

CORE COMPONENTS OF WORKPLACE WELLNESS PROGRAMMES

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Considerable confusion exists about what workplace wellness really is and how WWP should be implemented in the workplace. The primary objective of this study was to identify the core components of appropriate WWP. The scope of this study necessitated a literature review, in-depth interviews, as well as a web-based questionnaire. The relevant population for this study is all the financial institutions in the Gauteng Province (n = 257). Convenience sampling was used to select one (n = 1) financial institution in the region. Quota sampling was used to select three (n = 3) managers from a group of eleven (n = 11) managers to collect qualitative data. The aim of the interview was to investigate the first and second research questions viz. to determine what essential components South African employers in financial institutions include in their WWP and to determine what the perceived reasons, drivers and benefits are for the employers to implement WWP. The interviews were recorded on an interview schedule and the open-ended section was later analysed through content analysis to provide an accurate and comprehensive account of the data. The questionnaire was completed by volunteer respondents in a call centre of the financial institution, who either intentionally, or by happenstance, completed the questionnaire. One hundred and fourteen (n = 114) employees from a group of one thousand two hundred (n = 1200) employees completed the questionnaire. Any employee from any level within the company was allowed to complete the questionnaire. The aim of the questionnaire was to investigate the third and fourth research questions viz. to determine what essential components South African employees in financial institutions want in a WWP and to determine how satisfied the employees are with their current situation (in terms of life in general and in terms of work life). Tabulation, frequency tables, frequency distributions, percentages, cumulative percentages, percentage distributions, averages (descriptive statistics) and cross tabulation were used to summarise the quantitative data. Content analysis was utilised for the open-ended section. Work place wellness is the integration of many dimensions, including the emotional-, intellectual-, physical-, spiritual- and social health of the employee which expands the employees' potential to work and live effectively. Appropriate WWP consists of: 1) prevention strategies, 2) health-promotion initiatives, and 3) intervention programmes. There are two levels of prevention that are of importance to organisations: primary and

secondary. Health promotion can be facilitated through awareness-, lifestyle change- and supportive environment initiatives. Nine different intervention programmes were identified including: health assessments, physical activity, worksite nutrition, worksite weight management, tobacco control and cessation, medical self-care, stress management, employee assistance programmes and social health in the workplace. The key to the success of appropriate WWP lies in the identification and implementation of the essential programme components that are of value to both the employer and employee. The core components of appropriate WWP were summarised and presented in table format.



## DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

I, Godfried Philippus van Zyl (Id number 7705065039080), declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. Any assistance that I have received has been duly acknowledged in the dissertation. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce at the University of Johannesburg. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at this or at any other University.

.....

Flip van Zyl

.....

(day, month, year)



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## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

- A        Managerial Interview Schedule**
- B        Invitation to participate in employee survey**
- C        Employee survey/Employee questionnaires**
- D        Informed-Consent Employers (Interview)**
- E        Informed-Consent Employees (Questionnaire)**



## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

*Body composition:* The relative amounts of fat and lean body tissue (muscle, organs, bone) found in the body. Used in the assessment of body type.

*Cardiovascular fitness:* Aerobic fitness; best single measure of fitness with implications for health; synonymous with cardiorespiratory endurance.

*Cholesterol:* A type of derived fat in the body which is necessary for cell and hormone synthesis. Can be acquired through the diet or can be made by the body. High concentrations of cholesterol blood indicate a heart disease risk.

*Fitness:* A combination of aerobic capacity and muscular strength and endurance that enhances health and quality of life.

*Flexibility:* The ability to move a joint through a full range of motion.

*Glucose:* The most noteworthy of simple sugars because it is the only sugar molecule that can be used by the body in its natural form. High concentrations of glucose in blood indicate a diabetes risk.

*HDL cholesterol:* A carrier molecule that takes cholesterol from tissue to the liver for removal; inversely related to heart disease risk

*Health Risk Appraisal (HRA):* This popular health assessment tool uses computer software to analyse and report on individual health risks. Input data from the HRA software is obtained from a questionnaire that includes self-reported health behaviours, personal health history, family health history and depending on the HRA tool and feasibility, biomedical screening data that is either self reported or obtained at a worksite health screening.

*Nutrition:* Provision of adequate energy (calories) as well as needed amounts of fat, carbohydrate, protein, vitamins, minerals and water.

*Obesity:* Excessive body fat.

*Risk factors:* Factors associated with a higher risk for a certain disease (e.g. coronary risk factors).

*Workplace Wellness Programmes (WWP):* Are programmes that deal with the whole person, mind, body and spirit. It is a fully-integrated programme that includes counseling services, wellness education, childcare and family resources, as well as elderly care.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

e.g.	For example
HRA	Health Risk Appraisals
i.e.	That is
NIOSH	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
USDHHS	United States Department of Health and Human Services
viz.	Namely
WWP	Workplace Wellness Programmes

