

WORKSITE WELLNESS

Toolkit



MESSA
Wellness
mindfulness • movement • nutrition



messa.org/wellness



MESSA Wellness

MESSA provides resources, tools and inspiration to MESSA members who want to start a worksite wellness program, jumpstart an existing program or work on their own personal wellness journey. You can find resources at messa.org/wellness.

MESSA Wellness is led by MESSA Health Promotion Consultant Rhonda Jones, a registered nurse and fitness expert with a passion for health and wellness. She's available to help your wellness committee set up a worksite wellness program at no cost to you. Contact her at 800-292-4910 or healthy@messa.org.

Medical Case Management

This program provides members and their dependents who have serious illnesses or injuries with personal support from a registered nurse to help you navigate the complexities of acute care. Contact MESSA's Medical Case Management team at **800-441-4626**.

NurseLine (24 hours per day, 7 days per week)

NurseLine is a free service staffed around the clock by registered nurses trained to answer medical questions and offer guidance. Call NurseLine at **800-414-2014**.

Teladoc Health for virtual care

Starting Jan. 1, 2024, MESSA members and covered dependents can access the Teladoc Health app for telehealth medical and mental health care services, including:

- **Teladoc Health 24/7 Care:** Members can visit with a board-certified provider for colds, sore throats, sinus infection, or strep throat and other minor illnesses or injuries. No appointment needed.
- **Teladoc Health Mental Health:** Members can connect with a licensed therapist or U.S. board-certified psychiatrist to get treatment for mental health concerns, such as grief, anxiety, depression and more. Appointment required.
- **Teladoc Health Virtual Primary Care:** This new service allows members and covered dependents who are 18 years and older to visit virtually with a U.S. board-certified Teladoc Health primary care provider.
- **Teladoc Health Chronic Condition Management:** Teladoc offers diabetes management, diabetes prevention and weight loss, and hypertension management programs to provide support for these common conditions. Additionally, members who are enrolled in one of these three programs can enroll in myStrength, a resiliency program offering support for stress, depression, sleep issues and more.

Learn more at messa.org/Teladoc.

Support for mental health

MESSA provides mental health support for our members and their covered dependents, including:

- **MyStressTools:** A powerful suite of stress management and wellness resources available for free to MESSA members to help manage stress and anxiety. Learn more: messa.org/MyStressTools.
- **AbleTo:** Meet virtually with a licensed therapist who will guide you through an 8-week program to help you develop tools and skills to support your mental health. Learn more: AbleTo.com/MESSA.

HOW TO

START

your wellness program

Congratulations on starting a worksite wellness program!

The three keys to worksite wellness are **mindfulness**, **movement** and **nutrition**. This MESSA Worksite Wellness Toolkit can help set you up for success as you work to create an environment that promotes a healthier lifestyle focusing on those three key elements.

To start building a solid foundation for your wellness program, follow these four simple steps.

1

Choose a wellness leader

Get your wellness program started by selecting a wellness leader. This person will be responsible for sharing and delegating wellness program tasks and responsibilities with the wellness committee. They should be someone with a strong interest in health, physical fitness and wellness, as well as strong organization, management and budgeting abilities.

Suggested responsibilities and activities:

- Lead regularly scheduled wellness committee meetings to implement and evaluate employee wellness activities.
- Develop and administer a budget for the wellness program. The budget should provide funds for prizes, awards and incentives for members who engage in wellness program activities.
- Communicate with employers about the status of the wellness program, and make recommendations and suggestions for program planning.
- Coordinate the development, implementation and evaluation of the employee wellness program.
- Delegate tasks for planning and arranging health promotion and wellness activities to wellness committee members.

2

Select a wellness committee

The wellness committee should include colleagues who have diverse individual skills and backgrounds. Examples include members with athletic and workout skills, those with nutritional and cooking skills, and members with health education backgrounds. Committee members are expected to be active and enthusiastic advocates of the worksite wellness program, and visible participants in wellness events and activities.

Suggested responsibilities and activities:

- Plan a calendar of monthly wellness activities, events and promotions. The National Health Observance Calendar provides a useful listing of recognized health observances at [HealthFinder.gov/nho](https://www.healthfinder.gov/nho).
- Launch a campaign to encourage colleagues to take a health risk assessment.
- Communicate regularly with school employees about wellness events and activities via email, newsletters, posters, etc.
- Identify community allies and resources such as parks, pools, tennis courts and walking trails, and arrange for their use for wellness activities.
- Identify local health clubs and fitness centers willing to provide membership discounts.
- Identify nutrition, exercise and fitness instructors who are colleagues or members of the local community to provide instruction on activities of interest to the employees.
- Schedule employee health fairs, health and fitness presentations, exercise and nutrition groups, and other activities.

3

Survey potential participants and request a MESSA wellness report card

A survey about health concerns is an excellent way to stimulate interest in your worksite wellness program and identify areas of need. The survey should seek information about:

- Perceptions of personal wellness.
- Possible financial or time constraints.
- Readiness to participate in a wellness program.
- Preferences for physical activity and exercise groups.
- Weight management and nutrition programs.

MESSA can provide a wellness report card for your group that highlights the most pressing risk factors. This information can help determine which wellness activities would be most beneficial in supporting good health and controlling health care costs. To protect members' privacy, personal data is not accessible by MESSA, the employer or any other third party.

4

Encourage participants to take a health risk assessment

MESSA partners with MediKeeper to give our members a helpful tool to assess their health status and identify risks for certain cancers, diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, depression and other illnesses. MESSA members can access the health risk assessment tool by logging into their online MyMESSA accounts at messa.org. Personal data is not accessible by MESSA, the employer or any other third party.



messa.org



What's your risk?

Learn more about your risk for heart disease, certain cancers and depression with the free MediKeeper app.

MESSA has partnered with MediKeeper to give our members a helpful tool for assessing their health and identifying risks for certain cancers, diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, depression and other illnesses.

Users fill out a detailed questionnaire, which is used to generate a personal health profile, including their lifetime risk for up to 16 major diseases and conditions.

MediKeeper also gives users individual feedback, suggestions to lower their risks and a personal wellness plan. Users can share the reports with their doctor to address any concerns. To protect your privacy, your personal data is *not* accessible by MESSA, your employer or any other third party.

The MediKeeper health risk assessment is accessible on a smartphone, tablet or computer. To access the tool, members should log into their online MyMESSA account at messa.org.



Rev. 09/06/19
Pr. 01/20 - 500





Tap into MESSA's expertise

Once you have established your wellness committee, invite MESSA's health promotion consultant to a meeting. She can work with the committee to identify resources and steps to form a vibrant wellness program that brings a health focus on movement, mindfulness and nutrition into your workplace.

SETTING

GOALS

for your wellness program

Your worksite wellness program should include goals that have the greatest potential to reduce participants' risk factors for chronic disease and require very little labor to execute. You may wish to include goals that target specific health issues important to your group, which can be determined by your MESSA wellness report card and the health risk assessment.

At a minimum, the following four goals should be included:

1: Know your MESSA benefits

Knowledge is power when it comes to your MESSA health and wellness benefits. The wellness committee may not get 100% participation in a walking challenge or lunch-and-learn, but information about your MESSA benefits can be easily shared with all of your colleagues.

For example, a yearly physical exam is free under all MESSA plans. This is a benefit that every MESSA member should use, every year. Seeing your doctor regularly will help cultivate a relationship with your primary health care provider, who can make sure you're following through on proper health screenings. Educating employees about their MESSA benefits will help ensure they get the most out of the benefits they deserve.

2: Create a culture of mindfulness

Stress is an inevitable part of our daily lives, but too much can take a toll on your mental health. Left unabated, high stress levels can lead to serious mental illness, such as depression or anxiety. Approximately one in five adults suffers from mental illness, which can lead to serious chronic health conditions such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

The effects of chronic stress can affect the health and well-being of employees, causing burnout, lack of engagement, job dissatisfaction and the development of chronic health conditions. It is essential to address mental health in the workplace and create an environment where employees can thrive. You can do this by increasing awareness about the causes of stress and incorporating stress management and mindfulness practices into the worksite.

3: Increase movement

Physical activity guidelines recommend a minimum of 150 minutes of aerobic exercise every week, which breaks down to about 22 minutes per day. Experts also recommend strength training for all the major muscle groups at least twice a week. Unfortunately, too few adults are hitting those goals. According to studies, just 23% of adults meet physical activity guidelines, while less than 5% perform 30 minutes of physical activity per day.

Research consistently finds that a sedentary lifestyle can cause obesity, diabetes, hypertension, low back pain and some cancers. Increasing both awareness and worksite opportunities for physical activity and movement will help promote health and wellness for employees.

4: Prioritize good nutrition

MESSA members spend a lot of their waking hours at work, where they too often have limited access to healthy food options — and unfettered access to vending machines full of unhealthy snacks. Compounding the problem, many working adults have limited knowledge and time to create healthy, nutritious meals that they can take to work.

Having access to healthy food options — whether available at work or brought from home — is essential to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Providing information about and increasing access to healthy food options will help encourage better choices for employees.



Try to build a culture of wellness in your workplace that will help employees maintain healthy lifestyle choices. MESSA members spend a lot of time at work, and it is nearly impossible to sustain healthy changes if the culture does not change to support a new lifestyle. Employers and employees should agree that building a culture of wellness is an economic strategy to minimize health care costs, as well as a caring strategy to increase employees' well-being.

HOW TO

PROMOTE

your program

Get your colleagues excited about your wellness program by using informational posters, email blasts and mailbox flyers. Share the calendar of activities you have planned for the upcoming year and outline the goals you have created for the wellness committee. Most importantly, let them know that participating in the worksite wellness program will help them make meaningful changes that will lead to a healthier life.

Suggested activities that will help promote the program and maintain momentum include:

Plan a health fair as a kick-off event

Include information tables that feature health topics such as healthy diet, cardiovascular risk factors and cancer screenings.

Set up a refreshment table with healthy foods and beverages, as well as recipe cards for healthy lunch and dinner options. Provide information on wellness events and activities that will be sponsored by the wellness committee. Invite MESSA's health promotion consultant to host a booth with information on health plans and services available to participants.

Hold regular meetings

Establish a weekly lunchtime or after work meeting for co-workers to join together for conversation and support to help encourage good habits that will maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Holiday challenge: maintain, don't gain

Starting with Thanksgiving, it's common to overindulge and gain weight during the holiday season. This holiday challenge motivates participants to make smart choices that will help maintain their weight within a couple pounds.



Hold a “bike-or-feet” event

A “bike-or-feet” event could be arranged for a weekend in October, close to Halloween, at a park or trail. Everyone would be required to either walk or ride a bike. Employees should be encouraged to bring family members. Healthy snacks and trail maps should be offered to participants. Get creative and hold a costume contest in conjunction with the event!

Organize an activity challenge

An activity challenge is a great way to get members involved in a walking program. You may wish to start with a weekend step challenge and then try a 10,000 steps per day challenge. The wellness committee can award prizes for activity challenge winners or participants.

Invite a guest speaker from MESSA

A health professional from MESSA is available to speak to your group about a variety of health topics, from stress control to the science of weight loss. Arrange for a guest speaker on a professional development day or during a lunch-and-learn session.



The value of wellness

There is great value in creating a wellness culture at your worksite. Employees will feel the benefits both mentally and physically, allowing them to give greater focus to their work. Employers will see the financial benefit through less use of sick time and lower employee turnover.

Creating a wellness culture will involve a commitment from top management, as well as those employees serving on the wellness committee. Organization leaders must commit to establishing a healthy workplace culture, and communicate that commitment to employees. The goal for everyone should be to help employees improve their health and wellness by ensuring the worksite culture encourages mindfulness, movement and nutrition.





MESSA Wellness

mindfulness • movement • nutrition

The three keys to worksite wellness are mindfulness, movement and nutrition.
MESSA's worksite wellness program can help set you up for success
in creating a healthier lifestyle at work and at home.



mindfulness



movement



nutrition

For more information,
contact MESSA's health
promotion consultant at
healthy@messa.org
or 800-292-4910.