

## **Special Considerations when planning Healthy Workplace programs:**

Workplaces are all different and have their own unique set of circumstances to work under. Planning Healthy Workplace Programs can present challenges under certain circumstances. A few common considerations that may need to be addressed when introducing healthy workplace programs in your workplace are,

- Shift Work
- Multiple worksite locations
- Lack of funding

### **Shift Work**

If you have employees who work shifts, consider the following:

- Offer duplicate events so all shifts have an opportunity to participate
- Provide access to health information in a variety of ways (eg. bulletin board, newsletter, video presentation).
- Provide specific information about health issues related to working shifts (eg. sleep, nutrition).
- Ensure and promote services that are accessible to shift workers “after hours” such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), hotlines, websites, etc.

(Adapted from Brant County Health Unit,2003)

## **Multiple Worksite Locations**

Reaching employees in a workplace that has multiple locations:

If your workplace has more than one location, it can be challenging to offer consistent programming, especially if the locations vary significantly in size and/or are geographically separate.

- If there is just one Wellness Committee for the entire workplace, find “champions” at each location. Even if they are not members of the Wellness Committee, they can be a point person for employees to find out about upcoming initiatives and can provide the committee with valuable insight on which initiatives will be best for their respective locations. Be sure to gather all of your “champions” together periodically to plan programs and to discuss the successes and barriers of programs
- Run multiple sessions of the most popular activities at all locations
- Decentralize programs as much as possible. In other words, choose initiatives that are “location-less”. For example, run a contest in which employees keep track of their own participation through use of a scorecard, provide fitness videos for sign-out, or give them access to health information through the company intranet at home and work. This permits employees to participate without requiring them to travel to a central location.
- Rotate initiatives among the various office locations
- Contact healthy workplace coordinators at health units in the locations of your other worksites for resources and programs specific to their geographical area

## **Lack of Funding**

It doesn't matter if your workplace is large or small, public or private – all workplaces struggle with funding for health and wellness initiatives. The good news is that while a budget is certainly helpful, it does not mean you cannot move forward with your programming.

If the Wellness Committee is just getting started, you may want to rely on free services in the community for things like displays for a health fair; presentations for employees; consultations; and resources. Call your local health unit for ideas and check with your Benefits and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) providers – you may be able to access resources and presentations that are already covered by your workplace. Find out if employees are interested in volunteering their services – you may already have a yoga instructor or walking club leader who would be happy to help your committee by offering a yoga demonstration or organizing some walks. Host a healthy lunch challenge, potluck or recipe swap or encourage walking at break-time instead of sitting in the staff room or cafeteria.

When a budget is necessary, there are a few options the committee can consider:

- Making a presentation to senior management for funding (either for an annual budget or for a specific initiative). The Healthy Workplace program Coordinator from Middlesex London Health Unit can come to your workplace and do a “*Making the Case*” presentation for your committee and/or workplace management team to assist you with this request.
- Collaborating on a joint initiative with another business unit within your workplace that already has a budget (eg. perhaps you can team up with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety committee to offer health and wellness activities). You may also consider the following options,
  - Internal fundraising events
  - Apply for community grants
  - Request free services/donations
  - Make use of in-house experts
  - Partner with local companies or business in your community

## **Other Workplace Health Promotion planning sites to visit:**

Health Works Guide

Resource URL: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/healthworks\\_guide/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/healthworks_guide/index-eng.php)

Healthy Settings: Canadian Case Studies

Resource URL: <http://www.ccohs.ca/healthyworkplaces/employers/casestudies.html>

Healthy Workplace Initiative Program Summary

Resource URL: <http://www.diabetes.ca/Files/HWI%20Program%20Summary.pdf>

Issues of Workplace Health and Wellness: Case Studies

Resource URL: [http://www.clbc.ca/Research\\_and\\_Reports/Case\\_Studies.asp](http://www.clbc.ca/Research_and_Reports/Case_Studies.asp)