

2024



# PEER SUPPORT BASICS

Reaching out can make all the difference

## June Newsletter



Peer Support Program  
National Program that's Internationally Recognized and Affiliated

# Local 591 National Peer Support

Credit IAM EAP, LAP

June 2024

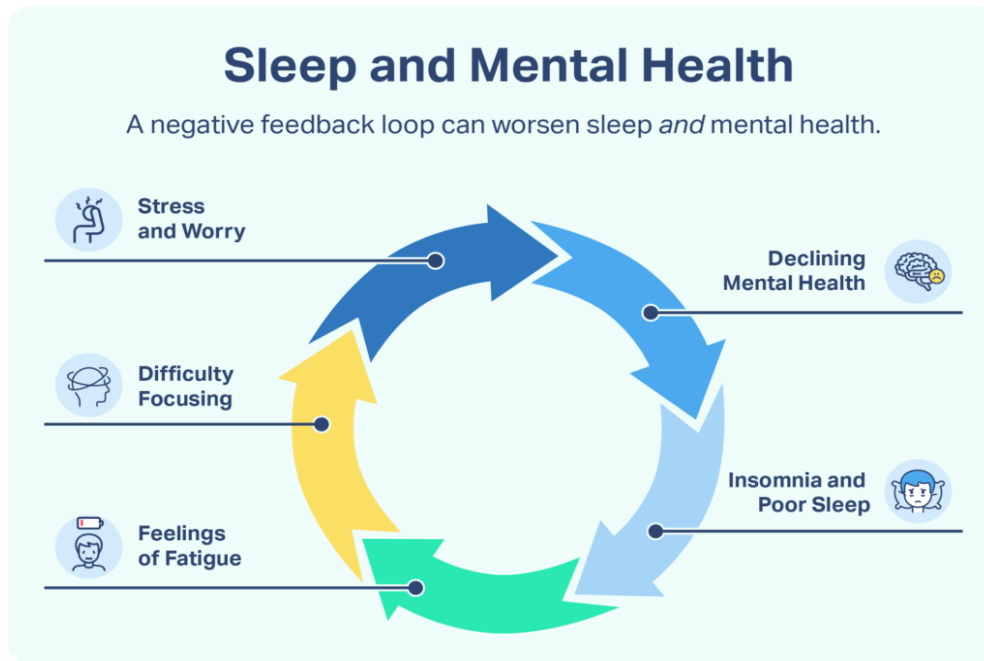
## Sleep and Mental Health

(excerpts from <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/mental-health>)

### How Is Mental Health Related to Sleep?

Brain activity fluctuates during sleep, increasing and decreasing during different [sleep stages](#) that make up the sleep cycle. Each stage plays a role in brain health, allowing activity in different parts of the brain to ramp up or down and enabling better thinking, learning, and memory. Research has also uncovered that brain activity during sleep has profound effects on emotional and mental health.

Sufficient sleep, especially rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, facilitates the brain's processing of emotional information. During sleep, the brain works to evaluate and remember thoughts and memories, and it appears that a lack of sleep is especially harmful to the consolidation of positive emotional content. This can influence mood and emotional reactivity and is tied to mental health disorders and their severity, including the risk of suicidal ideation.



As a result, the traditional view, which held that sleep problems were a symptom of mental health disorders, is increasingly being called into question. Instead, it is becoming clear that there is a bidirectional relationship between sleep and mental health in which sleeping problems may be both a cause and consequence of mental health problems. Further

research is needed to identify the diverse connections between sleep and mental health as well as how their multifaceted relationship can be influenced by numerous factors in any specific person's case.

### Depression

It is estimated that over 300 million people worldwide have [depression](#), a type of mood disorder marked by feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Around 75% of depressed people show symptoms of insomnia. Many people with depression also suffer from excessive daytime sleepiness and hypersomnia, which is sleeping too much.

There is growing evidence suggests that poor sleep may induce or exacerbate depression. Sleep problems and depressive symptoms are mutually reinforcing. While this can create a negative feedback

loop — poor sleep worsens depression that then further interrupts sleep — it also opens a potential avenue for new types of treatment for depression. For example, for at least some people, a focus on improving sleep may have a corollary benefit of reducing the symptoms of depression.

## Improve Sleep Habits

(excerpts from <https://www.sleepfoundation.org/mental-health>)

A common cause of sleeping problems is poor [sleep hygiene](#). Stepping up sleep hygiene by cultivating habits and a bedroom setting that are conducive to sleep can go a long way in reducing sleep disruptions.

Examples of steps towards healthier sleep habits include:

- Having a set bedtime and maintaining a steady sleep schedule
- Finding ways to wind-down, such as with [relaxation techniques](#), as part of a standard routine before bedtime
- Avoiding [alcohol](#), tobacco, and [caffeine](#) in the evening
- Dimming lights and putting away electronic devices for an hour or more before bed
- Getting regular exercise and natural light exposure during the daytime
- Maximizing comfort and support from your mattress, pillows, and bedding
- Blocking out excess light and sound that could disrupt sleep

Finding the best routines and bedroom arrangement may take some trial and error to determine what's best for you, but that process can pay dividends in helping you fall asleep quickly and stay asleep through the night.



## Sleep Facts

- Mental health impacts thoughts, feelings, and actions and influences our ability to handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.
- Quality sleep is crucial for good mental health, but sleep issues can worsen mental health conditions, and mental health problems can lead to poor sleep.
- Adhering to sleep hygiene practices can improve sleep quality and mental well-being.

# Insights By Dave

Dealing with stressors both at work and at home can be challenging, but there are several strategies you can employ to cope effectively:

1. **Identify the Stressors:** Understand what specifically is causing stress in both environments. Is it a heavy workload at work, conflicts with colleagues, or personal issues at home? Identifying the root causes can help you address them more effectively.
2. **Set Boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries between work and home life. Try to keep work-related activities and concerns separate from your personal time as much as possible. This might involve setting specific work hours and sticking to them, and avoiding work-related emails or tasks during personal time.
3. **Practice Time Management:** Prioritize tasks and manage your time efficiently to reduce overwhelm. Break large tasks into smaller, more manageable steps, and try to tackle them one at a time. This can help prevent feeling overwhelmed by the demands of both work and home responsibilities.
4. **Communicate Effectively:** Communicate openly with your colleagues at work and with your family members at home about your needs and concerns. Expressing your feelings and setting realistic expectations can help alleviate stress and prevent misunderstandings.
5. **Take Breaks:** Incorporate regular breaks into your workday to relax and recharge. This can help prevent burnout and improve your productivity. Similarly, make time for leisure activities and relaxation at home to unwind and de-stress.
6. **Practice Self-Care:** Make self-care a priority both at work and at home. Engage in activities that promote physical and mental well-being, such as exercise, meditation, hobbies, or spending time with loved ones.
7. **Seek Support:** Don't hesitate to seek support from colleagues, friends, or family members when you're feeling overwhelmed. Talking to someone you trust can provide emotional support and help you gain perspective on your challenges.
8. **Set Realistic Expectations:** Be realistic about what you can accomplish both at work and at home. Avoid putting too much pressure on yourself to excel in every area of your life, and be willing to delegate tasks or ask for help when needed.
9. **Seek Professional Help if Necessary:** If you're struggling to cope with stressors despite trying various coping strategies, consider seeking support from a mental health professional. Therapy or counseling can provide valuable tools and techniques for managing stress effectively.

Remember that coping with stress is a gradual process, and it's okay to seek help and take things one step at a time. Prioritize self-care and be kind to yourself as you navigate through challenging situations.

To speak to someone, please contact our team at 817-591-4596.

# Benefits and You.

## Life Events

You also may change certain elections mid-year if you experience a Life Event and your change is consistent with that event. Allowable changes vary by the type of Life Event you experience.

You must register the Life Event within 60 days of the event with the American Airlines Benefits Service Center. You must submit proof of the dependent's eligibility to the [American Airlines Benefits Service Center](#) within 31 days of the date the documentation is requested. Proof of eligibility will not be considered unless it is submitted after the date you receive the request from the American Airlines Benefits Service Center. Note that the request will come in the form of an email and/or a mailing to your address on file. **If you miss the 31 day deadline (60 days for Medicaid or CHIP), your Life Event change will not be processed.** You will have to wait until the next Annual Enrollment Period or until you experience another Life Event, whichever happens earlier, to make changes to your benefits.

When you experience a Life Event, remember these guidelines:

- Most Life Events are processed online through the American Airlines Benefits Service Center. Visit Life Events on Jetnet for a complete list of all Life Events and the correct procedures for processing your changes.
- If you register your Life Event within 60 days of the event (as applicable), your changes are retroactive to the date the Life Event occurred (or the date Proof of Good Health is approved, as applicable).
- The Company reserves the right to request documented proof of 24 dependent eligibility criteria for benefits at any time. If you do not provide proof of eligibility when requested, or if any of the information you provide is not true and correct, your actions may result in termination of benefits coverage.
- Any change in your cost for coverage applies on the date the change is effective.

Retroactive contributions or deductions will be deducted from one or more paychecks after your election is processed at the discretion of the Plan Administrator.

- If you experience a Life Event within 60 days of the end of the Plan Year, you cannot change your election under the HCFSA, LPFSA and DCFSA, or enroll in these benefits.

**More to come.**



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