

Wellness @ Work: Incorporating Health Promotion into the Workplace

March 4, 2014 | Sharon Storoschuk and Samantha Hartley-Folz: “Going Beyond the “Lunch and Learn” to Create Healthy Work Environments”

- WellnessFits (WF) provides employers with the ability to create a healthy workplace environment
- WF focuses on chronic disease prevention, not only cancer prevention
- WF is based on the University of Toronto model of:
 - Awareness/Education
 - Act/Behavior Change
 - Support (Work Environment)
- Some KEYS to a successful workplace intervention:
 - Senior Management
 - Workplace Champions
 - Must be great at communication
 - Wellness Committees
 - Appropriate Workplace Culture
 - All workplaces have difference stages of wellness-readiness
- Important Reminders:
 - It is good to remember that we should celebrate the success of the current work environment, rather than simply focusing on the future goals of the project
 - WF recognizes that it cannot change the current employment culture, but they can provide tools of change
- Moving Forward:
 - There is a need to build policy into the workplace

Question Posed to Audience: What are the barriers to workplace health interventions?

- Lack of policy
 - Where are the wellness decisions being made?
 - Many staff are making 'health decisions' without being included in healthy workplace conversation
 - Lack of budget for health
 - Food vendors, profit vs. health
 - Strict management
 - Lack of flexibility time
 - Some employees are not able to shower and participate in physical activity as they are not allowed to come in late
- Mentality of ‘inertia’
 - ‘It has always been this way, so let’s keep it that way’
- Subcultures of unhealthy employees/employers
- Shiftwork

Question Posed to Audience: What can we do to limit these barriers?

- Bring fitness classes close to the workplace, doesn’t always have to be within the workplace
- Grass roots pushes from staff
- Highlight the need for champions
- Interventions should be multifaceted and flexible
- Encourage group experimentation