

# Workplace Health and Well-being Promotion – Getting Started Fact Sheets



## **HOW DO YOU ADDRESS WORKPLACE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN THE WORKPLACE?**

Workplace health and well-being should be a part of the overall company strategy for a healthy workplace. Health and safety legislation and other workplace policies or programs can provide a basis for a workplace health (or health promotion) program. When setting up any program, remember to include training and other support (e.g., time to attend sessions) and choices where possible.

Remember that for health and safety programs, there are specific laws and regulations that must be complied with. Workplace health programs are different from traditional health and safety programs because there is no legislative mandate. However, the purpose of a workplace health and well-being program is to offer personal health resources and services for all employees. Therefore it is important to remember that employees are potentially exposed to a wide variety of health hazards or situations at work on a regular basis. As such, it is impossible to deal with workplace health / well-being issues in isolation from health and safety, and vice versa.

Another strategy to address workplace health and well-being is to create and implement a Comprehensive Workplace Health and Safety (CWHS) Program. This program is a series of strategies and related activities, initiatives and policies developed by the employer, in consultation with employees, to continually improve or maintain the quality of working life, health, and the well-being of the workforce. These activities are developed as part of a continual improvement process to improve the work environment (physical, psychosocial, organizational, economic), and to increase personal empowerment and personal growth.

## **WHAT ARE SOME KEY ELEMENTS OF A WORKPLACE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROGRAM?**

When planning the workplace health program, remember to be clear about your:

- Objectives: know what you want to see happen as a result of your efforts.
- Target audience: who is the program for? All staff? Only certain groups?
- Type of program or campaign: what tone will your program have? Informative? Fun? Fearful?

## **SHOULD A SEPARATE COMMITTEE/TEAM BE ESTABLISHED?**

Generally, a joint labour/management committee is recommended. A committee has the advantage of being able to work with key groups at your organization, including the

health and safety committee. Depending on the size and needs of the organization, these committees may be separate or the work can be done via the health and safety committee.

## **HOW DO YOU IMPLEMENT YOUR PROGRAM?**

There are a few steps that an organization should follow when developing a workplace health and well-being program for the workplace. When planning to implement your program, one should recognize that every organization is different and therefore everyone's needs may vary too.

### **WHAT ARE THE STEPS?**

**Step 1:** Take ownership and leadership and get support from the "top".

Have someone who is interested in taking on the role and being the contact point of the program. It may be a joint committee from labour and management or someone who wants to take interest in leading the project.

Like any policy, it will not be successful without support from senior management. After recognizing that this program presents an investment, it will make a difference when getting support from senior management.

**Step 2: Get support from everyone.**

Talk to as many people or groups as you can. Other people who can help, if they are not involved already, include:

- Union / worker representatives,
- Management,
- Health and safety professional(s),
- Human resources professional(s),
- Your employee assistance program (EAP) provider,
- Medical or occupational health staff, and
- Local groups from your community who may be able to help include:
  - Public Health,
  - Canadian Cancer Society, and
  - Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

**Step 3: Acknowledge current or informal activities and collect baseline data.**

There may be groups already established in many companies and may help you form a basis for your workplace active living program. Acknowledging these existing activities (for example, a group of people going for walks together at lunch) may encourage new ideas for your program, like a 'walkers mileage club'. Whenever possible, encourage participation at all levels and at all abilities.

**Step 4: Identify the key needs and expectations of the workplace.**

You want to find out the employees:

- needs,
- attitudes, and
- preferences.

regarding specific aspects of implementing a workplace health program. You can survey employees with:

- a full-length survey (can be confidential),
- an open one-to-one interview,
- a mini-survey, or
- suggestion boxes placed around the organization.

You can also conduct surveys by:

- hosting a luncheon round table meeting,
- sending out an informal email questionnaire,
- sending a survey with pay cheque stubs, or
- conducting a survey available on your organizations intranet site.

It is crucial in finding out the needs of your audience before designing your program or policy.

### **Step 5: Develop a detailed plan.**

Based on steps one to four:

- Identify what needs to be done.
- Prioritize these needs.
- Set realistic targets and timelines. Have both short-term and long-term goals.
- Plan how and when the program will be initiated.
- Plan how to maintain interest.
- Know what resources you need for each step (time, money, people, etc.).

When delivering your program, make sure you organize your activities into such as:

- **Education / Awareness-** providing knowledge.
- **Skill building-** getting individuals actively involved in changing their behaviour.
- **Work Environment-** changes in the workplace to support the initiative.

### **Step 6: Put your plan into action.**

Now it is time to communicate your program to everyone. Promoting your program can be done in many ways such as:

- posters around the workplace,
- postings on your organizations intranet or internet,
- bulletin boards,
- management telling employees about the program (i.e., manager and HR department),
- host demo days,
- flyers / pamphlets / brochures,
- kiosk where all material is promoted or found,
- exhibition fairs, and
- e-mail or mail

Formally introducing corporate policies that state the importance of the workplace health program are an additional essential step.

### **Step 7: Monitor, evaluate and maintain the program.**

Now it is time to monitor the progress and track results of your program. Always know that there is room for change and improvement for both short-term and long-term goals. Make sure you:

Review and evaluate your program:

- A review of the program can help you know what is working and what is not. Gathering the right information is essential but it does not have to be complicated. Be sure to take baseline data so you can compare results of later programs.
- When reviewing the outcomes, remember to evaluate the program based on the aims and objectives you set in the beginning.

Maintain the program:

- Use the results of your review and evaluation to help gauge what is working and what could be enhanced.

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