of sleep. To maximize the benefit, it is not about simply getting a certain number of hours of sleep. The sleep needs to be of good quality and on a regular schedule. This will result in more consistently feeling refreshed when you wake up in the morning.

Discussion Question: Why is getting enough sleep important?

Possible answers include:

- Get sick less often
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Lower your risk for serious health problems, like diabetes and heart disease
- Reduce stress and improve your mood
- Think more clearly and do better in school and at work
- Get along better with people
- Make good decisions and avoid injuries – for example, drowsy drivers cause thousands of car accidents every year

If you have trouble falling asleep, try making changes to your routine, which could include:

- Change what you do during the day
- Create a comfortable sleep environment
- Set a bedtime routine

Keep in mind that it's normal to have trouble sleeping every now and then. However, if you experience these problems regularly, you may have a [sleeping disorder](#). Consult a medical professional for testing and possible treatment.

Discussion Question: What are adjustments to your daily routine that can make it easier to fall asleep at night?

Possible answers include:

- Try to spend some time outdoors
- Plan your physical activity for earlier in the day, not right before you go to bed
- Stay away from caffeine late in the day
- Limit daytime naps to 20 minutes or less
- If you consume alcohol, drink only in moderation (less than one standard drink in a day for women and less than two standard drinks in a day for men) – alcohol can keep you from sleeping well
- Don't eat a big meal close to bedtime
- If you smoke tobacco, make a plan to quit – the nicotine in cigarettes can make it harder for you to sleep

Discussion Question: How can you create a good sleep environment?

Possible answers include:

- Make sure your bedroom is dark – if there are streetlights near your window, try putting up light-blocking curtains
- Keep your bedroom quiet or use white noise to block out sudden spikes in sound.
- Consider keeping electronic devices – like TVs, computers, and smartphones – out of your bedroom

Discussion Question: What are the steps to creating a good bedtime routine?

Possible answers include:

- Go to bed at the same time every night
- Try to get the same amount of sleep every night
- Avoid eating, talking on the phone, or reading in bed
- Avoid using computers or smartphones, watching TV, or playing video games at bedtime
- If you find yourself at night worrying about things, use these [tips to help manage stress](#).

If you're still awake after staying in bed for more than 20 minutes, get up. Do something relaxing, like reading or meditating, until you feel sleepy.

Use our discussion today to identify one small actionable step you can take this week to begin improving your sleep. Remember, sleep is your superpower towards better mental and physical wellness!

Resources

The content in this discussion guide is based on information from Health.Gov found specifically at <https://health.gov/myhealthfinder/topics/everyday-healthy-living/mental-health-and-relationships/get-enough-sleep>.