

Wexford Council on Aging Receives Exercise Equipment

Initiative in Brief

Wexford County Council on Aging is interested in encouraging healthy lifestyles for its employees in order to keep insurance premiums down. However, a worksite wellness program was going to be challenging to implement due to the nature of the business. The majority of staff provides services to clients in their homes, so few employees are in the office at the same time. The wellness committee came up with some unique ideas to address the needs of the employees.

A potluck luncheon is held at monthly staff training sessions. Management pays for a healthy main dish, and the employees bring a healthy dish to pass. The Council recently expanded its office space, which gave it the opportunity to put in an exercise room. To help furnish the room, the Council ran an ad in the local newspaper for used equipment, and the response was terrific! They ended up with donations and filled their room with 20 pieces of equipment. The Council has implemented a policy that gives everyone 15 minutes a day to exercise while they are on the clock, with the opportunity to earn paid time off for reaching set goals. "It was interesting to watch the people that hadn't even thought about getting in shape . . . they were the ones that came over that line and made it worth it," said Scott Schryer, Human Resource/Operations Manager.

"Smoking was a big focus for us. A lot of the clients don't like smoking. If you're not a smoker you don't have any interest in being with a smoker," said Schryer. A no smoking policy was implemented that does not allow the use of tobacco products in any work environment at any time. The Council also paid for a variety of smoking cessation programs for employees who wanted to quit.

Benefits

Noted benefits of the program are:

- Supported employees' major lifestyle changes.
- Engaged employees that hadn't previously considered healthy lifestyle changes.
- Created a new focus on health and a boost in morale.



Lessons Learned

- Know the needs of your group, and what will assist them and what will not in achieving their wellness goals.
- Look for different, unique ways of overcoming challenges.
- Get management involved in the plans.

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Cost: \$500 and paid time off
Risk Factor: Smoking, physical inactivity
Impact/Reach: 41 employees
Business/Sector: Private non-profit organization