Everyone wins in a healthy workplace
Posted by Elizabeth R. Click/Case Western Reserve University  October 08, 2008 02:53AM
Categories: Impact, NetWellness

Wouldn’t it be wonderful to feel energized and ready for work every day? Wouldn’t it be great to participate in programs at your work site that help you feel better and attain a higher level of health?

More and more companies have experienced numerous benefits from offering wellness programs focused on topics such as weight management, smoking cessation and relaxation training, and wellness services such as fitness centers, employee assistance programs, onsite health risk analysis and more.

Making each day a great one will go a long way toward enhancing your job satisfaction. One way to do that is by having access to health and wellness information and by participating in programs offered. That will help you stay healthier, reduce your days away from the office due to illness, and help you be more productive when you are at work.

Healthy worksites
A healthy worksite is established by both employers and employees. Employers can foster a wellness-oriented environment in many ways. Take a few minutes to assess if your employer is doing any of the following:

• Increasing employee morale by meeting employee health and wellness needs.
• Encouraging active participation in wellness programs and services such as educational programs and fitness classes.
• Helping employees understand their health risks.
• Providing programs targeting risky health behaviors.
• Motivating employees to actively incorporate wellness into their lives.
• Sharing the positive results of program participation with their work force.

If a wellness program is present at your worksite, are you:

• Actively participating in the program offered?
• Speaking with the health and wellness staff to learn more about how you can make healthy lifestyle changes?
• Obtaining your cholesterol, blood pressure and glucose readings during annual health screenings?
• Exercising regularly to increase your strength and cardiovascular endurance?

If a wellness program is not present at your worksite, have you:

• Shared this article with Upper Management and the Human Resources staff?

• Written a brief proposal describing why you think having a wellness program at your worksite would be beneficial?

• Gathered other individuals interested in health and wellness to form a support group?

All of the efforts described above will move you and your worksite toward a greater level of health and wellness. Start now and feel the positive effects of a healthy lifestyle at home and at work.

Talk to your employer

Encourage your employer to start a wellness program. Or, become actively involved in any program that is already in place at your worksite. Have your goals and ideas prepared so that you can make an immediate impact. Find out what similar worksites are doing in terms of health and wellness and share that information.

The business case for wellness programs is clear: Higher health risk levels are correlated with higher health care costs. Low health risk levels are associated with lower health care costs.

Employees who are stressed, unhappy, and unhealthy are considered "high risk" because they have a significantly greater chance of becoming ill. When they do get sick companies suffer financially. If your workforce is healthy they're much less likely to get sick and cost the company.

Here is a list of potential wellness programs for your employer to consider:

• Ergonomic evaluations and training classes

• Lactation rooms and classes

• Prenatal education

• Quiet rooms for relaxation

• Stress management programs

• Fitness facilities

• Massage therapy

• Nutrition education

• Onsite primary health care services

• Child care facility or resources and referral service

• Smoking cessation programs parenting classes

• Elder care resource and referral service

• Cholesterol, blood pressure and glucose screening programs

• Flu vaccination

• Weight management programs

• Health care consumerism programs

• Employee assistance program

• Lifestyle coaching

• Mobile mammography

• Holistic health education sessions

Although many worksites are offering such programs and services, some worksites are not. You could serve as a stimulus for healthy change by sharing this information.

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