

## Wellness @ Work: Incorporating Health Promotion into the Workplace

### March 4, 2014 | Valerie Molloy: Workplace Culture and Barriers to Wellness Programs

#### Culture:

- Importance in health and wellness
- Impedes/aids in success (make or break)
- May have to undertake/be handed something we're (program coordinators, etc.) ordinarily not responsible for
- Food choices → heart healthy choices, messaging in cafeteria about less fat choices, what is in vending machines, etc.

#### Recommendations:

- \*\* Take a "culture walk" around the organization/workplace and think about:
  - 1) Objects and artifacts → how space is structured. E.g. Furniture, common spaces, interactions within these spaces, etc.
  - 2) Space allocation
  - 3) Bulletin boards, messaging
- Health and wellness fairs (often, so that people don't forget)
- Make sure you have **Internet** presence → where are you on the internet, are you visible on the home page?
- Cultural interview → formal or informal talks with employees about the workplace culture.
- Workplace policy
- Designing health and wellness strategies should include the consideration of barriers

#### Barriers:

Question: What barriers are you facing?

- Physical locations
- Different jobs/schedules
- Legacy → reacting to new policies stubbornly
- Flexibility in work schedules
- Money and resources (human time)
- Trying to measure wellness and ROI
- Too busy/ time constraints
- Motivating individuals, personalization/tailoring
- Leadership mentality and defining wellness → consider health to be an individual's responsibility to take care of it on their OWN time.

#### Recommendations:

- Should have an incentive (doesn't have to be big)
- Clear vision and goals → be sure to communicate it, otherwise you will be over-promising, and under-delivering.
- Consider senior management → who are they? What generation are they? What are their personal views on workplace wellness/wellness in general?
- Consider management support → managers influence how/what it is like to work somewhere.

Examples of strategies to overcome barriers:

- Time/scheduling constraints: 20-20-20 → every 20 minutes, take a 20 seconds break, and look 20 feet away from your desk. They have messaging about 20-20-20 at every meeting/conference room, on every table.
- Team building exercises
- “Champions” and recognizing them for their value

Steps to success:

- Senior leadership → may entail doing your homework on how to “speak their speak”. E.g. demonstrate the cost of ill health and death