

Mental Health in your Workplace: Topics and Issues

Sleep Disorders

What is a sleep disorder?

Sleep disorders (or sleep-wake disorders) involve problems with the quality, timing, and amount of sleep, which result in daytime distress and impairment in functioning. Sleep-wake disorders often occur along with medical conditions or other mental health conditions, such as depression, anxiety, or cognitive disorders. Did you know that 36% of the adults in the UK struggle to fall asleep at least once a week and 35% of individuals in the UK said lack of proper sleep made them anxious?

What are the symptoms of a sleep disorder at work?

- Daytime fatigue and/or strong urge to take naps during the day
- A decline in motivation at work
- Impaired performance at work
- Irritability
- Increased stress
- Lack of concentration

What can you do to help an employee with a sleep disorder?

Supporting an employee with a sleep disorder is similar to supporting an employee with anxiety or depression (especially as the insomnia is a common symptom of anxiety and depression). The best support you can give is facilitating open conversations with your employee and discussing the adjustments that might help them. You should also signpost to a GP if your employee is not already receiving help with their sleeping disorder.

Some reasonable adjustments might include:

- Reassigning workload or allowing your employee control of their workload
- Granting time off, especially to attend appointments
- Being flexible with working hours

- Allowing a change of working environment
- Provide increased supervision and one to one support

Sources and Further Reading

<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/sleep-disorders/what-are-sleep-disorders>

<https://www.healthline.com/health/sleep/disorders>

<https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/supporting-employees-with-sleep-problems-the-evidence-base>

[Sleep Statistics UK \[2023\] \(cybercrew.uk\)](#)