

Teaching Outline: Fatigue in the Workplace

Date:	
Teaching Topic:	Fatigue in the Workplace
Type of Session/Audience:	Tailgate Session All employees
Session Length:	20-30 minutes
Materials Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipcharts and pens • Fatigue in the Workplace FACILITATOR NOTES
Session Requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting room of sufficient size to comfortably seat the size of the group • Instructor will need to take notes of discussion items • Instructor will need to take note of any unresolved questions and seek answers
Learning Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To discuss issues related to workplace fatigue • To emphasize the importance of controlling fatigue • To explain the various responsibilities we all have • To explain various hints on improving our sleep and controlling fatigue
Class Outline & Suggested Times:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and explain the purpose of this module (1-2 minutes) • Discuss the issues pertaining to fatigue (10 minutes) • Open up Discussion (4-5 minutes) • Competency Evaluation (2-3 minutes) • Closing remarks (1-2 minutes)

Detailed Class Outline:

<p>1. Introduce and explain purpose of the module</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What causes fatigue and the risk it poses in the workplace • How a fatigue risk management system can reduce the risk; • Strategies you can use to manage your own fatigue and reduce the risks in the workplace.
<p>2. Present Facilitators Notes (see Appendix 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the issues pertaining to fatigue that are identified in the facilitator’s notes.
<p>3. Open up Discussion, using the following as a guide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention that both mental and physical fatigue has been recognized as a contributing factor in many workplace incidents. • Explain that physical fatigue can impair physiological and psychological performance in a similar way to mental fatigue. However, unlike mental fatigue, physical fatigue can be managed with rules governing hours of service. Mental fatigue, on the other hand, is more complex and needs attention on many different levels. Using a systems based approach to managing mental fatigue will also manage physical fatigue.
<p>4. Competency Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is fatigue? • What causes fatigue? • How much sleep do we need? • Name several hints for a better sleep and reduce fatigue?
<p>5. Closing Remarks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminder: fatigue is a serious health and safety hazard • We all have a role to play • Much of the effect of fatigue can be controlled by a healthy work schedule, efficient sleep and a healthy life style.

Appendix 1: Fatigue in the Workplace FACILITATOR NOTES

KEY THEME:

Explain that fatigue is a serious workplace hazard.

When you're fatigued:

- your reaction time is slower
- you have trouble concentrating or remembering things
- you may have difficulty communicating clearly with co-workers
- you may fall asleep on the job
- there's a greater risk you'll make a safety-critical mistake.

VIDEO NARRATIVE NOTES:

Ask what is fatigue?

Answer:

Fatigue is the state of feeling very tired, weary or sleepy resulting from insufficient sleep, prolonged mental or physical work, or extended periods of stress or anxiety. Boring or repetitive tasks can intensify feelings of fatigue. Fatigue can be described as either acute or chronic.

Acute fatigue results from short-term sleep loss or from short periods of heavy physical or mental work. The effects of acute fatigue are of short duration and usually can be reversed by sleep and relaxation.

Chronic fatigue syndrome is the constant, severe state of tiredness that is not relieved by rest. The symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome are similar to the flu, last longer than six months and interfere with certain activities. The exact cause of this syndrome is still unknown.

Ask the participants-What are some conditions that make you feel particularly tired or fatigued at work?

Fatigue can be caused by:

- **Body rhythms:** Your body clock – also called your circadian rhythms – programs you to sleep at night and be awake during the day. It can be difficult to get good quality sleep during the day when your body wants to be awake.
- **Work schedule:** When you work and how much time you have between shifts affect how much opportunity you have to sleep. Working through the night, long shifts, many shifts in a row, and short turnaround reduce the time you have for sleep and increase the likelihood you'll become fatigued.

- Type of task: Some tasks are more fatiguing than others – complex, demanding tasks and boring, mundane tasks increase feelings of fatigue.
- Work environment: Loud noise, poor lighting, heat or cold, vibration, or humidity increase feelings of fatigue.
- Non work-related factors: Balancing shiftwork with family and social life can be stressful and make it hard to get adequate sleep. Family demands (e.g., illness) or personal problems (e.g., divorce) increase stress and the likelihood of becoming fatigued.

Explain that sleep:

- Most people need between 7 and 9 hours per day.
- It's not true that you need less sleep as you get older.
- When you sleep makes a difference in how much you get.
- Sleep is best obtained in a single block.

Explain to the participants that we all have a role in reducing fatigue in the workplace.

Employer Responsibilities

- Appropriate and safe work design, such as schedules that allow for adequate recovery periods during the shift and between shifts
- Ensuring safe work practices, such as scheduling sensible levels of overtime
- Assessment, control, and monitoring of fatigue-related hazards
- Development of policies, procedures and practices to manage fatigue-related risk
- Information and training about fatigue as a workplace hazard

Employee Responsibilities

- Arriving at work in a fit state to work
- Reporting all incidents and accidents, as well as potential fatigue-related hazards
- Maintaining communication with work colleagues, supervisors, managers
- Being aware of fatigue and how to counteract it in the workplace
- Avoiding behaviours that place you or others at risk

Explain that to get good night's sleep you should set up your bedroom for sleeping.

- Make it as dark as possible
- Make sure the temperature is right: 18°C to 24°C
- Move distractions to another room
- Make sure you won't be disturbed

As well:

- Keep to a regular bedtime routine
- Wind down before trying to sleep
- Be careful what you eat or drink before bed
- Don't toss and turn waiting to fall asleep
- Adjust your bedtime gradually if your shift changes

Healthy Lifestyle:

- Remind participants that when your body is low on water, it tries to conserve what you have left. It slows down your activity and makes you relax – which makes you feel sleepy. Being dehydrated can also make you feel lightheaded and cause headaches.
- Use caffeine smartly. It takes about 20 minutes to feel the stimulating effects of caffeine, and they can last for 4 to 6 hours. Avoid drinking caffeine too close to bedtime.
- Eat right. Being careful about what you eat can play an integral role in maintaining alertness on the job. Maintaining blood sugar levels is a key to controlling ups and downs in energy. The way blood sugar levels react to food is known as the glycemic index (GI) of foods. For example, snack bars or sugary foods can give you a rush of energy – a sugar high – but that’s usually followed by a low that makes you feel tired again. Foods like potatoes, pizza, and white bread have a high glycemic or sugar index and can make you feel sluggish.
- Get regular exercise helps you sleep well, stay healthy, and feel fit. It may not be easy to find a regular time to exercise if your work schedule keeps changing, but you don’t need to join a gym or a local sports team to enjoy the benefits of exercise. Even going for regular walks can help improve your energy levels and stamina, reduce the risk of heart disease and other health problems, and help you feel better and sleep better. You should avoid heavy exercise one hour before bedtime – let your body unwind and calm down before sleep.
- Spend time with friends and family. You may have to plan your time more carefully, and make more of an effort to stay in touch with friends. Let your family and friends know your work schedule. Try to plan events well in advance. You may have to organize activities yourself, rather than waiting for others to include you. Joining a recreational organization can also be a useful strategy to minimize feelings of social isolation. This can be particularly effective for meeting friends who work on a schedule similar to yours. It provides an opportunity to socialize and relax when most other people are working.
- Enjoy time for yourself. Take advantage of the fact that you don’t need to compromise or negotiate for time alone to relax, enjoy a hobby, plan a trip or event, get some exercise – or even catch up on some much-needed sleep!
- Stay fit and healthy. Get regular exercise and eat a nutritionally balanced diet. Learn to relax, manage your fatigue, and get the sleep you need. Pay attention to your overall health and visit your doctor regularly.