

# Section 2: How managers and supervisors can

## The Business Case<sup>8</sup>

Employers are learning that providing an organizational environment that supports employees' physical and mental health, results in a net gain. Many studies over the past few decades have shown that the workplace has a powerful effect on the health of staff. How healthy staff feel affects job satisfaction, productivity, and even their own health. Supporting healthy workplace initiatives pays back in the form of:

- Improved productivity
- Fewer insurance and workers compensation claims
- Less absenteeism
- A decrease in accidents
- Reduced staff turnover and the retention of valued staff, which means reduced recruitment, training and induction costs
- Improved staff attitudes towards the organization and higher staff morale and
- A more receptive climate for, and ability to cope with, workplace changes

*“The simple truth is that when employees “feel good”, they are more energetic, creative, innovative and productive”*

~ Erin Quinn

Health, Work & Wellness Conference (2005)

## BACKGROUND

Promoting health in the workplace doesn't have to be complicated, expensive or time consuming. It is a matter of making a commitment to workplace health, finding out what kinds of initiatives your team wants and helping to develop a plan and putting the plan into action<sup>7</sup>.

## COMMON WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

There are common concerns in workplaces everywhere. Some of the common workplace challenges include lack of communication, lack of respect, lack of recognition, little or no engagement or vote in what happens at work and working through breaks. Capital Health also has some these challenges. Did you know of the 2006 Capital Health employee survey<sup>9</sup>, respondents indicate that:

53% believe their opinion is considered in the decisions that affect them

51% feel they are recognized for the work they do

81% feel they are treated with respect and courtesy by coworkers

53% are satisfied with the quality and amount of guidance provided by immediate supervisor

As a manager/supervisor, are you aware of what your staff's concerns are? How can you find out if you don't know? The best place to start is to ask and just don't ask for a list of complaints, ask for solutions. For example, a common workplace concern is that some employees may feel that they are not recognized for their hard work. What can you do? Ask them how they would like to be recognized. Often employees would love to hear a sincere thank you.

# support wellness groups and workplace health promotion activities



## ROLE OF MANAGERS

We must remind ourselves that health and performance go hand in hand. The same workplace practices that lead to employee health can also lead to greater productivity and performance. **Managers can help by:**

### **Modeling healthy behavior – actions speak louder than words.**

As a manager, you set the tone of a work setting.

Are you demonstrating that you care by listening to and communicating with staff?

Are you open to suggestions to make things better?

### **Working with staff to identify workplace challenges.**

Be open to the possibility that some things may need to change and that staff has the ability to facilitate the change with your support.

### **Offering support to a wellness group.**

A manager's support of a wellness group may make or break their chances for success.

Are you supportive of the efforts of the team?

Are you open to considering new ideas to enhance the workplace?

### **Being as flexible as possible.**

Allow employees time to participate in a wellness group and health promotion activities.

Flexibility is important to genuine participation in planning and implementing health promotion activities.

Flexibility can be used as a measure of a manager's level of caring about employee health.

The need for flexibility, within operational requirements, cannot be underestimated.





### **Finding money.**

Employees may fund raise or successfully receive a Workplace Health Promotion Grant to implement their health promotion activity. Sometimes the money falls short of the actual dollar value to deliver a program; in this case a manager may be asked to supplement their health promotion budget. Please give this request, should it come your way, serious consideration. Again, it could make or break the program or activity. Supporting a health promotion program with extra money is a clear sign of support for employee health.

### **Participating in and supporting health promotion activities led by staff.**

This relates to the first point about modeling healthy behaviour.

Participation is another sign that you care about the health of people you work with.

### **Invite staff to form a wellness group and plan health promotion activities.**

Employees may not be aware that they can do this. Your invitation could be the beginning or a significant enhancement of employees participating in making things better.



Dr. Graham Lowe leading researcher and consultant on workplace health in Canada reports the following conditions facilitate health and productivity among employees who are<sup>10</sup>:

- **Challenged but not overworked**
- **Treated fairly and with respect, which fosters a climate of trust and commitment**
- **Provided with resources and equipment needed to do their jobs effectively**
- **Given job autonomy and opportunities for input into workplace decisions**
- **Supervised by someone who is a good communicator and supportive of their needs and**
- **Appropriately awarded and recognized for their contributions**

*Be the manager you'd love to have - Nova Scotia Public Service Commission*

## CAPITAL HEALTH MANAGERS SHARE THEIR STORIES ...

Brian Martell, Manager Special Imaging, believes that listening to employees and respecting their questions goes a long way in making them feel their input is important. "The best approach to get "buy in" on any workplace change is to include the people the change will impact.

By listening to our staff and demonstrating respect to one another, we can create a healthy workplace, an environment in which staff will want to work in.

Employers are our greatest asset and we must ensure they are valued and their contribution is appreciated. We all play an important role in the delivery of healthcare".

### Go FISH .... Housekeeping Services did!

The FISH Philosophy was invented at a real Seattle fish market and focuses on customer service-improving and morale-boosting concepts. It has four fundamental components: play; be there; choose your attitude and make their day!

*" Being one of the frontrunners for the VMB Housekeeping Fish Committee program gives me satisfaction knowing I am part of the team ...*

*As for hosting events for staff; BBQ's lunches, etc. , I like the whole package from planning to decorating.*

*For a brief time, we don't have to worry about work, just enjoy each other's company ..."*

Marlene Mantley, Housekeeping Services

### The Veterans' Healthy Workplace Team and The Veterans Services Management Team

teamed up last Christmas (2006) to do out first ever staff Christmas Party. There were a number of tables set up for fun activities and challenges, Ring-o-Rudolph; it's in the Bag, Spinter Wonderland, In the Nose, Candy Cane Grab, Puzzle Rush, and What's Inside.

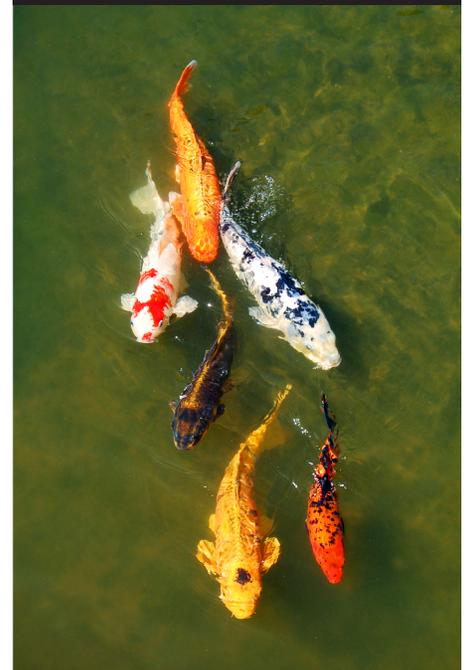
A Mocktail Bar was set up to provide colorful seasonal mixed beverages with Christmas names such as Rudolph's Nose, Starburst, Mistletoe, and Snowstorm. Festive music was played, healthy snacks were provided and there were lots of prizes for challenge winners.

The celebration was also used to honour a staff member who was retiring. Veterans Services staff who retire are honoured at celebrations and receive a framed and personalized print of Camp Hill.

*" The staff had a great time as did the managers"*

says Elsie Rolls, Director, Veterans Services.

### Go FISH



### Celebration



Peggy Preyde (retiring),  
Donna Mitchell and Elsie Rolls

## Take A Break



Jane Pryor,  
Director of Food and  
Nutrition Services, knows  
how important it is for her team  
to be refreshed and energized  
during the day. She arranged for  
her management team to receive a  
"Take a Break" visit from Healthy  
Workplace staff and a bag full of  
items and tips to encourage  
staff to take breaks!

Back: Mary Jane Taylor, Donna MacInnis, Terri Billard, Dale Fenerty  
Front: Elizabeth Reid (dietetic intern), Tenille Sonnichsen (dietetic intern), Bonnie Conrad (Healthy Workplace), Jane Pryor, Marilyn Cipak, Laura Kaulback (Healthy Workplace),  
Missing is Dale Melnick

## Healthy Workplace Council members December 2007



*We  
are all  
responsible for  
the health of our  
workplace*

Back Row (Left to Right): Neil Cook, Wendy Williams, Jennifer Barr, Cathy Saunders, Angela Coombs, Leanne Bryan, Tanya MacDougall  
Front row (left to Right): Dawn Burstall, Amanda Crabtree, Peggy Lyons, Bonnie Conrad, Tanya Godley, Laura Kaulback  
Missing: Annie Drew-Purcell, Cynthia Stockman, Heather Hampson, Jeanne Rokosh, Kristopher Dove, Lynn Campbell, Angie Harwood

## Give It A Go!

Human Resources (HR) supports and encourages health promotion within our work teams by listening and sharing with one another. We've conducted staff surveys to gather feedback on what we could do to improve our workplace. As a result, flexible work schedules have been implemented where staff go to the gym or take a walk during lunch time. Everyone in the department is encouraged to take a lunch break, away from their desks.



The employees have rallied together to take advantage of any organizational initiatives such as applying for Healthy Workplace Grants. These "special gifts" have provided great team building opportunities for staff to get together. This year's grant provided a much deserved one day, "Give it a Go" to experience new things with their colleagues, such as fencing, Tai Chi and other physical activities over two days.

The HR managers are always open to any form of "humiliation" created by the staff for fund raising in support of department activities such as Holiday celebrations. We truly believe in "Healthy People, Healthy Communities"!

Sherry Scott, Manager, Workforce Development

## Take A Walk



*"It was a beautiful day, we followed a great walking trail and our group was full of enthusiasm,"*

Stephanie MacEachern, Cobequid Community Health Centre (CHC).

*The wellness group is small in numbers but is making their mark.*