



Health & Wellness

kit for business 2022





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Health & Wellness

letter from our Executive Director

Health and Wellness programs support employee well-being

Designing and managing an employee wellness program is an important step in improving the health and productivity of employees and potentially improving the overall cost of employer-provided health care.

The Amherst & Area Chamber of Commerce is partnering with the Springhill, Oxford, Amherst and Region (SOAR) Community Health Board Wellness Funds program, and the YMCA of Cumberland to support the business community in establishing health and wellness programs for their staff.

There are many benefits of having a wellness program such as: Lowering health care costs, reducing absenteeism, increasing employee productivity, preventing or reducing injury, improving employee morale and loyalty, and reducing disability-related or workers' compensation costs.¹ Another huge benefit of hosting a wellness program at your business is improved communication between staff and increased team spirit.

As each place of employment is different, each wellness program would vary based on the organizational needs and resources. It is strongly suggested that whatever type of program is implemented, that the employer set aside a budget to encourage participation and positive outcomes. We have included links to websites for ideas and guidance on creating specific types of programs. The wellness program may range from a very simple program with one or two goals to an elaborate multi-activity program. We encourage you to seek feedback from your employees on their wellness interests and goals to build a program that suits your workplace needs and resources. It is important to include a variety of components that target risk behaviors and the needs and interests of the employees.

¹ Source: shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/how-to-guides/page/howtoestablishanddesignawellnessprogram.aspx

Some suggested types of activities that could be included in a wellness program are:

- Stress reduction programs.
- Weight loss programs.
- Smoking cessation programs.
- Health risk assessments.
- Health screenings.
- Exercise programs and activities.
- Nutrition education.

The Chamber is pleased to work with our business community and partners to address challenges related to the health and wellness of our workforce.

We have partnered in submitting a national policy Addressing Entrepreneur and Workplace Mental Health to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce seeking action on a national level and to keep the issue of employee health at the forefront for consideration by legislative decision makers.

Within this Workplace Health & Wellness kit, we have provided local and global resources to build a workplace wellness program, a sample plan and activities to inspire you to try new things while also offering challenges with incentives to boost participation.

For more information about the Chamber visit amherstchambers.ca



Resources

to Build a Workplace Wellness Program for your Business

Samples of wellness plans to inspire you from large and small corporations: to be confirmed as valid

digitalhrtech.com/best-employee-wellness-programs-examples

Wellness plan tools and resources:

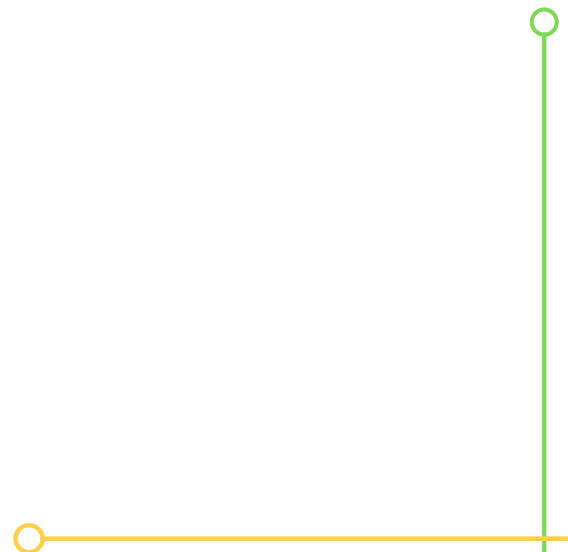
shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/how-to-guides/pages/howtoestablishanddesignawellnessprogram.aspx

Meditation and Mindfulness Solutions:

get.headspace.com/demo

WellSteps:

wellsteps.com/blog/2020/01/02/employee-wellness-program-examples-budget



Health & Wellness

activity menu

Choose any of the following challenges for you and your staff to take part in. We have provided the first 10 businesses to sign up with an incentive package of prizes for their staff. We encourage all businesses to provide an incentive for their employees to encourage participation.

Let us know which you choose by emailing us at info@amherstchambers.ca so we can keep track for our final report. See Health & Wellness activity book for more details.

These activities/challenges are only suggestions. The Amherst & Area Chamber of Commerce is not responsible for any injuries caused while completing them. Attempt at your own risk.

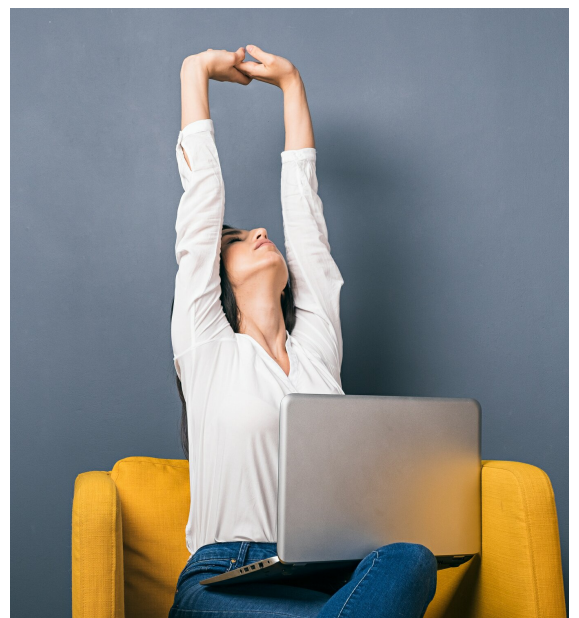
Walking the Shore

Count your steps yourself or as a group as you walk the equivalent distance of a trip along the North Shore from Tidnish to Wallace.



Simply Stretch

In a group or on your own, keep track of the minutes you spend stretching over the next month and work your way up to a total of 200 minutes.



Get Creative

Take the next month to create something. It could be a painting, craft, learn to bake a cake, woodworking, gardening etc. At the end of the month, present your creative item to your co-workers.



Awesome Asanas

In a group or on your own, keep track of the minutes you spend doing simple yoga over the next month and work your way up to a total of 200 minutes.



Great Plates

Bring a healthy dish to work on the day your employer chooses and staff will vote on the best dish served.



Workplace Positivity

certificates

Custom employee recognition awards and plaques can be a great way to help build your team. Showing your employees that their work is both noticed and valued will go a long way toward keeping up morale and motivation. Every participating business will receive the set of 5. Choose the employee who best fits these 5 categories and present them with their certificate. See Health & Wellness activity book for more details.

Mentorship Award

This award is great for employees who take those who are less experienced or newly hired "under their wing," even if it is not directly part of their job description.



Customer Service Award

When customers praise a worker for their service, don't let it simply fall by the wayside. This is especially important if the employee routinely receives rave reviews!



Exemplary Character Award

This award is for someone who has shown extraordinary integrity, poise, kindness, generosity, or more.



The Epitome of Teamwork Award

This is for someone who goes out of their way to help team members even if it is not technically their responsibility.



Exceptional Tenure Award

Loyalty is hard to come by in today's workplace so recognizing those who have stayed true to the organization for an extended time with an employee service award will go a long way toward making them feel appreciated and encouraging others to strive for the same tenure.





Local Resources

Amherst & Area Chamber of Commerce as:

Cumberland Chamber of Commerce

info@amherstchambers.ca

902-667-8186

Private Counseling

NS Psychologists - 1-902-422-9183

NS Social Workers - 1-902-429-7799

Mental Health

Mobile Crisis Line - 1-888-429-8167

Addictions - 902-667-3879 / 1-855-922-1122

Public Health - 902-667-3319 / 1-800-767-3319

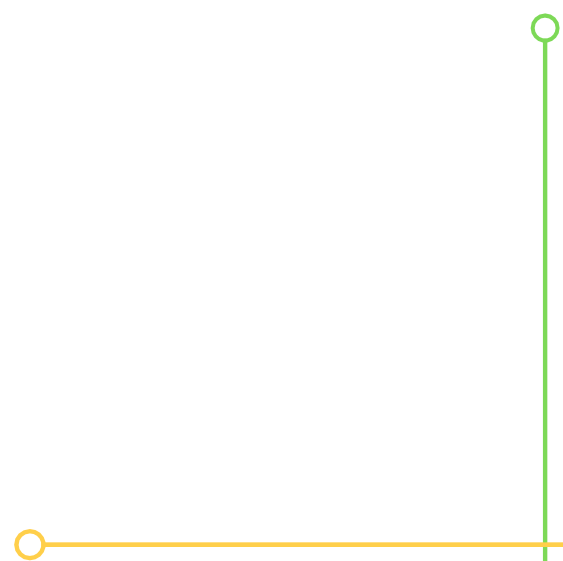
Family and Youth Counselor/Navigator

Maggie's Place - 902-667-7250


Amherst & Area Ministerial Association - 902-667-2523

Native Social Counseling Agency - 1-902-895-1323

CANSA - Nova Scotia Works - 902-661-1509



5 Benefits of Starting a Workplace Wellness Program



Communication

Develop leaders, make connections and expect better communication. Solutions come left, right and center when your brand is aligned and employees are communicating.

Connection

An employee-led wellness program builds internal connections among employees, strengthening your business.

Creativity

Creativity is such an important skill in today's market. Happy and healthy employees are creative employees. Spark the fire and reap the benefits.

Leadership

Empowering your employees to develop and drive internal communications builds leadership skills and opportunities for growth.

Empathy

A culture of "we" achieves together. Building selfless understanding of everyone's role, skills and contributions is vital to any business built on teamwork.

TAKING CARE OF MENTAL HEALTH

IN A REMOTE WORK ENVIRONMENT FOR EMPLOYERS



1.

Employers should ensure that mental health services and support are offered year round - not only when a crisis situation is reached.

2.

It's okay to take a step back when something is frustrating. Remember to breathe - sometimes even a big sigh can make you feel better.

3.

Check in with your employees - set deadlines and have regular phone calls to make sure that they are on track both professionally and mentally.

4.

Offer as much certainty as you can, and also recognize what is not certain. Remain in the present - focus on what you have control of right now.

5.

Take notice of your employees interests. You may suspect that you have a struggling employee, but if they don't feel comfortable discussing their mental health it can help you create an opening to talk about their wellness.

Managing Stress In Covid Times

A Tip Sheet for Entrepreneurs



As an entrepreneur, you are no doubt experiencing high levels of stress right now. The uncertainty of the future – while trying to navigate what feels like daily changes – has led many to feel exhausted and perpetually worried.

The very integrity you bring to your small or large business is what makes you feel so deeply – your sense of responsibility to your staff and customers, your worry about how lay-offs and cut backs will impact staff (and your) lives, the financial pressures that don't stop even when forced to close or reduce hours and store capacity ... Remember that it is your deep commitment to making things work that make this hurt so much.

So what's a person to do? Part of navigating all of this is figuring out just what it is we can control and trying not to focus too much on what we can't ... *Easier said than done!*

Letting go means releasing the emotional hopes and dreams that we have attached to things and ideas. This doesn't mean that we will lose them, letting go simply means we have enough faith that we will always get the things we need to survive in this world. And maybe, just maybe, we will be happy at the same time.

There are a number of reasons why we find letting go so hard, but given all that's going on around you, the most common reason is *fear*. Acknowledging that you are holding on to an image of yourself and the things you associate with *being you* can allow you to let go of the fear of what you might become. Sure the in-between journey can be a bit bumpy, but it can also be an exciting journey of re-discovery.

*If we want to show up the best we possibly can, we must **invest in ourselves**. That includes being selective about what we allow to consume our minds. Worry is inevitable and it is not realistic or even possible to ignore it. The point is to not allow it to overtake your life and overwhelm you and those around you.*

KEEP PERFECTIONISM IN CHECK

Perfectionism: a broad personality style characterized by a person's concern with striving for flawlessness and perfection, accompanied by critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations

Like any entrepreneur, you have **values and passions** that have led you to where you are. You are aware that your business is a direct reflection of the **time and energy** you put into it, and yet, despite everything you have done, something uncontrollable and unpredictable can happen.

Whether the pandemic has given you more or less time, your brain is seeking out patterns and routines that can help you feel more in control of what is happening around you.

Consider your pattern of work and exercise and how you try to achieve a better **work/ life balance**.

TAKE REGULAR, PLANNED BREAKS...

... Even a short 15-minute walk outside or a break with tea and a favourite book. **Set a definitive time to stop working for the day and hold yourself accountable.** Many business owners do not take vacation or set vacation dates that never get taken.

Everyone needs a break to re-awaken the creative spirit that is so needed in business. And, as a business owner, you certainly deserve it!

Set a planned vacation time and stick to it!

PAY ATTENTION TO PHYSICAL SIGNS THAT YOUR BODY IS UNDER STRESS.

Most of us are familiar with the **fight, flight or freeze** reactions; the problem is there aren't any saber tooth tigers coming at us... *well, maybe one with COVID 19!* These signals can include such things as increased heart and breathing rates, increased sweating, skin rashes and fatigue.

In these current challenging times, it is important to **ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT YOU ARE FEELING AND TRY TO DEAL WITH IT HEAD ON.**

- Name the feeling out loud and explore why you are feeling this way. Be honest and, if it helps to write it down, do so. As you explore your reaction to it, **be kind with yourself** and acknowledge that others in the same position would feel the same.

CONFIDE IN PEOPLE YOU TRUST.

- Reach out to your networks and listen and share with others in the same situation, exploring ideas and coping strategies that may also work for you.

More than ever it is important to try to focus on **CONTROLLING WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL** and to take the time to ensure you are keeping your mental health and your perspective in as good shape as possible.

CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THINKING AND INTERNAL STORY TELLING THAT CREATES SELF-DOUBT AND DESPAIR.

- Thoughts about “being a failure”, “stupid” or “not enough” are simply not true. When we allow these types of thoughts to take over our thinking, our window of tolerance for others narrows. We limit the ability to see possibility and to be compassionate.

Replace these with kinder thoughts that ARE true: **“I am doing the best I can in dealing with a situation over which I have no control,”** and **“I can do hard things in hard times.”**

Don't lose sight of the successes you achieved and the challenges you have already overcome.

Speaking of thoughts: *Sometimes we can be our own worst enemy. The strength of conviction to get things done while relying on no one but ourselves is often part of the entrepreneur's DNA. It's easy to think that these are also the skills that will help us navigate challenges. While normally that might be true, supporting staff and colleagues has never been more complex. While it is important to you to show up as a leader now – someone that staff can look to with confidence, who is leading the way successfully through all the mazes, who never cracks or shows weakness or the slightest ripple of worry – is it really what your staff really need? While you are busy exhausting yourself taking care of everything for them, what happens to their sense of safety?*

This is a great time to re-examine your definition of **LEADERSHIP.**

- No doubt, if you have staff, you have been tasked to reconfigure job descriptions, staffing levels and responsibilities. Feedback from successful organizations shows that **delegation of tasks to staff to reduce your workload helps both you and your employees.** Contributing to the effort reduces stress for anyone and creates a stronger sense of control. Completion of a task or a larger project brings feelings of satisfaction and mastery over whatever else might be happening in our lives. Providing new opportunities also allows employees to explore and develop new skills that may enhance your business in ways you never imagined.
- When staff ask you how you are, **be honest.** Encourage open conversations about fears and hopes and when you don't know what to do, ask your team for suggestions.

*Showing vulnerability as a leader means you are **showing active empathy** towards your staff and that you aren't afraid to hear when things aren't going well. For your team, it will increase feelings of safety and professional connection to the purpose of your business.*

The last tip might seem like an obvious one:

WORK TOWARDS AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.

- We have all heard the saying, **“you can't pour from an empty cup”.** Make sure that, whenever you can, you try to get at least eight hours of sleep, you exercise regularly, and you eat healthy meals and snacks. And, when you can't, you at least take a vitamin supplement.

Please know that your community sees you and knows you are being challenged as never before. If you try some or all of these tips and you still find you are struggling with feelings of despair, thoughts of suicide or an inability to function as you normally would, please reach out to someone for help. The **Colchester East Hants Canadian Mental Health Association** is here for you. If we can't help you, we will find empathic, supportive resources that can.



We are here for you.

ceh.cmha.ca 902.895.4211 x 1    @cmhatruo



Health & Wellness

plan template

This tool is intended to support the planning process. You may wish to use this template or use your own format.

Health & Wellness plan content includes:

1. Introduction
2. Health & Wellness Vision
3. Health & Wellness Context, Goals, Objectives and Initiatives
4. Budget
5. Health & Wellness Monitoring, Evaluation and Sharing Results

Organization Name: _____

Date: _____





Budget

Add your total budget here and include details in a separate file (example: spreadsheet) attached to this file.

Health & Wellness Monitoring, Evaluation and Sharing Results

Describes monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the plan and can also describe how information will be collected to measure progress.





For more information about the Chamber
visit amherstchambers.ca

