SLEEP ROUTINES BUILD RESILIENCY

Sleep boosts our immune system and enhances our emotional health, staving off depression. Sleep has become a common topic lately with the pandemic impacting so many parts of our lives.

Dealing with a pandemic causes our minds to race. We are trying to figure things out: the losses, uncertainty, new schedules, responsibilities, finances, and health concerns of our own and of others. Lack of sleep makes everything worse. Feeling anxious, irritable, hangry, impatient, guilty, unproductive and unmotivated, all contribute to lack of sleep and negative self-talk. Getting enough sleep helps us to take one day at a time and focus on what we need to do for today. By focusing on just today, it can prevent overwhelm about what is ahead.

Now is the time to work on sleep habits in order to build the physical and mental resilience that we will need for the challenging days to come. A sleep routine is what we do every time we prepare for sleep, no matter the shift or time of day. It is best to start the routine an hour before you want to sleep. It will take a few days to train your body/mind to relax and smoothly transition to sleep. Some things that are working for your colleagues with developing a sleep routine include:

If you wake up in the night and can't fall back asleep, don't get angry or frustrated. Waking up in the night is sometimes part of these uncertain times.

Instead try:
- Listening to an app like Headspace (free to healthcare workers for 3 months) or CALM
- Doing a full body relaxation (tighten your muscles and then relax them-with each part of your body, moving from your toes up to the top of your head)
- Trying some deep breathing:
  - An easy one is 4, 4, 4: Breath in for 4, hold for 4 and out for 4
- Getting out of bed and doing something boring—read a how-to book
- Praying or reading a prayer book that helps you to feel more hopeful
- Many are sleeping alone due to not wanting to spread germs. This can be a tough adjustment and takes some time to transition

Put on pajamas and get comfortable	No screen time within an hour of bedtime	No caffeine within a few hours of bedtime	Eat a light snack	Take a shower or bath
Reading (not on a tablet)	Enjoy a quiet hobby: sewing, crossword puzzles	Meditate, pray, stretch	Do not watch news or read work updates during sleep routine	Drink decaf tea
Talk with your spouse/partner	Make a "to-do" list so you are not thinking about it once you lie down	Start a gratitude journal. List 3 blessings of the day.	Do not use alcohol as it affects quality of sleep	Use blue-light blocking glasses or red-light filter for screen use

Other things to consider:

- Focusing on "I have to be available 24/7 even when not on call." This leads to a hypervigilance of always being on duty.
  - Try setting a boundary with your colleagues or leaders by saying, "Please call me if you need me as I'm trying not to check texts or emails after 9pm." This models healthy behavior and encourages others to do the same.
- Never do email in bed. Try to reserve your bedroom for sleep.
- Exercise and yoga help with sleep as long as you don't exercise too close to your desired sleep time.

It is important to personalize a routine that works for you in order to achieve better sleep. Be patient and kind to yourself as you figure this out. Keep track of what works and doesn't work and you will be that much closer to developing a routine that results in better sleep and more resilience to get through each day.