

Evaluation

Evaluation can be a daunting task, but it is an important part of every worksite wellness program.

Why evaluate my program?

- To get feedback that you can use to improve your efforts
- To demonstrate the value of your program
- To measure change
- To secure continued funding
- To establish accountability
- To see if doing something else would be worthwhile or if there's part of your program that's not working. You can then allocate those resources to another part of your program.

What should I evaluate in my program?

- Participation
- Participant satisfaction
- Biometric measures
- Productivity
- Medical claims

How do I evaluate my program?

- Program registration sheets
- Participant satisfaction surveys (half-way through program and at the end)
- Self-reported behavior surveys
- HRA results, biometric testing, screening results
- Productivity questionnaires
- Medical claims comparison

When do I evaluate my program?

- Participation and satisfaction should be evaluated on an on-going basis
- HRAs should be conducted annually
- Productivity audits and medical claims should be evaluated bi-annually

Most of these evaluation methods will produce “numbers,” but be sure and include stories from your employees regarding how the program was of benefit to them.

Sources:

Wellness Councils of America, 2005, www.welcoa.org

“More than Just Numbers,” 2007, www.welcoa.org

“The Fundamentals of Evaluation,” David Hunnicutt, PhD, 2007, www.welcoa.org

“Top 10 Reasons Why People Don't Evaluate The Workplace Wellness Programs,” David Hunnicutt, PhD, 2007, www.welcoa.org.



Why aren't worksite wellness programs evaluated? Dr. David Hunnicutt, PhD, president of WELCOA, explores the **top 10 reasons why worksite wellness programs aren't evaluated:**

My wellness program is not properly designed

This can be alleviated by building data collection methods right into your programming. For instance, have participants fill out satisfaction survey before they receive their incentive.

Resources are scarce

It is recommended to allocate about 20% of your worksite wellness funds for evaluation AND include this in your budget.

I'm not sure what I should be evaluating

Use the methods listed above to determine evaluation measures in your worksite.

I could lose my job if outcomes aren't favorable

Dr. Hunnicutt states: "Although it does happen, it is relatively rare that practitioners are let go simply because evaluation results aren't favorable. To the contrary, it is much more likely that you would lose your job if you don't constantly and continuously improve your programming efforts—and you need evaluation data to do this."

I won't see the changes in my lifetime

Behavioral changes do happen over time, however, participant satisfaction can help ensure that people continue to participate so those changes CAN happen.

The results aren't taken seriously anyway

Dr. Hunnicutt emphasizes that this issue can be solved in a two-part manner: 1) it is important to make a commitment to evaluating outcomes in the organization as a whole, and 2) it is important to find a way to communicate these results effectively.

I don't want my program's shortcomings exposed

Although it may be hard to receive negative comments about your program, this will help your program grow and improve.

There aren't enough hours in the day

Spending some time in the evaluation area of your program will help you to improve other areas of your program, thus making the overall task of worksite wellness programming easier to accomplish.

I'm not looking to publish the outcomes

Evaluation is different from research. "Evaluation really focuses on the idea of getting feedback from participants and outcomes from interventions to improve the overall quality of your program, whereas research is more concerned with proving outcomes," states Dr. Hunnicutt.

I don't feel like I have the expertise

This is not true in many cases. Evaluation requires forethought and identifying priorities, not an advanced degree.

Sources:

Wellness Councils of America, 2005, www.welcoa.org

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