

Sleep Is Your Superpower

CONVERSATION STARTER

INTRODUCTION

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

In this sleep hygiene conversation starter, questions to ask and points to make verbatim are in **bold**. Notes for facilitators are in *italics*.

FACILITATION CONTENT

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.

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:

- Changing what you do during the day
- Creating a comfortable sleep environment

- Setting 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 [sleep disorder](#). Consult a medical professional for testing and possible treatment.

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 females and less than two standard drinks in a day for males) – 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

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

What are steps you can take to create a healthy 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 worrying at night, use these tips to help manage stress:

- Get up and out of bed if you are still awake after 20 minutes of trying to sleep

- Practice relaxation techniques (i.e meditating, guided imagery, controlled breathing) until you feel sleepy
- Read a book
- Write down what is making you anxious before bed

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 toward better mental and physical wellness!

RESOURCES

The content in this discussion guide is based on information from the [“Get Enough Sleep” section](#) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website.

You should also share the poster below with your chapter.

