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## Coordinator's Guide

This Section is designed to help “Coordinators” that might be providing facilitation, technical assistance or leadership to a worksite that wants to develop or expand a worksite wellness program. Coordinators might be employed directly by the worksite, providing contracted services for the worksite or assisting the worksite as part of a broader mission. Some examples of coordinators from outside the worksite would be healthcare provider staff, insurance provider staff, local health departments or local chambers of commerce.

### **This appendix contains three resources:**

1. An overview of how you can use the kit to your advantage: What's in it for me?
2. Coordinator tips based on feedback from coordinators that have used the kit.
3. A frequently asked questions section with answers to common issues related to worksite wellness programs.

### **LiveWell Worksite Resource Kit – ADVANTAGES**

Trainers – why would you want to use the kit, particularly if you're happy with the outreach services that you're currently providing?

1. It's a potential foot in the door.
2. It's an additional tool to add to your list of services.
3. The “Toolkit” is based on proven practices, which leads to a higher success rate.
4. It can easily be integrated into what you're already doing.
5. Just because..... it's the right thing to do!

### **How Can I Use The Toolkit? Examples of Integration:**

- Order copies of the Kit and handout to interested clients as an additional free resource.
- Use the “Coordinators Guide” found in Appendix H in the first meeting with the client so that they understand what your roles and responsibilities are in assisting them in the development of their program. A sample memorandum of understanding is located at the end of Appendix H.
- At an initial meeting (kick off) - Offer the Worksite
- Assessment Checklist (Appendix C) as something you do for your clients/with your clients.
- Use the Employee Survey (Appendix B) or modify the questions to meet your client's needs.
- Suggest programming strategies in Step 4 for your clients to take advantage of - walk them through some of the links.
- Walk through the Recommendation Table (Appendix D) with your clients to assist them in focusing their efforts.
- Wrap Up—Complete the sample evaluation measures with your client at the end of the year. By doing this every year you are staying in tune with your clients program and it is assisting both you and the client to be accountable for the program.



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## 6 STEPS TO A WORKSITE WELLNESS PROGRAM:

### STEP 1: CONVINCING ME I NEED A WELLNESS PROGRAM.

The extent of your program will depend on resources, but you could implement some no-cost components of a wellness program tomorrow! In fact, small businesses may be at an advantage in making simple policy and environmental changes because the business owner or boss can make the decision without other corporate input.

### STEP 2: I'M CONVINCED, BUT NEED HELP GETTING STARTED.

At the start, when you're developing or enhancing a worksite wellness program, it's essential to get management's full support. If you are an outside coordinator not affiliated with the business, it may be worth while to list your responsibilities and the responsibilities of the business at the beginning. A sample memorandum of understanding is at the end of this appendix. Ideally the business will approach the coordinator with an interest for a wellness program, but regardless of who initiates the idea, senior management buy-in is essential. If that buy-in isn't apparent from the beginning, save everyone some time and effort and look to help somewhere else.

If you are an outside coordinator, make sure that you have solid worksite contacts. Factors to consider in evaluating your worksite contacts include available time, their enthusiasm for wellness programming, and their potential for reallocating some of their time to devote to a worksite wellness program. Many workers that aid in wellness programming often have other duties. It is important to differentiate between workers that want to help and workers that have the time available so that they really can help.

Developing a solid committee is crucial. Cross-sectional representation – for example: members from senior management, human resources, and cafeteria management – makes it easier to implement wellness programming later. It is also important to have all members of the committee actively participate. Do not try to bring everyone. A few committed members during the planning process can accomplish much more than a larger committee with some uncommitted members.

### STEP 3: HOW "HEALTHY" IS MY WORKSITE?

1. Use the assessment tool in Step Three to assess your current worksite environment. DON'T SKIP THIS STEP! This step ensures that the worksite at least understands and considers the varied aspects of a worksite wellness program and doesn't just focus on activities.
2. Learn more from your employees: A sample survey can be found in Step Three.
3. Use health risk appraisals (HRAs) and other data as tools providing specific information about your worksite. Establishing an effective HRA evaluation system can give you more information about your workforce and suggest specific strategies, which is extremely useful in defining target areas. HRAs can also monitor health changes over time and aid in determining the effectiveness of wellness programming. Bottom line: tailor your wellness program based on everything you know about employees at your worksite because "one size does not fit all" when it comes to worksite wellness programs.

Once you finish the assessment, be practical in choosing priorities. More is not better, if it spreads resources so thin that the program is ineffective. Look first at the assessment for wellness components that your worksite already has in place or are in process. If you have sufficient resources

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to complete or improve those components, then look at the list of components that your work-site does not have and prioritize them using the tools in Step 5.

## STEP 4: WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN I DO? SEE A LIST WITH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

There are many activities that you could include in your program. Read Step Four for a listing of program components. The components have been split into low, medium and high resource needs, so you can get a quick glance at what you might be able to quickly implement, and what might take more time or be too costly to include.

### SHARING IDEAS:

*Consider developing a local meeting group to exchange information and ideas and to aid one another in initiating wellness programming. **Example:** Heart Healthy Waukesha County (HHWC) created a Learning Circle on Workplace Wellness that used the Wisconsin Worksite Resource Kit both as a toolkit and as an organizing framework for the educational portion of the group's meetings. Part support group, part study circle, part leadership roundtable, the Learning Circle was developed by community, healthcare and business members from the local area. Heart Healthy Waukesha County and its partners provide circle members with process advisors, expert speakers and information specifically tailored to the needs of circle members. Circle members make a commitment to share data, as well as their personal expertise, and to develop and implement a wellness action plan for their organizations. The circle has held monthly breakfast meetings since its inception.*

## STEP 5: WHAT DETERMINES PROGRAM COMPONENTS FOR MY WELLNESS PROGRAM?

There are many components that you could include in your program. See the tools in Step Five that will help you determine priorities and set up a plan to make them happen. It also describes how you can clearly define the goals and objectives of your wellness program.

Try to incorporate more long-term components in your wellness programming. Environmental and policy changes have the potential to initiate considerable change with little or no cost and no ongoing resource needs. Try to stay away from one-time events such as health fairs, which are fun but have less lasting significance. Often doing one long-term event well is better than doing several short-term events.

If you are working with several worksites, consider using the same campaign or programming at multiple sites to lower cost and increase the number of employees impacted.

## STEP 6: HOW WILL I KNOW IF THE WELLNESS PROGRAM IS WORKING? PLAN FOR EVALUATION IN THE BEGINNING.

Evaluation of your program can be very simple to very complex. You will need to evaluate the program at some point, so consider some type of evaluation from the beginning. An overview of what to evaluate and how to do it can be found in Step Six along with a sample evaluation. A comprehensive Health Risk Assessment system that is already in place is very useful in the evaluation process. Frequently Asked Questions About Workplace Wellness



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## Sample Memorandum of Understanding Between the Worksite and the Wellness Coordinator

### Worksite Wellness Program Responsibilities of Wood County Health Department (Coordinator)

1. Partner with business representatives to develop a job site employee wellness program.
2. Serve as a communication link between participating businesses; promote sharing and successful program development.
3. Encourage business to partner with their respective insurance plans for available health promotion programs.
4. Serve as a link to community resources, speaker's bureaus, grant opportunities, and opportunities through the Community Health Improvement Plan.
5. Assist business with problem solving as the worksite wellness program develops.
6. Serve as a supporting partner for grant applications.
7. Help to keep business abreast on new ideas and programs relating to worksite wellness health topics.

### Worksite Wellness Program Responsibilities of Business Partners

1. Develop a worksite plan or policy that encourages and supports healthy lifestyles.
2. Commitment from management in:
  - Recognizing the value of employer-based worksite wellness initiatives
  - Allocating resources to develop and sustain a worksite wellness program
  - Developing incentives to encourage participation from employees
  - Evolving the worksite to support wellness activities
  - Ongoing awareness of the evolving needs of employees
  - Supporting and developing a pattern of communication between the program leader and the individual employees
3. Commitment to participate with other local businesses to share a common goal of worksite wellness development in Wood County.
4. Commitment to create a sustainable program that develops into a comprehensive promotion of healthy lifestyles in the workforce.

– Wood County Health Department, Chronic Disease Team

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## Frequently Asked Questions About Workplace Wellness

**Q: I know we can't do a comprehensive program right now, so is it still worth doing anything?**

**A:** Absolutely. Even a small activity can plant the seeds of success for your program to grow. Engage in some of the easier things – like providing a health and wellness bulletin board or newsletter. Or coordinate walking groups. Or try a salad bar lunch day. You might want to avoid some of the activities that are perceived as invasive, like HRA's or health screenings, until you are able to offer those in the context of a larger program that includes education and skill building around modifying lifestyle habits.

**Q: There is so much we could do in terms of programs, where do we start?**

**A:** Of course, following the toolkit framework is the best way to start. Then, after you have gathered a lot of information about employee health needs, start by planning programs to meet employee interests because they will be an easier “sell” to the employees and likely to gain more participation. Make sure your first programs – whatever the topic – are fun and interactive because they will become the first impression of your program. Start with programs that have broad appeal vs. those that might only be of interest to a smaller more targeted group. Another thing to keep in mind is that most adult learners don't want a lot of information; they want to learn and practice new skills. They probably know a little about what to do, they just aren't sure how to do it. You want them to walk away from your program or activity equipped with the tools for successful change.

**Q: We've tried some health and lifestyle programs but participation is small. What do we do?**

**A:** First of all, keep trying. You have to crawl before you can walk or run and it takes some time for your program efforts to get their legs. Be patient. It is also helpful to remember that ultimately, you are trying to change the workplace culture and that is a slow evolutionary process that happens over time. A common approach is to offer incentives for attendance and that can be effective in getting people in the room. It doesn't take a lot, just a few simple freebies or a light snack. Another approach to growing your programs is to intentionally invite, and get a commitment to attend, from key people in the organization that are liked, respected, and followed – opinion leaders. Others may attend because Jane is attending. After Bob participates and talks about the positive experience, others who respect him will be more likely to attend. So stack the deck as you launch new classes or programs.

**Q: We have a lot of work to do in the area of nutrition, so how can employee wellness avoid getting the reputation of being the food police?**

**A:** Focus your messaging, in programs, policies and practices, around adding more good food. Don't make it all about the unhealthier food. In educational sessions, you will talk about the health issues around fats, simple sugars and portion sizes, but focus the skill building and support on choosing healthy food. Part of the psychology is that as you eat more good food, you will usually start eating less of the unhealthier choices. Adding more good food is a much more upbeat and positive message as well. We already have enough guilt around the food we eat! Employees will al-



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ways joke about the office donuts, so in the beginning especially, make your policies about having choices. Later on as your culture shifts toward healthier behaviors, you can strengthen policies to be more restrictive.

**Q: CEO and leadership support is important, but they will probably never come to lunch and learns or walking groups. How can their support become obvious to employees?**

**A:** Some of the best support your leadership can provide is human and financial resources for the program. Endorsing policy change that supports wellness is another important high level support. Those are key starting points - but what comes next? Plan a program kick off or relaunch and have leadership visibly present and participatory. National Employee Health and Fitness day occurs every year in May. Get on their calendar early and have them involved in something that day. Even if they don't participate directly in all of your programs, they can communicate about their own wellness journey. All-staff communication about the wellness program can include a little information about what some key leaders are facing in terms of wellness challenges and successes. It's a great way to say, "I'm trying my best too - and I'm committed." Just a little self-disclosure goes a long way.

**Q: Some employees are very suspicious about the motives of the program. How did that come about and what can we do about it?**

**A:** A little suspicion happens within just about every program. It can probably be attributed in part to human nature, part related to the management non-management relationship and perhaps the economic environment. For example, if down sizing is part of the work landscape and you launch a new wellness program, rumors might spread that selection is based on health status. Timing can be significant. Before you do anything, check the current pulse of the organization.

What has the biggest positive impact in curtailing suspicion is honest, open communication. Tell the employees not only what you are planning, but also why you are doing it. Discuss the benefits to the company and to the employee as a win-win. Talk about the high cost of healthcare but also the value of employee wellbeing - the hard and the soft of it. Promise that you will ensure that no vendors (HRA or screening) share individual information - only grouped aggregate data. Addressing suspicion simply and directly, before it even arises, will work to your advantage.