Ball State's Employee Wellness Program: Working Well

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Organization Description

Working Well is Ball State Universities' employee worksite wellness program. They offer a variety of programs and incentives to identify and act on existing health conditions and help employees' and their families maintain active healthy lifestyles.

Working together with employees, the staff focuses on promoting a culture of health and well-being that contributes to employees thriving in their jobs, the classroom, and the community.

Their mission is to help employees live a life well lived by providing employees with tools to empower them to manage their own health proactively.

Your Role in Organization

1. Create health communication messages
2. Obtain and disseminate health-related information
3. Server as a health education resource person
4. Administer health education programs
5. Plan programs to empower Wellness Ambassadors

Principal Project Description

My primary project was developing a program for Ball State Universities' Wellness Ambassadors. I assisted my site supervisor in creating a Healthy Culture Audit and a Healthy Department Toolkit. These resources will better equip Wellness Ambassadors in creating a healthy culture within their department.

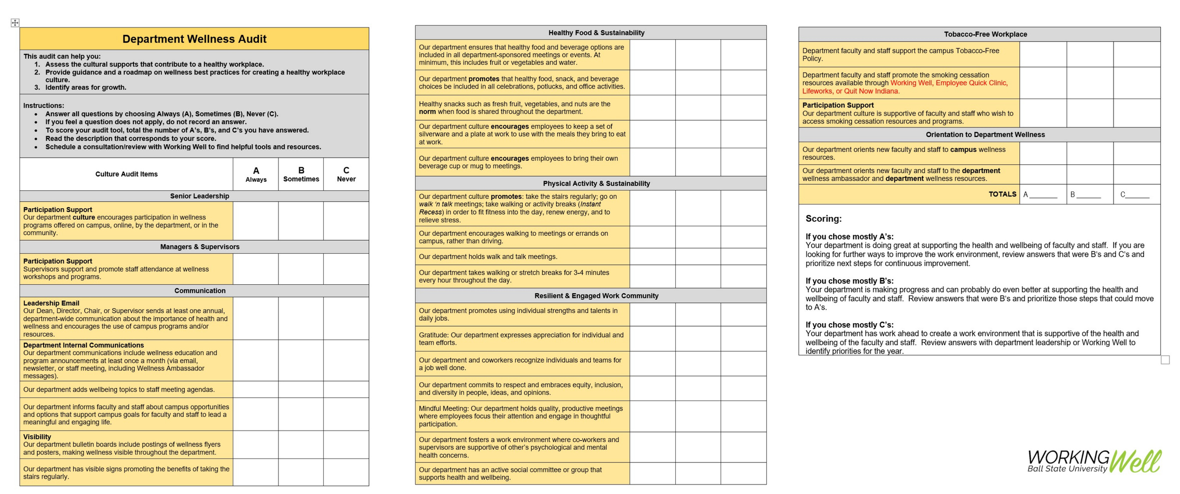
Wellness Ambassadors serve as liaisons between employees in their department and the Working Well staff. They play a critical role in cultivating department morale and teamwork, sharing wellness messages, and serving as the "go to" person to facilitate wellness opportunities.

We addressed key questions to define the purpose and scope of our project and to clarify the direction. During the 'needs' assessment, I gathered data, from national ambassador programs and conducted a literature review. Next, we analyzed factors that to strengthen our program.

During the planning process, we utilized the logic model to identity inputs, outputs, and outcomes. I researched best practices set by the CDC, WELCOA, and HERO. We engaged stakeholders and kept in line with Working Well's mission and Ball State's strategic plan. We examined other university audits and toolkits and collaborated with other wellness coordinators. Then we validated the audit to makes sure it measured the departments' cultural health. Last, we created a complementing resource toolkit.

Artifact Description

The Department Wellness Audit was created in collaboration with my site supervisor for use by Ball State University's Wellness Ambassadors. This tool will enable ambassadors to accurately assess their current worksite cultural supports that contribute to a healthy workplace, provide guidance for wellness best practices, and help identify areas for improvement.


Department Wellness Audit

Healthy Food & Sustainability

Tobacco-Free Workplace

WORKING Well

Areas of assessment include senior leadership and supervisor participation support in wellness programs, health and wellness communication, healthy food and physical activity availability and promotion, employee engagement, environmental sustainability, smoke-free environment, and orientation.

After completing the audit, ambassadors can schedule a wellness consult with Working Well to identify goals, plan action steps, and/or utilizes resources from the complementary toolkit to advance initiatives and areas of well-being within their department.

Collaborating with community health professionals in Delaware County

CHES Responsibilities

I experienced each of the 7 Areas of Responsibility for the Certified Health Education Specialist.

Area of Responsibility I
I assessed the needs, assets, and capacity for health education for a program to empowered Wellness Ambassadors to be agents of change within their department.

Area of Responsibility II
I planned a health education program that equipped Wellness Ambassadors with the tools and resources necessary to assess their department culture and implement change.

Area of Responsibility III
I assisted my site supervisor with implementation of a new strengths-based program and with the updated version of Ball States total wellbeing platform: LifeWorks.

Area of Responsibility IV
I conducted evaluation and research related to health education by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data from an ambassador survey used to identify the current level of engagement and program state.

Area of Responsibility V
I assisted with administering current health education programs such as health coaching, employee well checks, and LifeWorks.

Area of Responsibility VI
I served as a resource person by obtaining and sharing reliable resources for health coaching clients and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Area of Responsibility VII
I advocated using the strengths-based approach in community advocacy initiatives through the Delaware County Wellness Council.

Lessons Learned

I used a lot of information learned from my Health Communication course. Health messages must be clear, concise, and relevant if you want to reach your target audience. You must get right to the point. Also, a great deal of information from my Organization and Administration class came in handy, too! Workplace culture is a large determining factor in job satisfaction. Being in a supportive environment allowed me to step outside my comfort zone to make and learn from my mistakes.

I learned that worksite wellness requires you to wear many hats and being a health educator requires continual learning! I am passionately curious, so that is exciting to me.
I also learned the value of knowing and working from my personal strengths.

Ball State employees utilize the campus walking trails

Recommendations

Three things would have made my internship experience better and helped me adjust to the professional world. First and foremost, look at your internship as an opportunity to learn. You aren't supposed to know everything! Know you will make mistakes and use those mistakes as opportunities for growth. Second, concerning health messages, don't reinvent the wheel. Know how to access and utilize reliable resources that are available to you. Many organizations have already created health messages that are easy to read and have excellent graphics. Take advantage of those. Third, understand which projects benefit most from your time and best effort. In other words, spend more time on tasks that net the biggest impact.

One way I could have better organized my time is by reviewing the parameters before creating each health communication piece. I spent too much time researching or gathering information and then weeding through the massive amounts of information, when one or two reputable sources would have been enough. So, always keep in mind the length of your message and set some parameters for gathering information.

Three takeaways for future interns:
1. Always look at mistakes as opportunities to learn.
2. Take time to reflect on the work environments and tasks you enjoy.
3. Never be afraid to ask for help.