1.0 Introduction   Worksite Toolkit

Creating transformative change and building a healthy community ...is a collaborative process that is focused on empowerment and community-driven change, on policy change and environmental strategies rather than on individual interventions, and on social determinants of health rather than on the treatment of disease (Health Resources in Action, 2013).

Together we can create a vibrant community, one that is physically, mentally, spiritually, and culturally healthy. Through collaboration we can achieve positive, lasting change.

Toolkit Purpose

Welcome to the Community Transformation Initiative Community Health Assessment and Improvement Planning Toolkit. The Community Transformation Initiative of Madison County is pleased to provide this customizable toolkit as a resource - at your fingertips - to help in guiding you through simple changes for making widespread positive change in our community and most importantly in your life and the lives of those around you. As chronic diseases are the leading cause of preventable public health concerns in the State of Indiana and Madison County, we are in a unique position to create large-scale policy, systems and environmental (PSE) changes to address and permanently transform the health outcomes of this generation and generations to come.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if Madison County were known for its commitment to public health and Quality of Life? We can be. Taking simple steps at an individual and organizational level, when done throughout the community - in multiple arenas, can and does lead to positive change.

As an employer, you are in the unique position to drive change, to impact the health of your community, and to experience the benefits of collaborative health and community improvement planning. Making changes that support employee health and wellness may improve recruitment and retention, increase productivity, lower healthcare costs, reduce absenteeism, and improve employees' job satisfaction.

This Toolkit is designed to provide local employers and managers with a guide for making small and large scale changes in the workplace. In order to improve quality of life and to tackle public health concerns the Community Transformation Initiative is providing resources and support to employers, health care providers, schools, the community-at-large, and community institutions geared at assessing their level of need and improving their community health planning process.

2.0   Health and Wellness in the Workplace, it Pays.

Employee health and wellness is critical to overall workplace productivity and satisfaction. However, many people struggle to make balanced decisions regarding their own physical health. More than one-third (36.5%) of U.S. adults have obesity (CDC). It seems that while so many people want to be healthy the struggle continues, affecting employee productivity, absenteeism, disability, and medical costs. The estimated annual medical cost of obesity in the U.S. was $147 billion in 2008 U.S. dollars; the medical costs for people who are obese were $1,429 higher than those of normal weight (CDC). As American workers spend more than one-third of their daily lives in the workplace, employers are presented with an opportunity to implement wellness strategies to improve employee health, reduce healthcare costs, and improve overall productivity.

Workplace wellness in the private sector can promote and create a positive environment for healthy behaviors among workers, including increased opportunities for physical activity, Establishing tobacco and nicotine cessation programs, and worksite wellness programs that promote improved nutrition and diet quality. Improving worksite wellness presents two major benefits to employers: One, preventing employees from succumbing to dangerous conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and cancer as much as possible; and two, because of a lowered chance of chronic disease, substantial reduction in health care and insurance costs.

What's the Return?

Making changes to improve workplace wellness can be as comprehensive or as simplistic as your individual site deems appropriate. Many policy, system, and environmental changes can be made with little effort, while others may involve planning, manpower, and investment. With this in mind, it should be noted that research shows for every $1 spent on improving health and wellness in the workplace employers see on average between a $3 to $6 return on investment (ROI). It is also noteworthy that on average, **50%** of a company's profits are spent on health care costs. Reducing health risk factors including weight, blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol by just 1% would save as much as $103 annually in medical costs per person.

Figure 1. Benefits of a Worksite Wellness Plan

2.1   Creating a Culture of Health

Did you know that nearly 80% of U.S. employers now offer workplace health promotion programs? Employers are reaping the rewards of improved employee health and wellness. You don't have to be a fortune 500 company to make lasting changes to improve the health culture (and the bottom line) of your worksite. Companies both large and small are making simple and often strategic changes that fit their workplace, by offering heart-healthy vending machines, 7-minute workout breaks, smoke free policies, and weight loss counseling to name a few.

Company leadership can create and support a culture of health that supports and values employee health and safety. This kind of workplace culture is reflected in the policies, programs, and environmental supports promoted throughout the workplace. Employers who strive to build a culture of health frequently make health programming a routine part of daily business, integrating it into all levels of the organization. The long-term goals of this kind of workplace culture focus on empowering employees, impacting and reducing health care costs, and improving employee productivity as well as longevity with the company

2.2   Health Matters to Employees

Most people want to be healthy, to eat well, to be active, to reduce the effects of nicotine, and to reduce their stress in the workplace and beyond. Despite this intrinsic desire to improve health, 75% of health care costs are from diseases that are preventable. However, time constraints, cost, and lack of understanding can put roadblocks in the way of successful-attempts for lasting change. This is where you as an employer can make significant impacts on employee health. By providing leadership support, consistent communication, incentives, and integrated programming your wellness strategy will be much more likely to see success and your employees will be happier and healthier.

2.3   Assessing Your Worksite Needs

Assessing your worksite can help you understand the needs and interests of your workforce. Once completed you can use the assessment to create and implement policies, and environmental changes that are relevant to your business and employees. There are several ways to evaluate your worksite. There are different evaluation tools for different aspects of your business such as employee surveys, physical environment, and food availability (vending/cafeteria). Make sure to use the proper evaluation tool for the type of information you wish to collect. Some sample evaluation tools can be viewed on pages 3-9 of the Indiana Healthy Worksites Toolkit available here:
http://inhealthyweight.org/files/Toolkit_with_Cover.pdf

(Source: Indiana Healthy Worksites Toolkit for Small Businesses)

3.0 Tobacco & Nicotine Prevention

Did you know more than 70% of smokers say that they would like to quit smoking; however, of those who make attempts only 5 to 10 percent will actually succeed. Smokers need every support they can get, and employers have a vested interest in their success. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, every tobacco and nicotine user that a company assists in quitting, the employers' healthcare costs decrease by $2,583. Additionally, the improved productivity adds up to an additional annual savings of $1,200 per quitter. That's an incredible annual return on investment.

TOBACCO

BAD FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES' HEALTH. BAD FOR YOUR BOTTOM LINE.

3.1 Addressing Tobacco Use within Your Company

In many ways employers are disproportionally affected by tobacco and nicotine use; however, they are in a unique position to affect change and to reduce tobacco use. By implementing tobacco and nicotine cessation policies, ensuring that your insurance plan includes tobacco cessation benefit coverage, and creating workplace supports to enhance employees' opportunities for cessation success.

3.2 Benefits of a Tobacco-Free Workplace Policy

Creating a tobacco free workplace has two key purposes. One, encouraging tobacco users to quit. Tobacco use includes: smoking cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, cigars, pipes, hookahs (water pipes), small cigars, bidis, chewing tobacco & snuff. Two, reducing second hand smoke exposure

Employee Benefits:
- Safer, healthier workplace.
- Clear policies reduce ambiguity between departments & relieves stress from managers.
- Non-smokers won't be exposed to secondhand smoke.
- Smokers trying to quit may be relieved to have a policy in place providing accountability.

Employer Benefits:
- Direct health care costs are reduced.
- Employees may be less likely to miss work due to tobacco-related illness.
- The risk of fire is lower, reducing insurance costs.
- It may be possible to get lower rates on health, life and disability insurance as smoking rates decrease among employees.

Implementing smoke-free workplace policies not only reduces the occurrence of smoking at work, but may also reduce the incidence of employees initiating smoking at work. Workplace smoking bans (e.g. smoke-free buildings, campuses, and company-owned vehicles) encourages users to quit and reinforces the company's emphasis on health, thus promoting a culture of good health.

This is how much extra it costs to employ a smoker

Don't let your bottom line go up in smoke.

Did you know?

- Among adult smokers, <u>70% report that they want to quit completely</u>, and more than 40% try to quit for at least 24 hours each year.
- Tobacco bans on worksite campuses (prohibiting smoking anywhere on company grounds) is significantly more effective at reducing exposure to second hand smoke (by 72%).
- Smoke free laws and policies in workplaces were associated with a median 6.4% increase in tobacco cessation.
- Tobacco-free policies should be combined with tobacco cessation campaigns & referral programs to increase the likelihood of cessation success.
- Smoke free policies reduce cigarette consumption among continuing smokers.
- There is also strong evidence that smoke free workplaces increase successful cessation among smokers.

3.3   Sample Tobacco-Free Workplace Policy

The following model policy is a Tobacco-Free Worksite policy (from the American Cancer Society) that can be modified as needed, to fit the needs of your worksite. If your employees are represented by a union, work with them to create tobacco-free workplace policies, as employee health & safety are union concerns as well.

Model Policy

Because we recognize the hazards caused by exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, as well as the life-threatening diseases linked to the use of all forms of tobacco, it shall be the policy of _____ , effective [DATE], to provide a tobacco-free environment for all employees and visitors. This policy covers the smoking of any tobacco product and the use of oral tobacco products or "spit" tobacco, and it applies to both employees and non-employee visitors of_____

Definition

1. No use of tobacco products will be allowed within the facilities of_____at any time.

The decision to not provide designated smoking areas outside the building will be at the discretion of management or other decision-making body.

The designated smoking area will be located at least 20 feet from the main entrance. (Some companies may want to establish a larger smoke-free zone, choose a different location for smoking, or have no smoking on their property.)

All materials used for smoking in this area, including cigarette butts and matches, will be extinguished and disposed of in appropriate containers. Supervisors will ensure periodic cleanup of the designated smoking area. If the designated smoking area is not properly maintained (for example, if cigarette butts are found on the ground), it can be eliminated at the discretion of management or other decision-making body.

(For a policy that extends tobacco free to include all of the company property, substitute the following: No use of tobacco products is permitted within the facilities or on the property of_____at any time.)

2. No tobacco use in any company vehicle.
   - There will be no use of any form of tobacco in_____vehicles at any time.
   - There will be no tobacco use in personal vehicles when transporting people on _____ authorized business.

3. Breaks

Supervisors will discuss the issue of taking breaks with their staff, both smokers and non-smokers. Together they will develop effective solutions that do not interfere with the productivity of the staff.

Procedure

1. Employees will be informed of this policy through signs posted in _____ facilities and vehicles, newsletters, inserts in pay envelopes, the policy manual, e-mail, and/or orientation and training provided by their supervisors.

2. Visitors will be informed of this policy through signs, and it will be explained by their hosts.

3. The_____will help employees who want to quit tobacco by helping them access recommended cessation programs and materials.

4. Any violations of this policy will be handled through the standard disciplinary procedure.

3.4　Workplace Tobacco Cessation Activities

Low-cost Ideas for Reduced Tobacco Use

- ✓ Promote smoke-free buildings and meeting rooms with smoke free policies.

- ✓ Provide health information focused on monthly or seasonal events (i.e. the Great American Smokeout).

- ✓ Provide on-site smoking cessation programs.

- ✓ Reimburse employees for enrolling in smoking cessation programs.

- ✓ Incentivize smoking cessation, by giving out gift cards or time off.

- ✓ Provide a tobacco savings calculator tool employees so that they can see what they could do with the money saved from not purchasing tobacco products.

- ✓ Adopt a Smoker, encourage a non-smoking employees to "adopt a smoker" and to provide them with accountability, gum, etc.

- ✓ Create Stop-Smoking Stations where smokers can trade cigarettes or smokeless tobacco products for nicotine replacement therapies (e.g. gum lozenges, or patches), carrot sticks, gum, or lollipops.

- ✓ Go Cold Turkey challenge – offer a free cold turkey sandwich for any day that an employee goes Smoke free. Or raffle a "cold turkey" during Thanksgiving to participants while promoting the Great American Smokeout.

- ✓ Empathy Pledge – have nonsmokers give something up to (candy, soda, chocolate etc.) While smokers are giving up nicotine.

3.5   Additional Tools for Tobacco Cessation in the Workplace

- 1-800-QUIT-NOW - http://www.in.gov/quitline/

- American Cancer Society Quit for Life® Program –

  http://www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/qui   t-for-life

- American Cancer Society Freshstart ® Program -

  http://www.acsworkplacesolution   s.com/freshstart.asp

- American Lung Association - Workplace Wellness and Smoking Cessation tools -

  http://www.lung.org/stop -smoking/workplace -wellness/

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), provides a toolkit for *Implementing a*

  Tobacco-Free Campus Initiative in Your Workplace -

  http://www.cdc.gov/nccd php/dn pao/hwi/toolkits/tobacco/index.htm

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation - Tobacco Control - http://www.rwjf.org/en/our -

  topics/topics/tobacco-control.html

4.0   Nutrition and Wellness

To date, nearly 32% of adults living in the State of Indiana are considered obese, this is a staggering increase from a 13.3% obesity rate in 1990. Indiana has the 15th highest adult obesity rate in the nation (stateofobestiy.org). An increase in sedentary lifestyles and the consumption of calorie-dense low-nutrient foods has had an enormous impact on the health of Americans.

Individuals who are obese frequently have comorbid conditions including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, & obesity related cancers, which decreases quality of life and increases direct and indirect costs to both individuals and employers. Direct costs may include preventative, diagnostic, and treatment related services for individuals who are obese or overweight. Indirect costs may include insurance premiums, lost productivity, and Absenteeism resulting in lost pay. In addition, obesity is associated with job absenteeism, costing approximately $4.3 billion annually and with lower productivity while at work, costing employers $506 per obese worker per year.

4.1   Addressing Nutrition within Your Company

Employers have a unique opportunity to provide nutrition and wellness support to their employees. Implementing changes to company practices and policies can have substantial impacts on the workplace culture. Employees are at work on average 8.7 hours a day and will typically eat at least one meal during that period of time. This means that employers have an opportunity to support healthy food choices and to impact employee health through simple changes.

This is especially true for many workplaces that already provide snacks (vending machines) and beverages, have pitch-ins, offer a breakroom, or that have cafeterias on site. Simple changes to the kinds of foods being offered, such as, offering healthy food and beverage choices in vending machines and in food service facilities can make a widespread impact on employee eating habits.

4.2   Benefits of Workplace Nutrition and Wellness Policies

Ensuring that employees have healthy food options available allows them to make healthier food choices.

Employee Benefits:

- Increased energy.
- Reduced risk of chronic non-communicable diseases.
- Weight management.
- Decreases the threat of developing Type 2 diabetes.

DIRECT COSTS OF OBESITY:

Healthcare Services

Medical Testing

Prescription Drugs

INDIRECT COSTS OF OBESITY:

Insurance Premiums

Lost Productivity

Lower Wages

Employee Benefits Cont.

- Reduces the risk of high cholesterol, or reduces it in those who already have high cholesterol.
- Lessens the risk of high blood pressure, or reduces it in those who already have high blood pressure.

Employer Benefits:

- Increased productivity.
- Reduced insurance claims.
- Decreased rate of absenteeism.

4.3   Workplace Nutrition Activities

- ✓ Stop offering soda and sugar laden drinks.
- ✓ Ask your vending machine company to add healthy snack options.
- ✓ Stop offering low-quality snacks in the office or break room.
- ✓ Provide a healthy snack station. This can be run by employees and funds made go to replenishing with more healthy snacks. Find a list of healthy snacks below:

Healthy Snack Recommendations

1. Planters Sunflower Kernels (1/4 cup)
160 calories, 14g fat, 1.5g sat fat, 4g fiber
The Bottom Line: Full of healthy fats
2. Baked! Lays Original
210 calories, 3g fat, 0g sat fat, 4g fiber
The Bottom Line: Surprisingly fiber-full
3. Sun Chips Multigrain (variety of flavors)
140 calories, 6g fat, 1g sat fat, 2g fiber
The Bottom Line: Made of whole grains
4. Snyder's of Hanover Mini Pretzels (20)
110 calories, 0g fat, 0g sat fat
The Bottom Line: Naturally fat-free
5. Smartfood Reduced-Fat Popcorn
120 calories, 5g fat, 1g sat fat, 2g fiber
The Bottom Line: Low fat, and has fiber!

6. Peanut M&M's
250 calories, 13g fat, 5g sat fat, 2g fiber
The Bottom Line: Just don't go nuts
7. Fig Newtons
190 calories, 0g fat, 0g sat fat, 2g fiber
The Bottom Line: It's fruit!
8. Nature Valley Granola Bar, Oats & Honey
180 calories, 6g fat, 0.5g sat fat, 2g fiber
The Bottom Line: Beats hunger
9. Planters Honey Roasted Peanuts (39)
160 calories, 13g fat, 1.5g sat fat, 6g protein
The Bottom Line: High in protein
10. Quaker Chewy Low-Fat Granola Bar, Chocolate Chunk
110 calories, 2g fat, 0.5g sat fat, 1g fiber
The Bottom Line: Guilt-free chocolate

Choose
- Baked chips, baked tortilla chips, baked Cheetos
- Reduced-fat kettle chips
- Potato Crisps
- popcorn
- Whole grain Granola/Fiber/Nutri-grain type bars made with unsaturated fat
- Snack mixes of cereal and dried fruit with a small amount of sugar
- nuts and seeds

- Raisins or other dried fruit

- Fig bars

- Graham crackers

- Whole grain crackers

- Plain Animal cookies

- Gingersnaps

- Baked crackers

- Pretzels

- Cereal on the Go; Quaker Oatmeal-to-go bars

- Dark chocolate with almonds; Almond Joy

- Fruit snacks – Welch's and Kelloggs

- Peanut butter crackers

- Snackwells

- ✓ Plan company functions with healthy eating choices in mind
- ✓ Conduct a weight management support group.
- ✓ Offer a kitchen area with a refrigerator and microwave for all employees.
- ✓ Send out emails with information on how to pack a healthy lunch.
- ✓ Hold monthly healthy pitch-in.
- ✓ Have office watercoolers readily available for employee use.
- ✓ Promote an "Eat Your Greens" campaign on St. Patrick's Day.
- ✓ Create an 8-glasses of water a day challenge, for 30 days, the winner gets a prize.
- ✓ Hold impromptu contests like a "Who can bring the healthiest lunch?" contest.
- ✓ Create a worksite garden where employees can grow and harvest vegetables & fruit.
- ✓ Establish an onsite Farmers Market (if your business is small, partner with other businesses in the area).
- ✓ Bring a CSA (community supported agriculture) program to your worksite, encourage or incentivize employees participate. See if the CSA would deliver to your worksite with enough participation.
- ✓ Offer a diabetes prevention class at the workplace, or refer to one when necessary.

4.4   Sample Workplace Nutrition Policy

The following model policy is a Healthy Eating & Nutrition Worksite policy this policy should be modified as needed to fit the needs of your organization.

Definition
Because we recognize the health benefits of healthy eating habits and balanced nutrition for our employees and recognize the life threatening diseases related to obesity, it shall be the policy of _____ effective [DATE], to provide an environment conducive to and supportive of healthy eating habits for all _____employees and clients.

_____is committed to providing an environment that encourages healthy eating habits among its employees and clients.

Procedure
1. Company Functions

   a. At company functions which offer food, one or more healthful entrees, side dishes, snacks, beverages or desserts will be served
   b. Employees are encouraged to bring healthy food options to pitch-ins and functions to share with other employees

2. Snacks at Meetings

   a. Doughnuts, bars, giant muffins, pastries, sweet rolls, pies, cookies, sugared beverages (regular sodas, punch, etc.) will NO LONGER BE SERVED to employees or clients during meetings or be paid for with _____funds.
   b. Food will no longer be offered at mid-morning or mid-afternoon meetings, presentations or seminars two hours or less in length.
   c. Employees are encouraged to bring their own beverage or individual snack to meetings.

3. Vending Machines (***see section 4.4 for a comprehensive sample healthy vending machine policy)
   a. Vending machines will offer a variety of snack foods, including healthful alternatives.
   b. Drink machines will provide water and 100% fruit juices, as well as sugar-free and caffeine free soda selections.

4. Price Structure
   a. Food identified as low fat/low calorie will be priced lower than unhealthful foods.

5. Labeling
   b. Food that is considered healthful will be labeled to identify it.

4.5   Sample Healthy Vending Machine Policy

The following model policy is a Healthy Vending Machine policy this policy can be modified as needed to fit the needs of your organization.

Definition

Because we recognize the benefits of healthy eating habits and balanced nutrition for our employees, it shall be the policy of _____ , to require that all food and beverages sold in all —————————— Vending machines meet specified nutrition standards, effective_____

Whereas:
1. Heart disease, cancer, and stroke are largely affected by what we eat and how active we are.
2. Food products that are lower in fat and sugar are healthier choices for preventing many diseases.

Therefore:

Effective_____, it is the policy of_____that all snack and beverage vending offered by this organization will include items that meet the following standards:

Procedure
1. Beverages:

    At least 50% of beverages in each vending machine shall be:
    a. Water
    b. Nonfat or 1% low fat milk (including soy or cow's milk, chocolate, or other flavored milk containing no more than 15 grams of sugar per 250 gram serving).
    c. 100% fruit/vegetable juice.
    d. Fruit-based drinks containing at least 50% juice and no added caloric sweeteners.
    e. All other non-caloric beverages, including diet sodas Sports drinks less than or equal to 100 calories.
    f. Beverages that are limited to a portion size of 12 ounces or less except for water. Smaller portion sizes of (6 ounces) are preferred.

2. Snacks:

    50% of foods in each vending machine shall meet all the following criteria per individual package:
    a. Have no more than 250 calories
    b. Have no more than 35% calories from fat with the exception of nuts and seeds, snack mixes, and other foods of which nuts are a part (NO candy).
    c. Not more than 10% of calories from saturated fat
    d. Does not contain trans-fat added during processing (hydrogenated oils and partially hydrogenated oils)
    e. Not more than 35% total weight from sugar and caloric sweeteners with the of fruits and vegetables that have not been processed with added sweeteners or fats
    f. At least one item meeting the snack criteria in each vending machine shall also meet the FDA definition of "low sodium" (< 140mg/serving) AND be CLEARLY marked low sodium.

3. Pricing & Placement:
    a. Beverage and food items meeting the mandatory standards must be sold at a price that is equal to or lower than the price of items in the vending machine that do not meet the nutritional standards.
    b. Items meeting the mandatory standards must be placed in the top third of the vending machine so that they are visible at eye level.

4.6   Additional Tools for Improved Nutrition in the Workplace

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Healthier Worksite Initiative* - offers numerous links to additional worksite Toolkits
  http:// www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/nutrition.htm

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Strategies to Prevent Obesity* - http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/strategies/i ndex.html
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Workplace Health Promotion* - http://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/evaluation/topics/nutrition.html
- The Vitality Institute - http://thevitalityinstitute.org/pro jects/community -health/
  - o see the downloadable report *Beyond the Four Walls: Why Community is Critical to Workforce Health* for ideas on increased cross-sector collaboration to addressing community-level drivers of workforce health, found here - http://thevitalityinstitute.org/site/wp-content/ uploads/2015/07/Vita lityInstitute- BeyondThe FourWalls-Report-28July2015.pdf

- The National Diabetes Education Program has a plethora of diabetes related resources- http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep/communities/hispanic-latino-american/resources.html
- Prevention Means Business
  http://www.phi.org/uploads/files/PHI%20PMB%20brief.pdf
- Live Healthy Indiana is an online platform where individuals or businesses can pay a reasonable fee to sign up to track foods eaten and steps taken. You and your employees also gain access to three workplace challenges that take place throughout the year. Read more about Live Healthy Indiana here:
  https://indiana.livehealthyignite.com/users/sign_in#overview

5.0   Physical Activity

Regular physical activity lowers employees risk for chronic diseases and improves their overall health and wellbeing. For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Unfortunately, only about 1 in 5 adults actually meets the physical activity guidelines, resulting in a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases, depression, type 2 diabetes, and some cancers in individuals with low activity levels.

Achieving 150 minutes of physical activity in one week can seem like a lot. However, this can easily be broken down into 10 minute intervals, to better fit into an individual's daily and work schedule. The same is true for muscle-strengthening activities, such as yoga or resistance band training, which can be used at work, in short but focused periods of strength training.

5.1   Benefits of Increased Workplace Physical Activity

Increasing physical activity is a simple and effective disease prevention behavior, and the changes that individuals can make in their daily lives can be simple and fun. From a workplace standpoint, employers have a vested interest in employee health, as an unhealthy workforce means lost time, lost productivity, and lost income.

Employee Benefits:
- Reduces obesity and overweight, especially when combined with a balance diet
- Improves stamina and strength
- Reduces feelings of depression
- Decreases risks of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, and high cholesterol

Employer Benefits:
- Decreased employee stress and improved employee morale
- Increased employee productivity
- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced direct and indirect costs associated with healthcare expenses

It should also be noted that physical activity and wellness programs are frequently viewed as attractive components of an employee benefits package. High quality physical activity and wellness programs should be viewed as an investment and as a key component of attracting and retaining high quality employees.

Addressing Physical Activity within Your Company

There are numerous opportunities for increasing physical activity in the workplace, whether you are a small, mid-sized, or large-scale employer, even corporations with the best fitness programs have room for improvement. Supporting increased physical activity can be done through a wide range of activities, these may include: offering managerial support, increasing access to opportunities for physical activity, changing policies, altering the physical environment, and by offering social support programs.

Creating Opportunities for Physical Activity

Physical fitness can be achieved in the workplace through a wide array of activities such as offering onsite fitness classes such as yoga, Zumba, cross-fit, or walking groups. Creating corporate challenges and competitions that are led by management can make physical activity fun, while creating a sense of comradery. Additionally, workplace walking and running groups can create a workplace support system. Other simple changes can be made such as offering and encouraging bi-hourly stretch and walk breaks and implementing walking meetings, this creates a shift in the work culture and creates a sense of wellness in the workplace.

5.2 Removing Barriers

Time constraints, costs, and lack of access to opportunities for physical fitness can all decrease planned physical activity. However, there are frequently unseen barriers in place that may have not been considered, which keep people from engaging in simple physical activity in the workplace. Think about the following questions and barriers in regards to your work environment:

- Do employees know that they are allowed to take a break for physical activity? Is this encouraged by management?
- Are there policies in place to support physical activity?
- Is the work environment conducive to physical activity?
  - Are there walking paths near or surrounding the building?
  - Are there stairs? And if so, are employees encouraged to use them rather than taking an elevator?
- Are employees allowed to flex their worktime in order to come in later, leave earlier, or take an extended lunch to go workout?
- Are their lockers, showers, or rooms to change clothing in available on site for employees who bike to work or who engage in physical activity?
- Is there a strict dress code?
- Are employees required to be on site at all times?
- Are mandatory meetings scheduled during the lunch hour?

Looking for ways to reduce these barriers and talking with employees about what they would like to see change may help you in identifying what barriers exist in your workplace.

Make Creative Changes to Encourage Physical Activity

Seizing simple opportunities for increasing physical activity, such as taking the stairs, is a simple change to make. We all know that it's simple, better for us, and usually takes less time than waiting on the elevator However, it's something that we too frequently forget to do out of habit. By creating interesting messaging, artwork, and signage employers can encouraging people to take the stairs through fun and simple messaging.
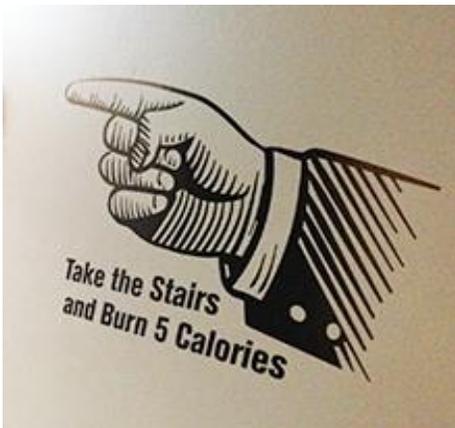
Creative signs may have simple messages such as:
1. "No waiting... One door over!"
2. "Walking upstairs burns almost 5 times more calories than riding the elevator!"
3. "No time to exercise today? Your opportunity is now!"
4. "Take the stairs your heart will thank you."

Integrating fitness into your worksite environment can be as simple or robust as you see fit, and can be gradually increased over time. Find ways to make it enjoyable to keep people engaged.

Pinterest.com

http://www.library.kent.edu/news/step-your-way-healthier-lifestyle-stair-campaign

https://portfoliomanager.zendesk.com/hc/en-
us/articles/211028178-Do-you-have-any-tips-for-engaging-
employees-and-tenants-

5.3   Activities for Increasing Physical Activity in the Work place

- ✓ Encourage employees to walk on average a minimum of 10,000 steps per day for incentive prizes.
- ✓ Provide bicycle racks or lockers in a well-lit area of the property.
- ✓ Negotiate corporate discounts for health club memberships.
- ✓ Encourage managers to hold walking meetings when gathering a small number of employees.
- ✓ Encourage employer-sponsored athletic teams.
- ✓ Offer flexible lunch periods and breaks to encourage individual, group or "buddy" walks.

    Offer incentives for employees who walk or bicycle to work.
- ✓ Incentivize distance parking and taking the stairs at work.
- ✓ Encourage physical activity breaks for long works sessions, meetings, or conferences.
- ✓ Promote a stairwell climbing competition. Improve the stairwell with better lighting and colorful posters.
- ✓ Start a walking, bicycling, running, or yoga club at work.
- ✓ Create standing desks.
- ✓ Participate in a 5K and offer to pay the cover entry for anyone who chooses to participate.
- ✓ Make the office fun and encourage people to take active breaks to rejuvenate.
- ✓ Get a small trampoline for the office and/or keep footballs, hula hoops, and volleyballs around the office and encourage their use.
- ✓ Post a note near the elevator reminding people to take the stairs instead.
- ✓ Encourage and schedule a 15-minute recess time for everyone to get up and go outside, socialize, and enjoy their day a little more.
- ✓ Allow employees paid time to participate in volunteer community work. (Community gardens, walking school buses etc.)

5.4 Sample Workplace Physical Activity Policy

The following model policy is a Physical Activity policy this policy can be modified as needed to fit the needs of your organization.

Definition

Because we recognize the health benefits of physical activity for our employees and recognize the life threatening diseases related to obesity, it shall be the policy of _____ effective [DATE], to provide an environment conducive to and supportive of physical activity for employees and clients.

1. Whenever possible, employees will be permitted to host "meetings on the move." All employees shall gain supervisor approval prior to departing the worksite for a "meeting on the move."

2. All employees will be offered 30 minutes of paid break time each day to participate in physical activity. Employees may use this time for participating in physical activity only. Employees who do not wish to participate in physical activity must decline the extra break time.

3. Employees who organize a meeting lasting longer than two hours in length must incorporate a physical activity break into the meeting

4. To the extent possible, employees will be permitted to adjust their workday schedule for physical activity within the following times: Start between 6:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.; Finish between 3:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Employees will be permitted to extend their lunch hour to 1.5 hours if the additional time is made up during the day. Individuals must establish their permanent start, finish, and lunch times with their supervisor.

5. All employees will be offered 15 minutes of paid break time each day to use environmentally friendly and/or physically active ways of commuting to and from work. These may include cycling, walking, in-line skating, skateboarding or a combination of walking and taking public transportation.

6. To support our employees' efforts to be physically active during the workday, employees are permitted to wear comfortable walking shoes.

7. To support active transportation, there will be secure bicycle parking provided to employees.

8. To facilitate walking efforts worksite walking paths will be established. 10-20 minute walking routes will be identified to make walking easy and safe for all employees.

9. Stairwell use will be encouraged with stairwell wayfinding signs. Stair counting competitions can create healthy office competition over who has climbed the most flights of stairs in a specified timeframe.

10. Employees are free to start physical activity clubs before or after work such as a walking or running club.

5.5   Additional Tools for Increased Physical Activity in the Work place

Check out - A Guide to Writing and Implementing a Physical Activity Policy in the Workplace at-

http://eatbettermovemore.org/SA/enact/healthcare/documents/healthcare.stairs.tools.healthatworkUK.pdf

Check out- Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative Worksite Wellness at-

http://inhealthyweight.org/273.htm

Use these Action Cards for ideas to implement a Physical Activity Policy-

http://inhealthyweight.org/files/ACTION_CARDS_FRONT.pdf

Live Healthy Indiana is an online platform where individuals or businesses can pay a reasonable fee to sign up to track foods eaten and steps taken. You and your employees also gain access to three workplace challenges that take place throughout the year. Read more about Live Healthy Indiana here:

https://indiana.livehealthyignite.com/users/sign_in#overview

6.0   low-cost Ideas for Program Support

✓ Survey employees to find out what is working and what isn't.

✓ Provide incentives, such as t-shirts, pedometers, or mugs.

✓ Arrange paid time off or lengthened lunch breaks.

✓ Create contests, challenges, health trivia games with prizes, or other worksite competitions.

✓ When hosting competitions, have the winning teams' supervisor or manager prepare a healthy meal or snack for employees.

✓ Create a wellness newsletter and highlight healthy lifestyle success stories.

✓ Conduct employee health fairs with wellness giveaways (i.e., gift certificates to a farmers' market of fruit stand).

✓ Publish weekly health tips via internal e-mail.

✓ Include health tips and information on the back of paystubs.

✓ Obtain company discounts.

✓ Have senior management set an example and support the programming.

7.0 Action, Promotion, and Evaluation

Now that you have the tools you need to create healthy worksite policies, the next step is action! Create an action plan based on what you wish to accomplish by implementing these policies. Decide what your short and long term worksite wellness goals are and how policy implementation relates. Create specific goals including a time frame and who will be in charge of implementing and enforcing the policy. Once the action plans are created and the initiatives are put in place be sure to promote your efforts so the employees are aware of the new opportunities and policies. After the policies have been in place for a while survey your employees to evaluate how well the changes are accomplishing the goals you created. You could also keep track of steps walked, flights of stairs climbed, weight lost, or decreases in insurance claims made by employees.

For more information or assistance contact:

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