

Inspiration for managers

Sleep well

How to incorporate questions about sleep and stress in 1:1 conversations

Typically, stress is linked to bad sleep – because stress often leads to poor sleep while poor sleep also has a negative impact on our wellbeing. Therefore, it may be wise to incorporate questions about wellbeing, stress and sleep in the conversations you have with your employees.

Here are some simple tips on how to inquire into various topics in a respectful and professional way that opens up dialogue without it getting too personal.

→ Wellbeing

What is working well for you in terms of quantity of work, colleagues, collaboration with other departments/customers, prioritising and expectations when it comes to your work?

→ Stress

Is there anything that is putting pressure on you right now – perhaps in relation to the amount of work, conflicts, unclear roles, responsibilities at work or at home?

→ Sleep

I've noticed you seem a little tired at the moment (if that is the case). Have you noticed that you're more tired or out of sorts than usual? Do you have any idea what the cause could be?

Asking directly about a person's sleep can feel like stepping on their toes because it's viewed as a very private matter, but many employees often mention it themselves when talking about wellbeing and stress. And, it is, of course, crucial to make it clear that neither stress nor sleep has any bearing on your assessment of your employee's performance or job security.



Think about ...

Whether, as a manager, you are helping to maintain a culture in the workplace in which prioritising work over sleep signals that you are an ambitious and dedicated employee or manager.

The fact is only a small per cent of people thrive on less than 7-9 hours of sleep. The rest of us perform worse, because the processes of the body and brain don't get an adequate opportunity for restitution. Therefore, a culture that defines sleep as a "waste of time" is counterproductive. Everyone will benefit, in the long run, from a culture that recognises that adequate sleep is a prerequisite for being able to perform at a stable high level.

As a manager, you play a vital role in bringing about a cultural change, but it takes time and means that you take a close look at your habits – is it customary, for example, to send and reply to emails at all hours of the day and night?