

Career Management Digest

Workplace Wellness

Workplace wellness is a broad term that is used in a variety of ways by worksites to define the projects and activities that are offered with a focus on employee health. Wikipedia offers this definition: "Workplace wellness is any workplace health promotion activity or organizational policy designed to support healthy behavior in the workplace and to improve health outcomes." A happy, healthy employee (in both body AND mind) is a productive one. Companies are implementing wellness committees to help develop policies and resources, create on-site activities and then promote them to their co-workers. This month, we offer some information on workplace wellness for your consideration.

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

There has been some recent discussion on the concept of Subject Well-Being by the Da Vinci Institute. The key word is "Subjective" because everyone defines happiness and well-being differently.

Subjective Well-Being is defined as the way you think about your state of happiness and fulfillment.

In broaching the topic of Mental Health in the workplace, one can find satisfaction in career choices and the environment of work by striving toward subjective well-being. Yet, everyone has a different idea about what it means to live a fulfilling life.

Subjective Well-Being describes how you, as an individual, think about your state of happiness, fulfillment, and satisfaction. Some things regarding well-being change over the course of time. What younger people might see at the core of their well-being (such as family, income, employment) may be quite different from those who are older (health, freedom, leisure). There really is no single key for achieving high subjective well-being because it is "subjective." All of us experience the swings of moods, emotions, both negative and positive... more or less... at any given time in our work life and in our personal life.

What keys can one implement to bring about the likelihood of high subjective well-being? The Da Vinci Institute has these suggestions:

Define Your Core Values – When you live in accordance with your values, you feel good about yourself and you know that you didn't compromise on things that you know are right.

Create Job Satisfaction – Crafting your job with techniques that allow you to experience flexibility, security, income, challenge, variety, lifestyle, and other aspects of a career that we strive for can bring about satisfaction.

Work With A Purpose – Work can make a positive difference in the lives of others. Many people think working for others and on behalf of others is a true calling to find that purpose in their lives. But remember, small acts of kindness in the workplace with co-workers can go a long way and have a powerful effect on your own sense of well-being, too.

Live A Healthy Life – Health is another important contributor. The healthy lifestyle leads to more energy, helps lower stress levels, and helps one face challenges. Don't forget to add an exercise program, rest, sleep, and staying hydrated to feel better and fuel peak performance.

Build Positive Relationships – Close trusting relationships are a factor in high subjective well-being that transcends age, gender, and culture. Building strong relationships takes work, but the benefits positively impact and add balance to our lives. These relationships can center on family, old friends, and colleagues. Appreciate others and invest time in these relationships.

Think Positively – Attitude plays a major role in how you feel about your life. The Law of Attraction says that you attract more of what you focus on. So, change your focus and change your outlook – by choice – to attract a better life. Our thoughts have a powerful impact on our life. They influence the choices we make and the actions we take (or choose not to take). Be positive and develop a habit of positive thinking.

In review, consider these ideas as steps that can actually lead toward more satisfaction, more happiness, and more fulfillment toward a Subjective Well-Being that defines who we are in life and rewards us in the workplace.

~Ed Duda, Career Counselor,
Workforce Development, Inc., Olmsted County



JUST BREATHE

The American Institute of Stress (AIG) has labeled [deep, mindful] breathing as a Super Stress Buster (stress.org/take-a-deep-breath/).

According to AIG, by practicing mindful breathing or "abdominal breathing" 20-30 minutes per day, the increased oxygen intake will create a state of calmness.

The American Lung Association defines "abdominal breathing" as such:

- Start by breathing in through your nose
- Pay attention to how your abdominal fills up with air
- Breathe out from your mouth, making sure to exhale about 2-3 times longer than it took to inhale
- Remember to relax your shoulders and neck when doing breathing exercises

Make sure you feel well and are able to breathe normally when practicing breathing exercises. They may seem simple, but it can take some time to get used to and make a daily habit.

~ Amy Lofquist, Career Counselor
Workforce Development Inc. Rice and
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Wellness and the JERF (Just Eat Real Food) Concept

One of WDI’s Wellness Committee initiatives is to educate and share the JERF concept with all employees. Healthy eating is beneficial to both physical and mental health, which in turn impacts work performance. The Committee has purchased a book called “100 Days of Real Food” by Lisa Leake for each office. As a lifelong recipe reader, I decided to take the book home and have a look.

A few years ago, I needed to make some changes in what and how I ate. I’ve always loved to cook and bake and knew the baking part would definitely be a challenge. I have been able to address that by baking healthier when possible and by discovering the “Win-Win” of sharing what I bake with others. Healthier cooking is fun and challenging; I look for recipes that are low carb, offer healthy substitutions and that looks and sounds delicious.

The author of “100 Days of Real Food” shares her family’s journey to learn to eat without highly processed or refined foods or how to eat more “real food”. She shares her advice on how to make smart food choices at the grocery store, how to read food labels, what essentials to stock in your pantry and to recognize foods to avoid/eliminate. The second part of the book is recipes. Leake includes recipes for breakfast, lunch, snacks/appetizers, salads and sides, dinners, treats and homemade staples. In addition to the usual ingredients and “how-to” steps, the recipes provide a difficulty level, prep and cook times, serving size and helpful tips. For those who have dietary restrictions or preferences, each recipe indicates Dairy-free, Gluten-free and Vegetarian. The one thing that’s missing (which I would have appreciated) is the nutritional information.

The book has beautiful photos for the recipes, which is important since many people ‘eat with their eyes first’. I’m looking forward to learning more about the JERF concept and trying the recipes.

~Valerie Kvale, Placement Specialist, Workforce Development, Inc. Freeborn County

SOME GREAT WORKSITE WELLNESS ACTIVITIES FROM THE AREA:

- Walking/weight loss challenges
- Walking paths within plant or marked walking paths outside facility
- On-site Flu shots
- Wellness Director on-site for staff and residents
- Dance fitness
- Provide healthy snack alternatives at meetings vs only baked goods
- Many Albert Lea businesses are “Blue Zones” employers
- Warm-up stretches/exercises prior to each shift
- Free biometric testing
- Well@Work clinic and onsite health clinics
- EAP programs
- Healthy Snack Market/vending
- Reimbursement for health club fees
- Health-related incentives for participation in events
- On-site pickle ball court
- Healthy food-focused potlucks

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