

Health and Wellness Program(s) for the Employees – The Change Needed at the Organizational level: Systems Approach

Dinny Mathew, MBA, MPH¹; Krista Hamilton²; and Tim Mack, MSW³
¹ Executive Director, Prescott FHT ² Executive Assistant, Prescott FHT ³ Social Worker, Prescott FHT

BACKGROUND

Stress accounts for about 80% of all illnesses for human beings and is currently the prime reason linked to mortality in developed countries. It is not unknown for healthcare workers to be working under stressful environments; both physical and psychological, even before the pandemic.

In healthcare professionals, burnout resulting from stress can not only cause with some serious health problems in the individual but also some serious issues for the organization as well.

Stressed employees are more likely to make some serious medical errors, unable to use the best of judgement to make decisions regarding a patient situation, and ultimately resulting in poor quality of care for our patients. For the organization it could also mean increase in health benefit costs because of higher usage of services, high turnover rate for employees, difficulty in filling job vacancies, difficult situations involving employees and patients, resulting in low ratings of patient satisfaction.

Even though employee wellness programs have gained more attention, most programs still focus on individuals rather than taking a systems approach to the problem.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

- ⇒ Change attitudes from an individual to an organizational level by taking care of their employees
- ⇒ Reconnect with the employees in an unconventional way
- ⇒ Achieve success for the individual and the organization using systems approach

OUR PROGRAM

We utilized systems approach by collaborating with a consultant to design a program for our employees, giving them tools to build resilience, courage, and confidence.

The **Employee Health and Wellness Event** was geared towards managing their time better, helping them prioritize their responsibilities, providing brain power habits to maximize their productivity, and enhancing communications between their colleagues, clients, and supervisors.

The **Workplace Wellness Committee** consisting of employees empowers them in bringing change and develop wonderful programs in the work environment.

The **Dynamic Employee of the Month Program** recognizes employee's contributions. The employee is selected by their peers and the organization recognizes them through social media posts and offer a small gift amount to enjoy hot or cold treats. Employees also get **FOUR amazing gift coupons** that they can use each week, on top of their usual deserved break times like 10 minutes break to listen to their favorite music, 10 minutes walking break, An extra 10 minutes coffee break, and Get out of the office 10 minutes early.

Recently, we also introduced two more exciting programs; **Buddy Program** to help our new employees get adjust to the new environment and **Building Healthy Habits Initiative** to encourage healthier lifestyle behaviors that allow employees to become healthier, happier and more energetic both inside and outside the workplace.

RESULTS

After attending the Employee Health and Wellness Event and with the incorporation of employee wellness programs, our employees reported the following helpful changes.

- ⇒ Using their time wisely
- ⇒ Being more aware of identifying a quick break to remove themselves from the stressful situation
- ⇒ More peer support and bonding with each other

The management's support has also increased productivity and reduced workplace conflicts. We are also anticipating increased retention and reduced absenteeism in the upcoming months.

The administration now has more appropriate and transparent operational policies and procedures to improve the work environment for our employees and ultimately providing better medical care for our patients.

