



Emerging Trends for Wellness Programs

Population Health Matters
by Wellsource®



Healthy eating, regular exercise, and stress management are naturally top-of-the-list topics to include in communications and events. These behaviors are addressed in the health risk assessment. What else can you include in your wellness program?

Emerging trends focus on programs and events that promote collaboration, community and a whole person perspective. Employees should not feel that they are being forced to participate in a culture of health. They should want to be an active participant. A progressive culture of health provides a comprehensive program with components that address coping with stress and building community.

Community Service.

Organizations that reach out to their local community help to increase a wellness culture both inside and outside of the company. Giving back to the community and getting employees on board to volunteer their time for charitable organizations is good for the employee and good for business. General Mills places an emphasis of its wellness program on philanthropy, contributing to causes tied to education, the arts, and hunger and nutrition through its foundation and employee volunteer program. One way Wellsource employees contribute to their favorite charity is via the [Charity Miles app](#) and serving on non-profit boards.

Financial Wellness.

Companies are always thinking about the bottom line. So, too, are employees in their individual lives. Employees who are stressed out about finances tend to be less engaged in their work and are more likely to make poor decisions that impact their well-being and the well-being of those around them. Helping employees understand what it means to be financially healthy can contribute to the stability of the individual and also help employees better understand the economic concerns of the company. Because money is a major source of stress for employees, companies such as Staples and Pacific Market Research are finding innovative ways to provide financial wellness services for their employees, such as through entertaining games that teach financial management skills along with on-site classes and one-on-one counseling sessions.

Mindfulness.

In a world that at times can be full of chaos and concern, mindfulness is one area that helps people to lower stress and improve

interpersonal relationships. It can even lower blood pressure and improve blood sugar levels. Mindfulness is the practice of focusing attention on the present and living in the moment. A variety of [mindfulness tools and techniques](#) can help employees feel better. Some companies provide a “quiet” room. This room typically includes a comfortable chair or couch, dimmed lights, and a no-phones-allowed policy. This creates an environment for meditation, reflection, and a quiet break.

Creativity.

Bringing out an individual’s creativity gives him or her license to be authentic and share or develop creative talents. Many corporate settings today offer art, music, photography and other classes to help enrich the lives of their employees and enhance right-brain thinking. Not only does this provide a positive outlet for employees, but it helps foster innovation. The Cleveland Clinic in Ohio offers weekly art classes for employees as well as for patients and the public. A company called Creativity at Work specializes in helping corporations use creative, art and design processes. Drawing, painting, storytelling, and improvisation can all be used as team building exercises and can encourage collaboration and innovation.⁹

Social Support.

Science has proven that a person who is more socially connected is a healthier person. In fact, being socially engaged can help lower a person’s risk of heart attacks and premature death. Holding social activities such as after work events at a restaurant or sponsoring workplace support groups facilitated by professionals such as an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, help employees become connected with other people in the company through common interests or needs. The staff at The Motley Fool can join a variety of employee clubs, ranging from knitting to kickball. And the folks at Zappos enjoy cross-departmental mini golf or laser tag outings.

Collaboration.

Who else is involved in wellness in the company’s region? Team up with other organizations, restaurants, exercise facilities and health care settings that offer wellness events, and let employees know about these activities. Start a wellness challenge with another company to see who can

shed the most pounds or log the most walking steps during one month of the year. Collaboration is a great and inspiring tool for expanding and optimizing wellness efforts.

Get Out in Nature.

Take advantage of nearby surroundings. Encourage your employees to get out and enjoy nature. A change of pace and scenery nearby can do wonders for clearing the mind and re-framing problems. Walking meetings can improve brainstorming sessions. Is your office located near a lake or river? How about a park? Schedule quarterly kayaking outings. Encourage employees to hike nearby trails. Have a company picnic. Plan a game of Frisbee or kickball.

Wellness Takes a Culture of Health and Action!

Wellness is not just one step, but rather a sustainable process that requires many actions on a regular basis for an individual to improve and maintain their health. Let’s face the facts. When it comes to improving health, we all need help in at least one or more lifestyle behaviors. Focusing on all of the target areas of wellness helps to maximize the potential for change.

Wellness also demands educating people about how to best optimize their health. This is where the employer can make a great and lasting difference in an employee’s life. Fostering a Culture of Health encourages employees to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors. Reaching out to employees through a comprehensive program enables employees to find better life balance, which ultimately can translate into better work performance.

About Wellsource

For nearly four decades, Wellsource has been personalizing population health by designing innovative tools that are grounded in evidence-based medicine, making us one of the longest serving and most experienced companies in the industry. Wellsource uses the power of technology to drive informed decisions with actionable data. Health plans, employers, care and service providers, and delivery networks use our tools for predicting health risks and reducing avoidable costs. [Visit www.wellsource.com to learn more.](http://www.wellsource.com)