

Chapter 3: What's Next?



What's Next?

The level of support you have obtained from management will influence your next steps along with the healthy workplace model (see Chapter 1) you have selected. More than likely, your next step will include forming a Health & Wellness Committee.

Is Having a Health & Wellness Committee Absolutely Necessary?

The argument could be made that forming a Health & Wellness Committee is so imperative that no healthy workplace initiatives should be attempted without one. Strycker et al (1997) state that such committees are felt to be important for implementing healthy workplace initiatives but that little research has established what makes them successful¹.

Many companies boast that their committees are extraordinarily productive. Although little research has been published on Health & Wellness Committees and outcomes, there is an association between number of hours spent by committee members and program success². It is not known if committees are essential for employee participation.

Some workplaces choose not to form a Health & Wellness Committee in favour of using an existing Joint Health & Safety Committee. The main function of a Joint Health & Safety Committee is to ensure that your workplace complies with health and safety legislation. According to O'Grady (2000), Joint Health & Safety Committees can play an important role in improving workplace health and safety³. The established structure and function of the Joint Health & Safety Committee makes it an appealing alternative to some workplaces, whereas others prefer to create a Health & Wellness Committee. Each workplace is different and will have to determine what is best according to their needs.

Forming the Health & Wellness Committee

The Health & Wellness Committee includes members that represent the various types of jobs and people at a workplace (e.g. senior and middle management, labour representatives, human resources, clerical, etc.). Committees range in size; 6 to 12 members are common. If you have a large workplace with multiple locations, you may want to consider having separate committees at each site. The other option is to have representation from each worksite location on the committee.

A member of the Joint Health & Safety Committee should be on the Health & Wellness Committee to act as a liaison between the two groups. If this is not feasible, there should definitely be communication and coordination between the two groups to maximize health and safety opportunities and minimize redundancies.

Strycker et al (1997) found that successful committees have a committed chair, active members, guidance and structure when starting out¹. These researchers also claim that Health & Wellness Committees appear to work best when they are made up of “doers”; start out with highly visible, easily managed activities; are given step-by-step instructions for conducting activities; solicit employee feedback and requests; and form ties with other worksites and community agencies.

As such, you will want to designate someone as “chair” of the committee and have each member take the lead on the different initiatives. In this way, work can be shared by all members.

Once the Health & Wellness Committee is formed, it is important to set terms of reference for the Committee members (e.g. roles; frequency and duration of meeting; how decisions will be made) and establish a goal statement to communicate the intention and direction of the committee to employees. Some companies also create a logo for their Committee, which is later used on all communication and promotional materials. This helps with branding and building awareness of the committee.

Recruiting New Members

Some people lean towards having a committee of volunteers rather than appointees. They argue that appointees may not be as devoted as volunteers. Researchers in one study took this position by suggesting that committees made up of volunteers would be most likely to last and have enthusiasm⁴. Contrary to the researchers’ hypothesis however, results showed it made no difference whether committees were made up of self-volunteers, were appointed by a contact person, or were recruited as volunteers. Similarly, there was no association between volunteer, appointed, or recruited committee members and subsequent attendance at meetings, participation in committee work, or representativeness of the committee. However, the researchers of this study admit that their finding is inconsistent with other research that found it difficult to form committees or difficult to obtain representation. Given the fact that there is very little research on this issue, you will have to find out what works best in your workplace through trial and error.

The committee may want to informally put a call out for new members to all employees, briefly highlighting what is involved with being on the committee. Invite those who are uncertain to attend a meeting so that they can get a better sense of what to expect. Another option is to formally request new members and have them go through an application process. If there is not a response from putting a call out to all employees, then have the existing committee brainstorm individuals to approach and ask them personally to be involved.

When recruiting new members, consider who is needed or missing on the committee. In addition to having members that represent the various types of jobs and people in your workplace, it’s also helpful to have people on the committee with varied expertise (i.e. creativity, promotional skills, motivational skills, planning skills, etc.) Include these details in the call out to employees or approach individuals that meet the profile the committee is looking for.

It is important to be realistic about the membership of the Health & Wellness Committee— your committee will change with new members. Change can be good as new members bring fresh ideas and energy to the table.

Motivating the Health & Wellness Committee

There will definitely be times when members of the committee need motivating. If your committee is just getting started, they may be unclear about their role and the direction of the committee. Initial enthusiasm can be maintained by:

- Asking the members what they would like to get out of being on the committee and aim to incorporate as many committee members' wishes as possible.
- Figuring out your direction as a committee and the role of each member. This process will provide a clear purpose for being involved and identify how they can contribute.
- Meeting on a regular basis (i.e. monthly) with times that work for everyone. Pre-book meetings so that people have the time blocked off, but be flexible to change if the schedule no longer works.
- Legitimizing committee members' roles as an important function in the company as opposed to a volunteer group (i.e. have role put in member's Performance Appraisal and encourage their managers to commend their involvement).
- Giving committee members access to training opportunities either by having a guest speaker during a meeting or attending workshops in the community on healthy workplace topics. This is important particularly if members feel they are interested in being involved but do not really understand the concepts behind healthy workplace initiatives.

For a mature Health & Wellness Committee (i.e. the committee and members have been in place for a while) that seems to have lost momentum, try the following to re-energize and motivate the members by:

- Finding out if members are still interested in being on the committee. If they are, try to identify what is making the group stagnant. Maybe their workload is intense and the committee needs to scale back on their activities or make use of project groups with people outside the committee. Perhaps conversations need to take place with certain managers to stress the value of their staff being involved on the committee. Or, the direction of the committee may need to be reviewed to ensure that it still aligns with members' wants and needs. If the focus of the committee is no longer clear, revisit the goals.
- Celebrating achievements and look for opportunities to have committee members recognized for their contribution (i.e. apply for an external award, treat the committee to lunch, incorporate committee recognition at a staff recognition event).
- Having the occasional creativity session can help the committee generate new ideas—they may be bored with the status quo or may struggle with what to attempt next.
- Fostering camaraderie among members.
- Advocating for committee members to have the responsibility and authority to make changes in the workplace without the fear of reprimands from others. At the very least, define the parameters of what they are able to do as a committee. Perhaps the role of the

committee is to act as a non-partisan group whose recommendations are heavily considered by management.

- Creating opportunities for personal and committee growth (i.e. training, learning new skills, taking on exciting challenges).
- Designating working spaces (i.e. meeting room) and resources (i.e. operational budget, bulletin board, section on the company intranet) so the committee feels acknowledged.



Notes About Integration

Integration is one of the key conditions for a successful workplace health promotion initiative (see Chapter 1). Integration means workplace health promotion strategies should be integrated into a company's regular management practices and eventually should be formally incorporated into the company's corporate plan⁵. This includes having an overall wellness policy²¹ and acknowledging the value of people in the vision/mission statement of the organization².

For workplaces just starting comprehensive workplace health promotion, integration may not be feasible. If this is the case for your workplace, consider the goal statement of the Health & Wellness committee as a starting point for integration. Creating a wellness policy and aligning the vision/mission statement based on the philosophy of comprehensive workplace health promotion can be addressed as you move forward.

Where Do Employee Assistance Programs Fit?

Employee Assistance Programs, or EAPs, are a benefit provided by employers to their employees and family members with the aim for improving employee health and organizational well-being well reducing costs associated with absenteeism, disability claims, workplace accidents or low productivity. EAP services typically include short-term counselling assistance provided by professionals, telephone and web-based information and support services, and wellness and training programs that focus upon prevention and health promotion. In addition, EAPs can offer specialized services such as on-site trauma response, management consultation, mediation/alternative dispute resolution, and outplacement services⁶.

If your workplace already has an EAP, employees and their families can access assistance for a wide range of personal challenges. EAP usage data can be collected during the needs assessment process (see next page) as an indicator of the current state of your workplace. EAP can also be promoted and utilized in planning and implementing workplace health initiatives.

Coordinating the Needs Assessment Process

At this point, many Health & Wellness Committees are eager to begin implementing programs or activities. However, it is imperative that they refrain until the needs of the workplace have been assessed and the findings translated into a plan of action. Typically the responsibility of coordinating the needs assessment process falls to the Health & Wellness Committee. A **needs assessment** is a process used to identify the gap between what exists and what is desired. This may also be called a gap analysis or situational assessment. The needs assessment process should reveal the actual needs, current practices and preferences of employees. In choosing tools or techniques for the needs assessment process, the Health & Wellness Committee will want one that is valid (measures what its supposed to measure) and reliable (measures the same thing consistently). Preferably the Health & Wellness Committee will select tools or techniques that identify employees' needs and preferences in terms of the 3 avenues of influence (Chapter 1): Health Practices, Physical Environment, and Social and Personal Resources.

Tools or techniques that can be used as part of a needs assessment include surveys, focus groups, audits and human resource data analysis. The benefits of conducting a needs assessment include:

- ❑ Identify employee and organizational needs
- ❑ Provide justification for programming and financial support
- ❑ Consulting employees about their needs fosters employee's ownership and commitment to programming
- ❑ Information collected can be used as baseline data to measure changes at a future date

Tips for the Needs Assessment Process

Assessing the Needs of a Changing Workforce

- ❑ This newsletter provides a rationale for assessing the needs of your workplace. Includes articles specific to nutrition, physical activity, and smoking policies and programs. Available in hardcopy by e-mailing workplace@hamilton.ca or calling 905-546-2424 ext. 3065 or 7218.

[Workplace Health: Discovering the Needs](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/health-sante/index_e.html)

(http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/health-sante/index_e.html)

- ❑ A guide for the committee or co-ordinating group that has been given the responsibility for planning workplace health programs. The guide outlines a step-by-step process for planning the needs assessment so that it is as effective as possible.



How the Health & Wellness Committee proceeds with the needs assessment process depends on the resources available (i.e. staff time and expertise, statistical software, a budget for workplace health promotion initiatives) and management support to respond to employee needs identified through the needs assessment. The Health & Wellness Committee will need to weigh the pros and cons in selecting tools and techniques. For instance, some tools are not quantifiable. Members of the Health & Wellness Committee will want to discuss issues such as whether or not they want to benchmark their organization to others in their respective industry or if they have the resources to meet the demands that will arise.

The Health Communication Unit (THCU) at The Centre for Health Promotion Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto has developed a Catalogue of Situational Assessment Tools that contains information about 29 recommended and promising situational assessment tools in six categories: needs assessments, health risk appraisals, workplace audits, employee interest surveys, current practice surveys, and organizational culture surveys. To view the catalogue, go to <http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/sat/index.cfm>.

Creating a Health & Wellness Action Plan

The results of the needs assessment will provide the Health & Wellness Committee with a picture of what is going on in your workplace in terms of needs, current practices and preferences of employees. The results should also identify employees' needs and preferences in terms of the 3 avenues of influence (see page 5): Health Practices, Physical Environment, and Social and Personal Resources. The Health & Wellness Committee can translate the needs assessment results into a Health & Wellness Action Plan. A **Health & Wellness Action Plan** is a detailed description of how employee and organization needs are going to be addressed.

The value of the Health & Wellness Action must not be understated. Without a written plan of action, the Health & Wellness Committee jeopardizes their survival in the organization. By having an action plan, the Health & Wellness Committee can justify resource utilization and demonstrate accomplishments when objectives are achieved. Furthermore, with a Health & Wellness Action Plan the foundation is laid for future evaluations (see pages 13-15).

It is often said that what gets measured matters, and without written objectives and an evaluation plan, there is no framework for measurement.

Features of the Health & Wellness Action Plan should include:

- Objectives to be achieved.
- Programs or activities that will be offered to employees as a means to achieve the objectives. To get a better idea of the types of programs or activities you could use, read the section on Implementing Programs (pages 11-13).
- How the programs or activities will be evaluated. For more information on evaluation, read the section on Coordinating Evaluations (see page 13-15).
- The timeframe in which programs or activities are taking place.

- Estimated cost of programs or activities.
- The individual(s) on the Health & Wellness Committee responsible for taking the lead.

To view a sample structure, see page 10.

How to Write Objectives

An objective is a brief statement specifying the desired impact, or effect of a health promotion program (i.e. how much of what should happen to whom by when)⁷. The Health & Wellness Committee, based on the results of the needs assessment process, typically generate the objectives in the Health & Wellness Action Plan. Generally speaking, the objectives on the Health & Wellness Action Plan remain the same until they are evaluated; however, the activities and timelines may be revised in order to accommodate the ever-changing needs of the workplace.

- To increase by 5% the number of respondents who describe their health as good/excellent by June 2008.
- To decrease by 12% the number of respondents who feel their present level of activity is unsatisfactory by August 2010.
- To investigate the possibility of offering a yearly health and wellness subsidy of \$100 for each employee by October 2009.
- To implement the Eat Smart! Cafeteria Program by September 2011.
- To offer 6 educational opportunities to all employees on health topics by May 2007.

Helpful Hint: **A good objective is SMART⁴⁰**

Specific (clear and precise)

Measurable (amenable to evaluation)

Appropriate (i.e., realistic)

Reasonable (i.e. reasonable)

Timed (specific time frame provided for achievement of objective)

To help you write objectives, try using the framework below:

To (check one only):

- increase
- decrease
- investigate
- implement
- other (specify:)

by _____ % _____

(what¹)

in/for (whom²)

by (when)

¹ E.g. awareness, behaviour, environmental support, policy, etc.

² E.g. management, all employees, shiftworkers, etc.

Example Structure for Health & Wellness Action Plan

Objectives	Programs or Activities	Evaluation	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Responsibility

Implementing Programs or Activities

If your workplace has offered very little in terms of health and wellness, a good place to start is to focus on awareness raising and educational/skill building opportunities. The goal of **awareness raising** is to provide information, increase knowledge and interest. Awareness raising includes making health information available to employees through posters, brochures, newsletters, e-mail messages, paycheque inserts and displays.

Education and skill building opportunities help employees develop new skills to change and maintain health behaviours. Examples of education and skill building opportunities include lunch and learns, workshops and conferences.

- **[Health and wellness fairs](http://www.healthyworkplaceweek.ca/2003/HealthFair.php)** (<http://www.healthyworkplaceweek.ca/2003/HealthFair.php>) are useful to raise employee awareness of health issues and can be used as an avenue for demonstrations (e.g. Tai Chi) or screening (e.g. cholesterol testing).
- Many local agencies offer **free resources and presentations**. To access health resources in Hamilton check out the **[Community Resource Directory](http://doitwell.ca/pages/projects/Workplaces/Workplace+Resources.html)** (<http://doitwell.ca/pages/projects/Workplaces/Workplace+Resources.html>).

Helpful Hint: Some Health & Wellness Committees like to coordinate their programs with established health-related days. For a calendar of the health-related days and corresponding contact information, **[click here](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/conferences/calend/index_e.html)** (http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/conferences/calend/index_e.html).

As employees become aware of and participate in awareness raising and educational and skill building opportunities, you will want to offer environmental supports. Environmental supports are necessary to enable employees to participate in or practice healthy behaviours. On-site fitness classes or walking clubs, healthy food choices in the vending machine and cafeteria, and a smoking cessation program at work are all examples of supports in the workplace that make healthy choices easier for employees.

Examples of Environmental Supports

[Creating a Supportive Environment](http://www.welcoa.org/wellworkplace/index.php?cat=2&page=12)

(<http://www.welcoa.org/wellworkplace/index.php?cat=2&page=12>)

This article focuses on how workplaces can provide supportive healthy lifestyle choices.

Workplace Physical Activity Challenge

Although designed as a challenge for Hamilton workplaces to participate in during Canada's Healthy Workplace Week 2004, the Workplace Physical Activity Challenge can be used in your workplace at any time! This inexpensive, ready-to-use challenge comes with an implementation guide and packages for those who are regularly active and those who want to be more active. For more information, e-mail workplace@hamilton.ca or call 905-546-2424 ext. 3065 or 7218.

EatSmart! Cafeteria Program

Eat Smart! Cafeteria is a program for workplace cafeterias composed of specific requirements related to availability of healthy food choices, food safety standards, and non-smoking seating. For more information, call 905-546-2424 ext. 3632. For details of the EatSmart! Restaurant, check out <http://www.eatsmart.web.net/>.

[The Stop Smoking Centre](http://www.stopsmokingcenter.net/) (<http://www.stopsmokingcenter.net/>)

The Stop Smoking Centre is a free web program designed to help people who have either quit smoking or are thinking of quitting.

Policy Development

Policy is the key to sustaining healthy workplace programming. Workplaces can create an overall written health policy, or develop specific policies. Examples of specific policies include:

- Cost share program for physical activity equipment and activities
- Healthy food choices available at company meetings and functions
- 100% smoke-free policy

Where to Find Sample Policies

City of Hamilton, Public Health Services

For samples policies or consultations regarding policy development, contact a Workplace Health Promotion Specialist at workplace@hamilton.ca or 905-546-2424 ext. 3065 or 7218.

Developing A Comprehensive Health Policy. Why and How: A Guide for the Workplace

The purpose of this guide is to show why a comprehensive health policy would benefit an organization and how to develop it. A comprehensive health policy is a statement of an employer's intention to protect and promote the health of all their employees' by providing as healthy an environment as possible. This guide is available from through the [Workplace Resource Library](#) or Health Canada Publications at 613-954-5995.

Healthy Policies = Healthy Profits

This manual can help you develop and implement policies on specific health-related issues of relevance to your workplace. Sample policies are included along with ideas and further sources of information. This guide is available through the [Workplace Resource Library](#).

Policy: The Key to a Healthy Workplace - A Guide to Making Your Organization Healthier

This guide can help you develop and implement policies on specific health-related issues to enable you to employ a more global approach to target specific problems in your workplace. Considerations, ideas and further sources of information and assistance are identified. Samples of existing or model policies are included. The guide is available through the [Workplace Resource Library](#) or through Ottawa-Carleton University at 613-724-4197.

Coordinating Evaluations

It is often said that what gets measured matters. This makes evaluation an extremely important component in your efforts to build and sustain a healthy workplace. **Evaluation** can be defined as a course of action used to assess the value or worth of a program⁸. Evaluations can improve programs, provide justification for existing or demonstrate the need for additional resources.

According to Chapman (1999), evaluation questions that senior managers frequently want answered are:

- How much program activity actually reached employees?

- How many employees participated in the program?
- How many employees completed the program?
- What difference in individual health risk factors were achieved?
- How many employees actually changed?
- How much did the program cost?
- What effect did the program have on sick leave and injuries?
- What effect did the program have on employee health benefit costs?
- What was the net economic effect (cost/benefit) of the program?
- What improvements should be made in the program for next year?

Although it is widely accepted that evaluations are important, many Health & Wellness committees find evaluation challenging. Common barriers to evaluation worksite health promotion programs include⁹:

- lack of knowledge
- fears of exposing weaknesses
- lack of time
- lack of money
- not a priority (i.e. efforts concentrated on doing programming rather than evaluation)

You may identify with the barriers outlined above. Perhaps the biggest issue facing Health & Wellness Committees is that employers considering workplace health promotion want to be guaranteed of the benefits—however, if they proceed, they don't want to pay for evaluation³¹. Possible solutions to these barriers include familiarizing yourself with evaluation and emphasizing importance of evaluation when attempting to get buy-in (see Chapter 2). To learn more about evaluation, check out the links below:



Evaluation Links

[Evaluating Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion](http://www.thcu.ca/workplace/documents/EvaluationInfoPackFinalWeb.pdf)

(<http://www.thcu.ca/workplace/documents/EvaluationInfoPackFinalWeb.pdf>)

This Info-pack focuses on key aspects of evaluation within the CWHP framework. It is designed for busy practitioners who support the development of CWHP initiatives in their community and would like to access practical, 'how-to' information about program evaluation.

[Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion: Recommended and Promising Practices for Situational Assessment Tools](http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/sat/index.cfm)

(<http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/sat/index.cfm>)

This resource contains information about 29 recommended and promising situational assessment tools in six categories: needs assessments, health risk appraisals, workplace audits, employee interest surveys, current practice surveys, and organizational culture surveys. It is designed to help workplace health promotion intermediaries in Ontario to: select and implement a situational assessment tool in their workplace, and replicate and/or adapt the best practice process used to generate the tools. The resource also provides a conceptual look at CWHP, situational assessment tools and best practice; guidelines and principles related to situational assessment tools; methodological information; and future recommendations for the project.

This chapter outlined the process for building a healthy workplace. The purpose of the next chapter is to provide solutions to barriers the Health & Wellness Committee may encounter.

¹ Strycker, L., Foster, L., Pettigrew, L., Donnelly-Perry, J., Jordan, S., & Glasgow, R. (1997). Steering committee enhancements on health promotion program delivery. American Journal of Health Promotion, 11(6): 437-440.

² Linnan, L., Fava, J., & Thompson, B., et al. (1999) and Hunt, M., Lederman, R., Potter, S., et al. (2000) as cited in Thompson, B., Hannon, P., Bishop, S., West, B., Peterson, A., & Beresford, S. (2005). Factors related to participatory employee advisory boards in small, blue-collar worksites. American Journal of Health Promotion, 19(6): 430-437.

³ O'Grady, J. (2000). Joint Health and Safety Committees: Finding a Balance.

⁴ Thompson, B., Hannon, P., Bishop, S., West, B., Peterson, A., & Beresford, S. (2005). Factors related to participatory employee advisory boards in small, blue-collar worksites. American Journal of Health Promotion, 19(6): 430-437.

⁵ Chu, C., Breuker, G., Harris, N., Stitzel, A., Gan, X., & Dwyer, S. (2000) as cited in The Health Communication Unit (2003). Conditions for successful workplace health promotion initiatives. Retrieved July 2003 from <http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/infoandresources.htm#res>.

⁶ Butt, J. (personal communication, September 9, 2003).

⁷ The Health Communication Unit. Introduction to Health Promotion Planning. Retrieved from http://www.thcu.ca/infoandresources/planning_resources.htm#tp.

⁸ Farrell, Kratzman, McWilliam, Robinson, Saunders, Ticknor & White. (2002). Evaluation made very easy, accessible, and logical.

⁹ Chapman, L. (1999). Evaluating your program. The Art of Health Promotion. Vol. 3, No. 3: 1-12.