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Introduction to the Pillars of Employee Wellness and Holistic Wellness Programs

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When thinking about wellness or wellbeing, what is the first thing that comes to mind? For most folks, wellness is often associated with physical health and geared towards nutrition, exercise, and weight management. Physical health is a vital part of wellness; however, it is just one part of overall employee wellness. Wellness programs should be viewed as a holistic integration of physical, emotional, community, social, occupational, and financial wellbeing. Maintaining one's wellbeing is largely individualized, and expanding the definition of wellness to include a more holistic approach to wellbeing in the workplace can create a more inclusive and equitable work environment.



A well rounded workplace wellness program should include the following pillars of wellness:

- Physical Wellness
- Community Wellness
- Financial Wellness
- Emotional Wellness
- Social Wellness
- Occupational (Career) Wellness

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Agencies should consider offering employees various solutions to help increase wellness and wellbeing in their wellness programs. By supporting employees' efforts toward wiser choices, employees can maximize their overall health and wellness while minimizing their potential for illness and disease.

Below are some examples that agencies can utilize to increase awareness of the pillars of employee wellness.



Physical Wellness – Agencies should place emphasis on employees prioritizing sleep, consuming nutrient dense foods, and participating in physical activity. Agencies can also incorporate a wellness service to assist employees with tracking healthy behaviors and access to wellness resources such as exercise videos and healthy recipes. * Note that physical activity is not a one-size-fits-all solution, and encouragement of activity should incorporate activities that can be completed at any physical level.

Emotional Wellness – Agencies can promote workshops that encourage incorporating stress management techniques, resilience, and prioritizing positive thinking and mindfulness. Emotionally well employees have increased happiness and satisfaction in themselves and their lives. Mental health can also be factored into emotional wellness, and if not prioritized, poor emotional wellbeing can affect physical health. Encourage employees to utilize the agency's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services and consider including mental health and substance abuse coverage in your agency's health plan.

Community Wellness – Agencies can improve employee wellness and productivity by looking beyond the workplace to the communities where the agency and its employees reside. By increasing community wellness, an agency can create improved community relations and goodwill. Community wellness and engagement from an agency level can include contributing to the community through participation in activities that assist at various levels, such as volunteering, neighborhood activity engagement, sponsoring community events, or even organizing philanthropic activities. Agency leaders and executive employees can serve as catalysts to bring together members of the community to identify wellness needs, develop strategies to solve problems, and implement solutions.

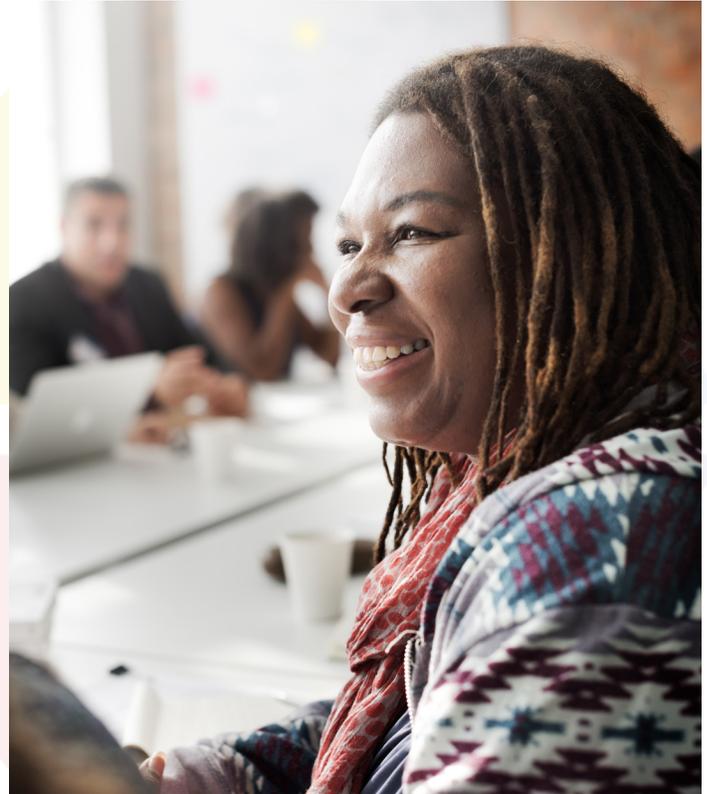
Social Wellness – Full time employees often spend most of their time in the workplace, and cultivating healthy peer relationships can positively affect an employee's stress levels, productivity and increase their general feeling of happiness. When an employee has negative (poor) social wellness, it can not only affect their work product but can also affect their mental and physical health. Agencies should consider creating social groups and activities that encourage engagement amongst all employees. This could include encouraging employees to participate in activities together, such as

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cooking demonstrations or lunchtime walks. Encourage team building and cross pollination amongst the entire agency.

Financial Wellness – Employees who experience financial wellness tend to have less anxiety about their economic life. Even if an agency’s employee base appears financially secure, agencies can still address financial wellness. For employees with financial security, advanced financial education and training and resources for estate planning or wealth preservation are useful. Employees looking to begin building their savings or starting a retirement account could benefit from financial skills that include budgeting, future focused saving programs, and mortgage or home buying support.

Occupational (Career) Wellness – An employee who feels occupational well tends to find their work rewarding, has a good relationship with co-workers, and finds positive ways to handle workplace stress. An occupationally well employee knows how to have a good work/life balance. To increase or promote occupational wellness, agencies should consider supporting professional growth and increasing employee perception of job stability and satisfaction. Encouraging employees to utilize their strengths, set healthy boundaries, and clearly communicate with their peers and supervisors can help employees feel more satisfied in their careers.



When looking for creative ways to encourage employees to participate in wellness activities, agencies should entertain offering some of the aforementioned options at different times of the day and week, not just after work. An agency should aim to cultivate a culture of inclusivity. If the activities surrounding an agency’s wellness program does not factor in a work life balance, it could be counterproductive to the success of a wellness program. An agency could also consider identifying personnel or volunteers with expertise in certain areas to contribute to the agency’s efforts with assistance on activities such as teaching employees how to cook or giving a demonstration on how to set aside time during the day for meditation. An agency could even partner with their EAP or insurance company to tap into additional services to support employees within various aspects of their lives, such as financial or occupational wellness.

For questions about employee wellness or wellness programs, contact the [PRISM Risk Control Department](#).