

Living on WELL Street Blog: **“What Does A Wellness Leader Look Like”**

By Michael White, Worksite Wellness Technical Assistant, We Choose Health

A potential stumbling block in a company's effort to implement and sustain a workplace wellness program is the person, or people, championing the effort. Do they value and practice a healthy lifestyle, and do they encourage others to do the same? The company executive who is an avid fitness buff and believes that everyone should "just do it", fails to engender a "we can do it too!" attitude in employees. At the other extreme is the human resource manager who is assigned wellness responsibilities, but does not live healthy and is embarrassed to be leading the charge. Wellness will not thrive in either of these situations.

Judd Allen, Ph.D., in his book, *Wellness Leadership* provides a tool to measure a person's wellness leadership ability. The survey asks you to rate your level of agreement with twenty different statements. You are to score them as follows: (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) undecided/don't know, (2) disagree, and (1) strongly disagree. Please test your wellness leadership below.

I consistently:

- Describe the wellness program in a way that employees understand.
- Express enthusiasm for the wellness initiative.
- Share how I personally benefit from wellness.
- Help employees see how they may personally benefit from wellness.
- Discuss why wellness is among the top organizational priorities.
- Explain how employees can participate in the wellness effort.
- Ask for employee input about the wellness effort.
- Make lifestyle choices that demonstrate my commitment to wellness.
- Participate in the wellness program.
- Eliminate or reduce barriers to healthy lifestyles.
- Recruit employees who are open to pursuing wellness.
- See to it that new people are aware of the wellness program.
- See to it that people are taught skills needed to achieve their wellness goals.
- Establish wellness traditions and rituals.
- See to it that individuals get regular lifestyle assessments.
- See to it that work teams are given collective feedback regarding wellness.
- Use wellness activities for team building.
- See to it that adequate time, space, and other resources are available for wellness practices.
- Reward and recognize individuals for their wellness efforts.
- Reward and recognize groups and work teams for their collective wellness efforts.
- Total Points

How did you do? Did you fall short of a perfect wellness leadership score of 100 points? If so, please don't be discouraged. Take the survey again in a month or two months from now. You will see improvement as you make the effort to improve your agreement with each statement.

The challenge of creating and sustaining a worksite wellness program is an on-going journey, a process that requires leadership to be flexible, responsive and engaged. Leaders who do that reap the rewards in a workforce that is happier, healthier and performs better on the job.

Lead WELL!

Michael