

Workplace Employee

March 2021

Testimonials

Here are some quotes from employees who recently called on Concern for a Counseling Consultation:

"I've had more than half a dozen contacts with your office and have been impressed each and every time. The staff is so kind and positive, and most importantly, interested in getting you help. I share my enthusiasm for your office and our EAP program will all my coworkers, and I think it makes the process seem so much more doable. My family and I appreciate you all very much."

"Such a good resource. It really helped me when I needed it. The fact that my work pays for the initial sessions helped alleviate the pressure of worrying about that too."



Tips for Success

Are You Getting Your ZZZ's?

Sleep is often the first thing to go when people feel pressed for time. Many regard sleep as a luxury and think that the benefits of staying awake longer outweigh the costs. But a good night's sleep is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. In fact, sleep is as important to our health as eating, drinking, and breathing. Yet, according to the National Sleep Foundation, 40 million Americans suffer from sleep disorders such as sleep apnea, insomnia, and restless leg syndrome, and 60% of adults report having sleep problems a few nights a week or more. Over time, that sleep debt can profoundly affect memory, learning, creativity, productivity, and emotional stability, as well as your physical health. While everyone's individual sleep needs vary, research shows that most people require seven or eight hours of sleep to function optimally. Here are a few resources if you would like to learn more.

Sleep IQ Quiz — The National Sleep Foundation

The Benefits of a Good Night's Sleep — Ted Talk (Teens) (5.45 min)

Common Sleep Disorders — Sleep Foundation.

Sleep Diary — Sleep Foundation.

The Importance of Sleep, Especially Now! — Tip Sheet, Concern

Check Out Concern's Mental Wellness Resource Center



You'll find resilience-building toolkits to help promote your physical and mental wellbeing. Toolkits include practical self-help tools, apps, resources and guidance for **Stress, Anxiety, Depression, and Substance Use**.

60-Day Checkup! How Are Your New Year's Resolutions Progressing?

Have you gotten off track or allowed your New Year's resolutions to slip to the wayside? Here are some ways to stoke your enthusiasm and get back on track: 1) Forget the guilt. Instead, jump back to working toward your goals. 2) Do a check. Was the goal too big or was it unrealistic? If so, pare the size or degree

continued...

60-Day Checkup, *continued...*

of required effort. For example, instead of exercising every day, make it your goal to exercise three or four days a week. 3) Journal about your progress. These written reflections are proven devices to help you maintain momentum. 5) Get going!

Have You Practiced Mindfulness?

Studies show that practicing mindfulness helps people initiate and sustain positive changes to their physical health and emotional wellbeing. Now, through a partnership with eMindful, a leading provider of evidence-based solutions, you will have access to eM Life—an entire suite of live and on-demand mindfulness solutions.

With eM Life you can...

- Learn new skills
- Have a truly personalized experience with access to the right mindfulness solution tailored to how you're feeling in the moment
- Explore hundreds of hours of on-demand content on topics such as stress, sleep, weight loss, diversity and inclusion, and self-care
- Participate in live daily 14-minute mindfulness programs led by experts multiple times each day
- Discover resources to help you build and sustain healthy habits.

Multi-Week Mindfulness Programs

- Better Living with Diabetes™
- Cultivating Compassion
- Living Well with Chronic Pain™
- Mindfully Overcoming Addictive Behaviors
- Mindfulness at Work™
- Medical Professional Mindfulness Program
- Mindfulness Based Cancer Recovery™
- QuitSmart© Mindfully
- Stress Less, Live More™
- Weight Balance for Life™

Give it a try! Whether you're new to mindfulness or an avid practitioner, there's something on eM Life for everyone.

This exciting new benefit will begin in early March. Watch your mail for more details.

Employees and eligible dependents can request Concern counseling and work/life services 24/7 by calling or visiting our website.

Call: 800.344.4222
employees.concernhealth.com



DREAM A LITTLE DREAM OF SLEEP

Resetting Your Circadian Clock

SLEEP. As far as physical health is concerned, it ranks in importance with eating, drinking, and, yes, even breathing. Despite this, healthy slumber is often missing from our daily routines. Have you ever traded a good night's rest to finish up that work project? How about to read *just one more* chapter in a book or to binge-watch a few more episodes in your favorite streaming series?

If so, you're not alone. But, considering the serious toll sleep deprivation can take on your body and mind, it might be time to make those Zs a bigger priority.

Here's a snapshot of what skimping on sleep looks like:

Short-Term Effects of Sleep Deprivation

- ↓ Decrease in mood, concentration, and productivity
- ↑ Increase in errors and accidents

Longer-Term Effects of Sleep Deprivation

- ↓ Decrease in immune and cognitive functioning
- ↑ Increase in risk of weight gain, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease

In the past, we've discussed [how we can increase our productivity by honoring our bodies' ultradian rhythms](#), which regulate periods of alertness and fatigue. Similarly, if you're suffering from the effects of either short- or long-term sleep deprivation, it's probably time to pay attention to the rhythms of your circadian clock.

The Tick Tock of the Circadian Clock

We might like to believe we're the masters of our domain, able to set our body's schedule at our own discretion — an all-nighter here, a compensatory catnap there. Unfortunately, we don't have that much control, as the quality and timing of our sleep is largely the prerogative of our circadian clock, the body's internal timekeeper. Through the strategic regulation of the sleep hormone melatonin, the circadian clock signals to the body when to wake up and when to hit the hay.

The process looks something like this: When biological night approaches, the circadian timekeeper cues our brain to flood our bloodstream with yawn-inducing melatonin. With the break of morning light and increasing a.m. temperatures, the brain knows to dial back melatonin to gently wake us. At least, that's the sequence in healthy sleepers.



If you notice that it's hard for your body to ease into sleep at night and that you typically wake up in a fog, your melatonin cycles are likely out of sync with your daily schedule. This is a common issue, as modern “nighttime” in the age of electric lights and gadgets rarely mirrors the biological nighttime set by the natural world. This misalignment can throw our bodies and minds for a loop.

The good news is that your circadian clock can be reset like a wristwatch and put back in sync. Only, instead of replacing a battery or rewinding some gears, rebooting your circadian rhythm entails making some behavioral changes to help return your body to a more natural equilibrium.

How to Go All Natural with Your Sleep

It took hundreds of thousands of years for our circadian clocks to adapt to our environments — and that physical conditioning isn't going away anytime soon. This conditioning also means that we can often develop healthier sleep patterns by taking a *return to nature* approach, such as:



Rewiring with a Weekend Away:

Take a cue from the early humans and become one with nature by surrounding yourself with it. If you can, take a weekend camping trip away *sans* electronics. Go to sleep when it gets dark, and rise with the sun to reset your natural clock.



Restart with a Staycation:

If camping just isn't your thing, you can simulate a weekend trip without leaving the comfort of your hometown, by:

- Getting outside a few days in a row for adequate daytime light exposure
- Limiting tech use during the day, tapering off in the afternoons, and unplugging electronics in the hours before sleep (when the body starts to churn out melatonin)
- Setting your bedtime earlier than usual, shortly after it gets dark

Recent sleep studies show that we can reset our circadian clocks by following this approach for as little as 2-3 days. Once you've performed a natural reset, there are plenty of other behavioral changes you can make to your routine to support more regular and restful sleep.



Nap Smart:

To reap the benefit of naps without interrupting your natural rhythms, try limiting them to 20 - 30 minutes or less.



Hop out of Bed:

If more than 20 minutes have elapsed since you've turned in and you can't fall asleep, get out of bed and do something relaxing, like meditating or drinking caffeine-free tea. But remember — no electronics.



Bedtime Best Practices:

Sometimes good sleep requires good preparation. That entails:

- Filtering out ambient noise with a white noise machine or fan
- Keeping your room cooled to around 67 or 68 degrees
- Avoiding afternoon caffeine
- Exercising regularly for a rest well-earned

For customized tips and more strategies for better sleep, visit [Concern's Digital Platform](https://employees.concernhealth.com) by logging in to employees.concernhealth.com, and selecting the “Access Services” button in the upper right menu.

This newsletter is intended for informational purposes only, and should not be used to replace professional advice.

If you find your level of stress is impacting your well-being, you can contact us for additional help and support.

Call: 800.344.4222
employees.concernhealth.com



Your digital front door to everything Concern has to offer. After a quick digital assessment, Luma will create a custom dashboard of select life balance solutions and self-help tools personalized to your needs and will match you to a counselor when needed.

Chabot Las Positas

Services are available to all regular benefit-eligible employees, and to their spouse/domestic partner and dependent children up to age 26 if enrolled in the HR department.



Visit employees.concernhealth.com and log in with your company code **CHABOT LAS POSITAS** for easy access to all available Concern

Counseling Benefits

In-Person, Telephone, & Video Counseling

Concern offers assessment, crisis intervention, referrals, and confidential short-term counseling for help with personal issues. Up to 3 visits, per problem, per year with a skilled Concern counselor for help with: Difficulty with relationships • Emotional distress • Job stress • Communication / conflict issues • Alcohol or drug problems • Loss and death

Help Wherever You Are

Accessible from your phone, tablet or computer. Easily get the help you need, when you need it:

- Simple digital intake
- Client-counselor matching
- Video counseling self-scheduling
- Guided self-help tools
- Digital therapeutics

Life Balance Solutions

Parent & Childcare

Referral available to quality providers for a variety of services, including: Family day care homes • Infant centers & Preschools • Adoption Assistance • Before/after school care • In-home childcare • 24-hr care • School-age & College Assistance • Complimentary New Baby Kit

Financial Coaching

Get sound financial guidance to help you manage money wisely and develop long-term financial security. Referral includes up to two 30-minute telephone consultations. Example topics: Money management • Debt management • Identity theft resolution • Tax issues

Adult Care Resources

We'll help you find the most appropriate resources to help you care for an elderly or disabled relative. A complimentary copy of **How to Care for Aging Parents** is available upon request.

Legal Consultation

We can link you to a local attorney for a free 30-minute office or telephone consultation for legal issues not related to employment. These may include: Estate planning • Wills & living trusts • Landlord-tenant matters • Immigration • IRS matters • On-line legal forms