STRESS MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR WORKSITES

A Healthy Arizona Worksites Program Toolkit

Stress Management Interventions

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INTRODUCTION

You can't have a healthy company without healthy employees. Improving employees' stress management is a key strategy in preventing and managing a number of diseases, including cardiovascular conditions and mental disorders. Improving stress management at worksites is a promising way to help employees combat a number of chronic conditions because most Americans spend a substantial part of their time at work. Workplaces are critical both as an environment that can contribute to proper stress management as well as a location to reach targeted populations for health education, awareness, behavior change, and targeted interventions aimed at managing stress in and outside of the workplace.

A large majority of workers in the US (70%) consider the workplace to be a major source of stress. 51% reported that job-related stress negatively impacted their productivity at work (Azagba & Sharaf, 2011). Half of the 550 million working days lost every year in the US can be attributed to stress-related issues. It is estimated that unanticipated absenteeism costs companies $602 per employee each year, totaling $3.5 million annually for larger companies. (Ray, 2011). By engaging in healthy worksite efforts to improve employee stress management, employers can decrease costs related to conditions both caused and exacerbated by stress. 44% of women and 36% of men want to quit their jobs because of job stress. Employees in high stress jobs access physician services 26% more often than their counterparts in low stress jobs. It is estimated that stress-induced healthcare utilization costs US companies $68 billion per year and results in a 10% reduction in profits. Job stress can lead to a number of chronic health issues, including cardiovascular disease, weakened immune function, musculoskeletal problems, mental health issues (including depression, anxiety, and substance abuse), diabetes, and high blood pressure. Job stress can also indirectly impact employees' health by limiting their abilities and motivation to participate in other health promotion behaviors (CPH-NEW, Stress@Work: An Introduction to Job Stress).

By conducting a comprehensive needs assessment of the health risks and interests of your employee population, you can assess the modifiable risk factors (e.g., high-demand, low-control jobs, sedentary jobs, insufficient breaks, unrealistic deadlines, poor communication, etc.) and the chronic diseases (e.g., cardiovascular disease, mental illness, diabetes, musculoskeletal disorders, etc. (CPH-NEW, Stress@Work: An Introduction to Job Stress) that are impacting employee health. Armed with this information, your worksite can identify the most promising strategies that will help to improve the health of your employees while also contributing to improved employee morale and productivity. This toolkit offers your worksite multiple strategies to improve stress management among your employees with varying levels of:

- **Outcomes**, or degree to which the intervention can be expected to bring about significant improvements in employees' physical activity
- Potential for **sustainability**, meaning the extent to which the intervention can continue to be in place and be effective with minimal ongoing resources required
- Required **resources** (financial and human)

Your worksite can use these three variables to identify the strategies, or interventions, that most effectively meet your healthy worksite goals and objectives. Stress management strategies are categorized by type of intervention:

- Policies
- Environmental supports
- Awareness and educational efforts
- Employer-offered health benefits
- Programs

Policy and environmental support interventions are generally the most effective and most sustainable of all strategies. These interventions create change that can be maintained on a permanent basis, impact larger numbers of employees, and while sometimes may require a larger initial investment, often require only minimal resources to keep in place. Policy and environmental support interventions provide the conditions that can make stress management more appealing, accessible, and easy, such as ensuring that employees have an easily accessible relaxation area and ample time to utilize it.

Research has shown that the more strategies that are implemented together (e.g., education and awareness efforts implemented in conjunction with stress management policies and a supportive worksite environment that encourages access to stress management resources), the more successful the outcome and impact will be (CDC Workplace Health Promotion, 2014). For maximum effectiveness, your worksite should aim to utilize multiple strategies, and integrate at least some policy and environmental strategies.

The following information is offered for each intervention, as appropriate:
- Purpose
- Costs and materials: staff time, equipment or materials, promotional costs, administrative costs, incentives, and other costs to plan and implement
- Steps for implementation
- Recommended communication activities
- Opportunities for incentives (where relevant)
- Examples (such as policies)

- Potential evaluation measures: process, short-term and mid-term outcomes
- Additional resources

Worksite investment in wellness initiatives can vary widely, and within nearly every intervention, there is opportunity to scale the activity to fit the size of your worksite and the resources you have to devote. Keeping your worksite's health improvement plan in mind, your worksite can start with short-term objectives and as support, engagement, and resources may increase, you can focus on longer-term goals and achieving your overall vision. This can involve an increase in the number of strategies you implement or increased intensity of strategies; for example, moving from offering on-site massage therapy to a more comprehensive stress management approach encompassing the causes of workplace stress and coordinated solutions to address these causes (e.g., poor communication, lack of training, unwanted overtime).

Special considerations
Differing characteristics of your employees and worksite
It is valuable to make efforts to include everyone in worksite health efforts, taking into consideration the demographics of your workforce in addition to many other factors that may influence their participation in healthy worksite activities. Offering options or alternatives so that everyone can participate regardless of the kind of work they do, where they are situated, and in what industry or sector your worksite is in, will help you get closer to full participation in healthy worksite efforts.

For example, the participation levels in wellness programs and therefore the benefits of these programs are often more pronounced in employees of higher socioeconomic status (e.g., white-collar vs. blue-collar jobs) (Champagne et al., 2012). Therefore, it is important to ensure that programs are offered in such a way that all employees have equal access, and that at least some program offerings are tailored to the particular needs and constraints of the low-wage workforce (ranging from night shifts to frequent overtime to the fatigue resulting from prolonged standing at work). For example, employees who travel frequently or are highly mobile might benefit most from strategies making use of technology (such as utilizing workplace flexibility in the form of telecommuting), or policies to address dependent care issues. Know your "audience" – your employees — not only in terms of what stress management interventions might most appeal to them, but also in terms of the work environment and the nature of the work that they do. Consider the harmful physical and emotional responses that can occur within your workplace when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities and needs of the worker.

Evidence also suggests that the key to long-term, sustainable workplace health protection and health promotion programs may depend on engaging employees at all levels of the worksite in assessing needs and offering all employees opportunities to participate in identifying strategies and activities to address those needs (Henning et al., 2009, p.27).

Analyze demographic characteristics of your workforce (number of workers by wage level, job type, educational requirements, age distribution, gender, ethnicity, etc.). Also consider work organization characteristics that might influence time or motivation for program participation (shift work, overtime, contract work, etc.). Be sure to consider:

- Sedentary jobs (e.g., desk jobs)
- Physically demanding jobs (e.g. construction, etc.)
- Shift work
- Decentralized or multiple locations, telecommuters, employees whose jobs require significant long-distance or local travel
- Union vs. non-union employees
- Salaried vs. hourly employees
- Industry sector
- Size of business

High-demand, low-control jobs
"Job strain," or the strain caused by jobs with **high demand** (of responsibilities, hours, potential for injury, workers capabilities matched with their responsibilities, etc.) and **low control** (over decisions affecting their jobs, work schedules that allow them to complete responsibilities outside of work, etc.) can be particularly damaging to employees' health. **Low social support**, in combination with high demand and low control, can also negatively impact employee health. Employees who face high job strain (i.e. have high demand-low control jobs) are more likely to experience a number of chronic health conditions such as heart disease compared to employees with low demand, high control jobs *and* employees with high demand, high control jobs. High control, high demand jobs can be stimulating and challenging, and have been linked to positive health and well-being. It is essential to engage employees in the process and increase employee control whenever possible in order to promote employee health. Characteristics of lower-strain work environments include:

- Workstations are designed for tasks and injury avoidance
- Tasks are matched with workers' capabilities and resources
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
- Job overall has meaning and a variety of tasks
- Workers can use their skills and learn new skills

- Workers can make decisions affecting their jobs
- Communication takes place between co-workers and in two directions between workers and supervisors
- Employee input is utilized in workplace changes and stress management interventions (see "Assessment" in this section)

Each intervention listed in this toolkit emphasizes assembling a champion or team to spearhead implementation. It is ideal that the team or champion represent employees from all levels of the company to give a voice to employees who may usually not have a say in these types of changes. This helps to ensure that employees who do not have a high degree of control in their jobs are able to increase their level of control. Providing opportunities for employees to participate in organizational decisions regarding workplace stress is supported by the CDC ScoreCard (#67) and NIOSH ("Stress at Work", 2013) as an effective means of managing employee stress.

Be mindful of accommodating the needs of all your employees, offering options that everyone can participate in, and ensuring that no one feels excluded or alienated by programs or changes in your workplace. As the type of work individuals may be engaging in (e.g. desk job versus physical labor, 9-5 versus night shift, etc.) may affect employees' abilities to take part, ensure that there are options that all employees are able to take advantage of (relaxation spaces, EAP programs, etc.). Be sure to take any needs related to physical ability into consideration, as well, making sure that relaxation and exercise spaces are accessible, and that any outings (social or otherwise) are open to everyone.

Partnerships and other cost-saving strategies
Worksite wellness is not a "one size fits all" activity. Worksites can help each other by sharing resources and best practices. Another way to support an individual company's healthy worksites efforts is to partner with other companies, community leaders, and local experts, forming a worksite collaborative. Collaboratives, or employee coalitions, provide the opportunity to compare program successes and challenges and share solutions with peers. A collaborative approach may also offer small companies the chance to combine forces to improve purchasing power for wellness-related programs. For example, companies in the same building could partner with building management to utilize a shared space for relaxation/meditation or exercise. One such example is the Greater Fall River Small Worksite Wellness Project, which is making incentives and other resources available to small businesses to promote healthy employee outcomes, as well as collect valuable data (http://www.gfrpartners.com/WorksiteHealthSmallWorksite.html). Your worksite can consider partnering with others and tap into the expertise of local human service organizations, not-for-profit organizations, health plans, business coalitions, community-based organizations, and

academic institutions. On a smaller scale, employees might support a healthy worksite effort by pooling funds to purchase exercise equipment, engaging in an office park-wide basketball tournament, or save up for on-site massage therapy or a company social outing. Such "ground up" approaches can serve to change worksite culture and demonstrate support for more intensive stress management efforts, too.

Support and engagement

In order for healthy worksite efforts to be widely supported and utilized, the wellness champion or team must actively promote their efforts from the very beginning. Engaging employees as champions of healthy worksite efforts as early as during the assessment and planning stage will increase employee investment and engagement. Similarly, gaining support and buy-in from management is key to success and needs to start early with the planning process. Engagement from and ongoing communication with management can help to preempt or address concerns that might be raised. Management can also help to model healthy behaviors and participation in healthy worksite efforts, ultimately contributing to a healthy worksite culture.

When planning interventions, try to anticipate where there may be resistance or concern and plan for how you will address it. Concerns about the cost of offering an on-site employee assistance program (EAP), for example, can be a significant barrier. Working closely with those responsible for employee benefits can help to unearth specific concerns and how they may be addressed, such as demonstrating employee support through a survey or pilot program.

Other barriers might be posed by the general worksite culture or simple resistance to change. Regular communication is key to building broader buy-in and participation. Communicate your stress management efforts in ways that demonstrate the benefits of reducing stress, provide opportunities for employees to express their preferences and opinions, and allow for employees to try various stress reduction strategies multiple times for free or at a reduced cost to help build interest and appeal. Providing opportunities for employees to have a say in organizational decisions regarding stress management not only helps tailor stress management efforts to the wants and needs of the employees, but also gives employees some autonomy in how they are able to manage their stress. See the "Recommended communication activities" section for each healthy worksite intervention for specific ideas about effectively communicating your efforts to improve stress management.

ASSESSMENT

Before attempting to implement any stress management intervention, assessment measures should be taken. The importance of utilizing employee input in implementing workplace stress management interventions cannot be overstated. Some worksites choose to assess the needs

and interests of employees by administering a survey. Others may find that conducing on-site focus groups provides an opportunity for deeper, facilitated discussion. Regardless of which type of assessment you choose to use, assessing employees' stress levels and stress management needs is key to successful and effective implementation of these interventions.

In order to truly understand the causes of workplace stress, it is best to invest time upfront to understand the health and safety issues that are affecting your organization. You will need to know what issues are important and the root causes of workplace stress before jumping into intervention planning (Tyler, 2006). By understanding employee perceptions about their health concerns and ways that work impacts health, both positively and negatively, you will be able to develop solutions to address the identified stressors and concerns. Not only can you gain important insights, but you are also giving your employees a further degree of control in their workplace. Below are several assessment tools and evaluation resources your organization can use to conduct a proper needs assessment and later evaluate the success of your interventions. Evaluation measures should be informed by assessment data collected prior to implementation to best show the impact of the interventions on stress management and health.

Depending on your workplace size and industry, different assessment and evaluation methods may be more or less effective. For example, in larger organizations, it may be easier to collect data from your entire workforce through surveys issued to all employees. For smaller organizations, focus groups may be more effective and may provide you with richer qualitative data from which to tailor your interventions. If possible, conducting both surveys and follow-up focus groups may be able to give you a clearer picture of your organization's stress management needs and the true causes of workplace stress.

When assessing employee needs and interests it is important to create a safe environment where employees feel comfortable, and where they are encouraged to openly share information with their employers. Employers should actively communicate the importance of sharing ideas, respect for differing opinions, and privacy and confidentiality. These messages should remind employees that their feedback will not impact their job but rather will help the workplace assess needs and develop solutions to address the identified needs and interests. When conducting focus groups, employers are encouraged to segment participants by job category so as to ensure that employees feel comfortable sharing information without management in the same room.

Below are a number of tools and resources your worksite can utilize in assessing employee stress. These tools can help you to establish a variety of baselines – for stress levels, employee work/life balance, knowledge, support/control/social support, stressors in the workplace, sources of stressors, etc. They are useful in helping to determine root causes of stress in your workplace. The results of these surveys (and any other assessment tools you may use) should be used to both tailor your interventions to your worksite and employees as well as for use in evaluation of your interventions.

Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ)
"The Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) is a questionnaire-based instrument designed to measure the "content" of a respondent's work tasks in a general manner which is applicable to all jobs and jobholders in the US. The best-known scales--(a) decision latitude, (b) psychological demands, and (c) social support--are used to measure the high-demand/low-control/low-support model of job strain development. The demand/control model predicts, first, stress-related risk and, second, active-passive behavioral correlates of jobs. Other aspects of work demands are assessed as well: (d) physical demands, and (e) job insecurity. The instrument has a recommended length of 49 questions. No personality scales or measures of non-job stressors are included; two areas in which the user may want to supplement our instrument."
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/workorg/detail086.html

CDC – NIOSH Quality of Worklife Questionnaire
"The primary goals of the Quality of Worklife module are to measure how work life and the work experience have changed since the earlier Quality of Employment Surveys and to establish benchmarks for future surveys. Secondary goals include measuring the relationship between job/organizational characteristics and worker health and safety and identifying targets for health and safety preventive interventions."
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/stress/qwlquest.html

The Link - Boston College Center for Work and Family
A guide for conducting a Work/Life workplace assessment.
https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/research/publications/pdf/The_Link.pdf

Additional resources can be found at the Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace (CPH-NEW)'s site
http://www.uml.edu/Research/Centers/CPH-NEW/stress-at-work/resources.aspx

Specific metrics:

Some metrics may be very important to measure, but difficult to articulate and quantify. For example, employee productivity can be a vague concept, but a strong potential indicator of stress management. Here are a few examples of ways to measure productivity and other more amorphous metrics:

- Employee Productivity
    - Rate of task completion
    - Team effectiveness ratio (amount of gross profit the company makes for every dollar spent on salary)
    - Measure on a Likert scale
        - Typically a 5-7 point scale, uses Strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/disagree as points with the question tailored to the metric (ex. Q: Conditions on my job allow me to be about as productive as

I could be. A: 1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree)

- Perceived stress level
  - Measure on a Likert scale
    - Q: I feel stressed at work. A: 1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree
- Perceived workload
  - Measure on a Likert scale
    - Q: I feel that my workload is manageable. A: 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral. 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

When you see these metrics used in "Potential evaluation measures" sections in each intervention, refer to these examples for ways to measure them in surveys or focus groups.

JOB STRESS AND STRESS MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

According to the Center for Health Promotion in the New England Workplace (CPH-NEW), job stress is "the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker."

Job stress can negatively impact both employees' health and quality of work, as discussed previously. Some signs of job stress include headaches, sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating, short temper, fatigue, muscle aches and pains, over-/under-eating, chronic mild illness, anxiety, depression, gastrointestinal problems, anger, accidents, substance abuse, isolation, job dissatisfaction, low morale, and relationship problems (CPH-NEW, Stress@Work Introduction to Job Stress).

There are a number of well-known stressors that commonly contribute to workplace stress. Some are related to the physical environment:

- Sedentary work/lack of mobility
- Repetition
- Fast-paced work
- Rotating shifts
- Insufficient breaks
- Poor temperature control
- Excessive noise

While others are psychosocial in nature:

- Unrealistic deadlines
- Sustained excessive workload
- Excess overtime
- Responsibility without authority
- Job skills not used
- Lack of recognition
- Poor communication
- Inflexible rules
- Lack of input or control in decisions
- Conflicting demands
- Poor supervision
- Poor relations with co-workers
- Lack of promotion
- Job insecurity
- Favoritism
- Discrimination
- Racism
- Sexual harassment

(CPH-NEW, Stress@Work: An Introduction to Job Stress).

While the sources of job stress are numerous, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has developed an effective approach to dealing with job stress. First, they recognize that while working conditions have a primary role in determining one's level of job stress, individual factors also have a strong influence on an individual's workplace stress. Their approach to preventing job stress follows suit – they suggest pairing organizational change with stress management techniques in order to promote a healthy workplace and decrease workplace stress.

To make organizational change effective for improving stress management, NIOSH suggests the following:
- Ensure that the workload is in line with workers' capabilities and resources
- Design jobs to provide meaning, stimulation, and opportunities for workers to use their skills
- Clearly define workers' roles and responsibilities
- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions and actions affecting their jobs
- Improve communications: reduce uncertainty about career development and future employment prospects
- Provide opportunities for social interaction among workers
- Establish work schedules that are compatible with demands and responsibilities outside the job

More best practices resources can be found at: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-101/default.html.

INTERVENTIONS

POLICIES

Creating stress management policies at your worksite not only shows employer commitment to keeping employees healthy through reducing stress – it helps to make the healthier option the easy or default option. The most effective interventions are those that change the context, or environment, to make the healthy choice the default choice (Frieden, 2010). Stress management policies also help to shape a healthy worksite culture. Worksite culture is a powerful force in encouraging and supporting employees to reduce stress responses. It is the set of attitudes and behaviors that define the company and how employees work together (CDC Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity: Steps to Wellness, 2012). Think of worksite culture as informal policy - unwritten "rules" or guides that are publicly supported and widely communicated.

As defined by the CDC, a culture of health "is the creation of a working environment where employee health and safety is valued, supported and promoted through workplace health programs, policies, benefits, and environmental supports" (CDC Workplace Health Promotion, Glossary of Terms, 2014). Building a culture of health is the responsibility of all levels of the organization, particularly upper as well as middle management, who should not only support a healthy work environment but actively demonstrate the organization's commitment to it. Adopting and maintaining a culture of health establishes healthy worksite activities as a routine part of business operations aligned with overall business goals.

Workplace flexibility

Evidence:

Mass in Motion recommended: http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/mass-in-motion/worksite-wellness-toolkit.pdf
Cochrane Public Health Group – some scientific evidence:
http://www.cochrane.org//CD008009/PUBHLTH_flexible-working-conditions-and-their-effects-on-employee-health-and-wellbeing
Changing Work, Changing Health: Can Real Work-Time Flexibility Promote Healthy Behaviors and Well-Being? (Moen, et al) – some scientific evidence:
http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/individuals/pdf/WellbeingFlex.pdf
Boston College Center for Work and Family (Creating a Culture of Flexibility: What it is, Why it Matters, How to Make it Work) - recommended:
http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/research/publications/pdf/BCCWFFlexibilityEBS.pdf

Purpose:

To give employees more flexibility and control over work scheduling.

Flexible work arrangements have been shown to increase productivity and retention, improve job coverage and scheduling, enhance recruitment, raise morale and job satisfaction, reduce stress, and ultimately improve employee health.

Standard flexibility programs allow employees to vary when and where they do their work. Strategic flexibility includes variations on what, when, where, and/or how work is done, toward what goals, and for what compensation. It focuses on overall business goals rather than case-by-case individual accommodations. It emphasizes the long-term rather than the short-term, is proactive instead of reactive, and intervenes at the systems level.

There are 3 dimensions of flexibility: time, place and work processes.
1. Flexibility of time: Variations in scheduled work hours including daily and traditional flex time, compressed work weeks, and arrangements such as 9/80 (working eight 9-hour days in a 2-week period, one 8-hour day, and then one "free" day off every other week).
    a. Adjustments in the number of hours worked per week or per year (i.e., summers off or reduced hours during off-season)
    b. Flexibility during one's career path that allows for sabbaticals or leave time
2. Flexibility of place:
    a. Telecommuting at home
    b. Working at satellite sites
    c. Offsite work (e.g., at customer sites)
3. Flexibility of work processes:
    a. Work redesign or job restructuring to reduce inefficiencies and low-value work

(Boston College Center for Work and Family, Executive Briefing Series: "Creating a Culture of Flexibility: What it is, Why it Matters, How to Make it Work")

Some common flexible work arrangements include:
- *Flex time* - Employees vary the duration and timing of the workday (e.g., start and end times, breaks, lunch) within limits set by management, such as core hours from 9 am to 3 pm. Traditional flex time is a schedule with a fixed start and end time (i.e., 7 am – 3 pm every day). Daily flexibility allows employees to vary their work hours on a daily basis.
- *Part time* - Working less than full time hours
- *Compressed work week* - Working full time hours in a reduced number of days such as 9/80, where over a 2-week period, employees work nine 9-hour days, one 8-hour day and then have the tenth day off
- *Telecommuting* - Working away from the office some or all of the time
- *Job sharing* - Two workers cover one full time job
- *Paid and unpaid leaves* - To care for dependents, education, or other reasons
- *Sabbaticals* - Paid or unpaid time off at recurring intervals

Costs and materials:

Workplace flexibility can be implemented at low to no cost, and even has the potential to be cost-saving by reducing real estate costs and employee commute time. There may be some initial cost associated with marketing and education around workplace flexibility. Other costs to consider include costs of technology and equipment to facilitate working from home, paid parental leave policies, and training costs.

Implementation Steps:

Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a team or champion** to be involved in the development of workplace flexibility policies, representing human resources, management, and general employee interests. It is important that employees at all levels are represented, to increase employees' level of control over decisions made in the workplace.
2. **Assess feasible options** for workplace flexibility policies that best fit your company size, job types, work organization, etc. (See "Examples" and "Considerations for different industries and sectors" below).
3. **Survey your employees to assess their needs and interest** in utilizing workplace flexibility, including the different types of workplace flexibility your organization is able to offer.
4. **Communicate** the introduction of workplace flexibility to your employees before implementation, including information on options and health/stress management benefits. (See "Recommended communication activities" below)
5. **Create forms for requesting and approving workplace flexibility arrangements** (utilize Sample Flexible Work Arrangement Proposal Form (BCCWF) in "Additional resources" below).
6. **P**rovide **training for managers** on how to effectively manage workers using flexible work arrangements.
7. Upon implementation, **provide ongoing support** for employees choosing to utilize workplace flexibility. (See "Additional resources" – Helping Remote Workers Stay Connected tipsheet)
8. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Barriers to consider:

A "face time" culture, manager skepticism, and fear of negative career consequences are among the barriers that prevent employees and employers from taking advantage of flex time policies. To overcome these barriers, employers are encouraged to have flexibility policies on the books, actively communicate and promote these policies, and provide a workplace environment with a level playing field for flextime adoption. The flex time policy should ideally be available to **all** employees as long as they meet the identified criteria (e.g., tenure, job function, employee status). This will help to reduce resentment and differences in adoption among managers, and help to ensure the success and adoption of flexible work arrangements. Among human resource professionals who reported that their organizations had formal flexible work arrangements, 93% indicated their organizations' flexible work arrangements had a positive impact ("somewhat positive" or "positive") on the quality of their employees' personal/family lives. (Society for Human Resource Management, 2008)

Recommended communication activities:
- Hold informational sessions for employees to educate them on the benefits of workplace flexibility, the options they have, and how to utilize them.
- Send out notices regarding implementation via email, company newsletters, organization-wide meetings, and other methods your organization uses to communicate information to employees.
- Promote workplace flexibility options regularly. If your company chooses to implement a "Stress Management Awareness Month" (or similar event), advertise the workplace flexibility policies your organization chooses to implement as effective options for managing stress.
- Consider piloting flexible work arrangements in one unit or location to gain insight, understand barriers, and assess lessons learned.

Examples:

The Ohio State University – Flexible Work Arrangement Toolkit
http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/individuals/pdf/FlexibilityToolkitFinal.pdf

Potential evaluation measures:
- Level of stress perceived by employees before and after implementation
- Rate of employee absenteeism
- Number of employees utilizing flexible work arrangements
- Number of sick days taken
- Productivity
- Rate of employee retention

- Perceived workload
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Utilize "Measuring the Impact of Workplace Flexibility" as a guide to formulating assessment and evaluation materials.
https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/research/publications/pdf/BCCWF_Flex_Impact_Final_Report.pdf

Evaluating Telework: Tip Sheet (Discussion Guide)
http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/pdf/TipSheet_EvaluatingTelework.pdf

Considerations for different industries and sectors
Workplace flexibility may be considerably easier to implement depending on the type(s) of work an organization does. However, even workplaces with more rigid scheduling can implement workplace flexibility and reap its benefits. When ARAMARK reorganized their Tailor Shop (part of ARAMARK's uniform services sector, consisting of 100 employees) from a standard 5-day schedule to a 4day, 10-hour compressed work week, they saw a 5% increase in productivity and a 30% decrease in turnover (from 60% to 30%) (Boston College Center for Work and Family, Executive Briefing Series: "Creating a Culture of Flexibility: What it is, Why it Matters, How to Make it Work").

Additional resources
Boston College Center for Work & Family – Flexible Working Resources
http://www.bc.edu/centers/cwf/work-life-resources-for-individuals/flexible-working.html

Sample Flexible Work Arrangement Proposal Form (BCCWF)
https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/pdf/BC%20Flex%20Work%20application%20form.pdf

Helping Remote Workers Stay Connected: Tip Sheet (BCCWF)
http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/cwf/pdf/TipSheet_HelpingRemoteWorkersStayConnected.pdf

Work/life balance policy

Evidence:

CDC ScoreCard #65(3 pts.)

Mass in Motion Worksite Wellness Toolkit – p.159 – Recommended
http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/mass-in-motion/worksite-wellness-toolkit.pdf

Purpose:

To establish a company-wide policy ensuring employees' access to life skills and work/life balance programs and resources.

Addressing stressors from outside of the workplace that contribute to job stress is a key factor in managing employee stress. Financial difficulties, dependent care needs, simultaneously pursuing education, and other potential stressors can be a significant source of stress, which can then impact employees negatively in the workplace. By putting company policies in place that protect employees' access to programs that can address these work/life stressors, organizations can more effectively reduce their employees' stress. Employees may also feel that they have more control over their situation if they know that they are supported through organizational policies should a work/life matter arise.

This often includes provision of an employee assistance program (EAP), which is discussed later in this toolkit, and workplace flexibility options (see "Workplace flexibility" on p.13). In addition, worksites should consider the following strategies:
- Expand benefits and programs to assist with managing personal and caregiving needs.
- Develop vacation or sick time pooling programs (see "Examples" below)
- Allow paid work time for community volunteering (See "Additional resources" below)

Costs and materials:

Including a work/life balance section in your company's policies and procedures can be implemented at little to no cost. However, the services outlined by the policy may incur some cost. For example, expanding benefits for personal and dependent care needs may cost your company more initially. However, when employees are able to access such programs, they are ultimately able to manage both their lives and stress much more effectively, and therefore are able to be more productive in the workplace.

Implementation Steps:

Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a champion or team** of employees who will champion the inclusion of a Work/Life Balance policy in company handbooks. The team should have a leader in human resources, but represent employees at all levels so as to include input from all worker types.
2. **Survey employees** to gain insight on current knowledge of and satisfaction with company policies regarding work/life balance. Determine specific interests and needs to help decide what should specifically be included in the policy.
3. Have aforementioned team **draft the new work/life balance policy**. Utilize examples and additional resources below. Revise as necessary.
4. **Determine ability to provide services promised** in new policy draft. This should include budgeting as well as an assessment of which services would best benefit your workplace.
5. **Implement services promised alongside policy.**
6. **Promote knowledge** of new policy through email, newsletters, departmental and company-wide meetings. Outline services offered and stress reduction benefits of utilizing such services.
7. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:
- Promote new policy through several means of communication, including email, newsletters, departmental and company-wide meetings. If possible, hold informational sessions to educate employees on the benefits outlined in the policy.
- Hold informational sessions ("Lunch & Learns" for example) to educate employees on new programs and benefits offered through the new policy.

Examples:

University College London – work/life balance policy
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/docs/work_life_balance.php

Florida International University – Sick Leave Pool
http://hr.fiu.edu/index.php?name=sick_leave_pool1

Potential evaluation measures:
- Employee awareness of policy
- Employee utilization of services policy offers
- Perceived stress level
- Rate of employee absenteeism
- Number of employees utilizing flexible work arrangements

- Number of employees utilizing EAP
- Number of employees utilizing other work/life balance services
- Number of sick days taken
- Productivity
- Rate of employee retention
- Perceived workload
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Additional resources:

Work/Life Balance Policies -
http://www.shrm.org/research/surveyfindings/articles/pages/worklifebalance.aspx

Aston University – Work/Life Balance Policies – Management Guidelines
http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/equalops/policies/worklifebalancemanagment/

HR Council – Workplaces that Work – Workplace Wellness
http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/workplaces-health-safety.cfm

Office of Personnel Management – Fact Sheet: Guidance on Scheduling Work and Granting Time Off to Permit Federal Employees to Participate in Volunteer Activities
http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/leave-administration/fact-sheets/related-information/

Unwanted Overtime Policy
Evidence:
CDC ScoreCard #67 (3pts)

Purpose:
To prevent employees from being required to work frequent overtime and establish a protocol to avoid excessively long work hours.

Many employees cite frequent unwanted overtime and long work hours as a major source of job stress. While some lines of work may be more likely to require employees to work long hours and overtime, measures can still be put in place to prevent workers from having to work overtime unnecessarily. If the line of work requires employees to work overtime, be sure to include a section detailing compensation for overtime. In addition, if working conditions are constantly indicating the need for overtime, an organization might want to conduct a work-flow analysis or bring employees together to discuss the increase in overtime and the workplace processes that might need to be changed in order to minimize unwanted overtime. There are

times where working long hours is inevitable (e.g., tax season, end of the year). The key is to create a culture with open communication to engage employees in the process and to prepare them for the upcoming peaks in workflow and hours spent at work.

Implementation of an overtime/compensatory time policy also keeps companies in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Costs and materials:
Including an overtime/compensatory time policy in your company's policies and procedures can be implemented at little to no cost. Should you choose to include additional tracking measures to ensure enforcement of the policy (such as electronic entry cards), your organization would incur that cost.

Depending on the nature of your industry, there may be concerns about the potential cost of needing more employees. Utilizing a workplace flexibility policy can help to keep employees from being required to work frequent overtime hours and can prevent the need to hire extra employees (See the "Workplace flexibility" intervention on p.13). Additional costs to consider might include costs to hire temporary workers, pay associated with time and a half for overtime work, and salaries for new hires.

Implementation Steps:
Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a champion or team** of employees who will champion the inclusion of a work/life balance policy in company handbooks. The team should have a leader in human resources, but represent employees at all levels so as to include input from all worker types.
2. **Survey employees** to gain insight on current knowledge of and satisfaction with company policies regarding work/life balance. Determine specific interests and needs to help decide what should specifically be included in the policy.
3. **Strategize with employees** to develop solutions to address unwanted overtime and long work hours.
4. Have team **draft the new overtime/compensatory time policy**. Utilize examples and additional resources below. Revise as necessary.
5. **Include measures to ensure policy is enforced**, such as requiring workers to obtain supervisor approval in order to work overtime.
6. **Promote knowledge** of new policy through email, newsletters, and departmental and company-wide meetings.
7. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:
- Promote new policy through several means of communication, including email, newsletters, departmental and company-wide meetings. If possible, hold informational sessions to educate employees on the stipulations of the policy.

Example:

Sample Overtime Policy – University of Colorado Boulder

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&sqi=2&ved=0CCYQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fhr.colorado.edu%2Fes%2Fdocuments%2Fovertimepolicytemplate.doc&ei=45IGVdiwGPXIsAT4vIDYAQ&usg=AFQjCNEtj8lAUTea_C7djN1WoZBsoWB_Ig&sig2=v4LK3ooLGFYJc9O26ud2OQ&bvm=bv.88198703,d.cWc

Potential evaluation measures:
- Employee knowledge of policy
- Frequency of employee overtime
- Perceived stress level
- Productivity
- Perceived workload
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Considerations for different industries and sectors:

Based on your organization's line of work, your employees may be more or less likely to work overtime. In situations where employees *must* work overtime regularly, be sure to include a section on compensation (e.g., time and a half) for overtime. In situations where overtime is not often required but has the potential to be abused by workers, put policies in place requiring employees to obtain supervisor approval to work overtime. Put extra measures in place if necessary, such as paper or electronic documentation.

Additional resources:

Stop overtime abuse with 4 steps, smart policy (Business Management Daily)
http://www.businessmanagementdaily.com/31591/stop-overtime-abuse-with-4-steps-smart-policy

ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS

The worksite environment can easily be either a source of stress *or* a way to facilitate stress management and reduction. The work environment can be structured in ways that give people increased opportunities for and reduced barriers to stress management. Whenever possible, (e.g., when completing a new construction or renovation or moving to a new office), consider and create opportunities for stress management. Some points to consider include creating spaces for relaxation/meditation and exercise and walking areas.

Worksite stressor reduction

Evidence:

Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace (recommended) – http://www.uml.edu/Research/Centers/CPH-NEW/stress-at-work/employers.aspx#what

Purpose:

To reduce aspects of the work environment that contribute to job stress.

Various physical and sensory aspects of a work environment can become major stressors for employees. Noise pollution, potential for injury, and hazardous materials are just a few examples. This intervention should be aimed at either removing the source of the stressor if possible, and if not, providing protective materials. For instance, if workers are constantly subject to a loud noise, removal of the source of that noise is ideal. However, if it is impossible to remove the source, providing employees with ear plugs or giving permission to use headphones would be a suitable alternative. Another example would be exposure to hazardous materials. If employees must be near these materials, then they must be provided with protective gear and training on how to use it properly to ensure their safety.

Costs and materials:

Depending on what aspects of your worksite you are addressing, costs can vary. Some potential costs to consider are that of protective gear, earplugs, or sound insulation, and costs of removing aspects of the worksite (for example, if you have an older workspace that contains harmful materials, the cost of replacing those materials with safe alternatives), etc.

Implementation Steps:

Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a champion or team** of employees to spearhead stressor reduction efforts. The team should ideally comprise employees from all levels of the worksite to guarantee input from all

areas of the organization, and ensure that worksite stressors from all areas of the workplace are addressed.

2. **Survey employees** on what aspects of their workplace cause them stress.
3. **Determine which stressors** (indicated by employees through surveys) **can be removed and which cannot be.** Based on this, consider methods and cost of removal (or alternative solutions and costs when stressors cannot be removed).
4. **Remove stressors or provide employees with protective materials.**
5. **If necessary, provide training or educational materials** on how to properly use protective gear.
6. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:
- Notify employees of removal of stressor or provision of protective gear through multiple routes (such as emails, company newsletters, "payroll stuffers," signage around the worksite, etc.)
- Encourage use of protective gear as part of organizational culture. This may include instituting a policy on proper or required usage of protective gear.

Potential evaluation measures:
- Number of stressors removed
- Number of protective materials distributed
- Number of injuries reported
- Perceived employee stress level
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Considerations for different industries and sectors:
Note that in physical labor-intensive industries, many stressors may not be possible to remove. It is crucial in these circumstances that other protective measures be instituted in order to maintain the health and safety of workers and minimize the damage of the stressor.

Additional resources:
Occupational Health and Safety Administration
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/

Relaxation/Meditation Space

Evidence:
CDC ScoreCard #62 (1pt)

Purpose:
This intervention involves creating or utilizing an already existing space for employees to use for relaxation or meditation as a stress management tool.

Costs and materials:
Depending on space available at your workplace, the intervention may be implemented at little to no cost if space is already available. If space is not available, cost to construct or rent a space for meditation and relaxation may be more considerable. Cost of seating, lighting, décor and other materials may also depend on what your organization already has available.

Steps:
Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a team** to be involved in the development of the space, representing human resources, management, and general employee interests. This team should include employees who will use the facility and promote its use among other employees.
2. **Assess the options for creating a relaxation space** based on the nature of your worksite, the space available and possibilities for build-out, and budget.
3. **Survey your employees to assess their needs and interest** in a relaxation space, including if they would utilize the space for meditation, quiet relaxation, and/or relaxation methods programming (e.g. yoga, muscle relaxation, deep breathing relaxation methods, etc.)
4. Depending on the capacity of the space, **develop programming to maintain interest and provide instruction**, such as yoga classes, muscle relaxation training, deep breathing training, etc.
5. **Purchase necessary equipment** such as comfortable furniture, soothing music, books, and massage equipment.
6. **Involve employees in the process**. Consider hosting a naming competition, showcasing employee artwork to decorate the walls, or other measures to personalize the space.
7. **Develop a protocol on how to run your relaxation room**. Suggestions include using a sign-up sheet and booking appointments in 15-20 minute increments.

8. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:
- Send out notices regarding the availability of the space for relaxation and meditation via email, company newsletters, organization-wide meetings, and other methods your organization uses to communicate information to employees.
- If your company chooses to implement a "Stress Management Awareness Month" (or similar event), advertise the utilization of the space for relaxation and meditation as an effective option for managing stress.
- Reinforce use of the relaxation space as part of organizational culture. While policies may exist for how the space may be used, it is important to convey to employees that it is acceptable and encouraged to use the room. Specify when employees are allowed to use it. Leadership should show support, including using the space themselves.
- Emphasize the benefits of meditation – stress relief, health benefits, improved productivity, etc. Showing employees why participating in meditation is beneficial is a key component in getting them to utilize the space itself.
- Advertise any programming (yoga, muscle relaxation, etc.).
- **Periodically promote the facility by sharing users' success stories:** Success Story Data Collection Tool: CDC Steps to Wellness page 111: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/steps2wellness_broch14_508_tag508.pdf
- Communicate the protocol for using the relaxation space including sign-up measures.

Potential evaluation measures:
- Number of visits to room/space
- Employee perceived stress level
- Rate of employee absenteeism
- Number of sick days taken
- Productivity
- Quality of work
- Rate of employee retention
- Perceived manageability of workload
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Considerations for different industries and sectors:
Depending on the industry, some companies may have facilities that are more suited to providing a relaxation space (for example, in office-based work, there may be an extra empty office that could be converted into a relaxation space). Industries that do not have a traditional office space may choose to utilize a temporary mobile modular space to provide employees

with a place to rest and relax. However, this option is more costly than utilizing already existing space. Some worksites may also want to use this space as a nursing room.

Exercise facility and walking routes (See Physical Activity Toolkit)

The following interventions are unique in that they are able to serve a dual purpose – to increase physical activity as well as manage stress. People may choose to use them for different reasons, but reap the benefits of stress management *and* preventing/managing chronic conditions simultaneously.

Evidence:
Mass in Motion Worksite Wellness Toolkit recommended – p.159
http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/mass-in-motion/worksite-wellness-toolkit.pdf

Exercise facility

Purpose
To offer facilities at the worksite that support and encourage increased physical activity as a means of reducing stress.

The provision of a fitness facility demonstrates the company's commitment to employee wellness, and there are a variety of ways in which worksites can foster on-site physical activity, from a fully-equipped workout facility to ad-hoc space used for easily transportable equipment and/or fitness classes. Options for equipment and facilities might include stretching mats, exercise balls, treadmills or elliptical machines, stationary bikes, strength training equipment, and DVD player and monitor for use of fitness DVDs or online videos. Fitness facilities can be permanent, but other spaces can also do the job; unused office areas, large conference rooms, cafeterias with moveable furniture, and work bays or safe warehouse areas can serve as fitness areas on a temporary or periodic basis (NC Worksite Wellness Toolkit). Outdoor fitness areas may be an option for your worksite, if your company has a campus or owns land on which all-weather fitness equipment can be installed. This can be a good complement to a walking trail (see "Walking routes" on p.30) or a walking group's activities. It is most effective to offer a worksite fitness facility in conjunction with showers or changing facilities, as well as lockers.

A fitness facility requiring a more significant investment may include:

- Individual workout area for cardio and strength training equipment
- Group exercise area for classes such as yoga, Zumba, t'ai chi
- Stretching area
- Changing rooms with showers and lockers

- Small office for professional staff
- Counseling room for fitness assessments

Costs and materials:
Costs and other resources required for a fitness facility can vary widely. A fitness area can be modestly equipped with simple items including fitness balls and other accessories for only a few hundred dollars. Purchase and installation of professional-grade equipment as well as shower and changing facilities requires an investment of thousands of dollars, as does the creation of an outdoor fitness area with all-weather equipment. Some larger employers may hire companies to design, build, and manage on-site fitness facilities, ideally offering access after work hours as well. While such costs are significant, some companies that have invested in extensive facilities have experienced a return on investment in three to five years (Trifit Workplace Fitness Facilities, 2002). Costs can be offset with membership fees, which can be collected through payroll deduction.

Whether the facilities are modest or extensive, it's important to consider equipment and facility maintenance costs and factor this into decisions about an on-site facility. Liability insurance costs will vary, and personnel time will be required for planning and continued administration related to the fitness facility.

Implementation Steps:
Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a team** to be involved in the development of the facility, representing human resource, management, and general employee interests. This team should include employees who will use the facility and promote its use among other employees.
2. **Assess the options for creating a fitness facility** based on the nature of your worksite, the space available and possibilities for build-out, and budget.
3. **Survey your employees to assess their needs and interest** in a fitness facility, including the specific kinds of facilities and provisions they will be most likely to use.
4. **Collaborate with a fitness consultant or company** to design and develop the fitness facility, purchase, and install equipment.
5. Depending on the capacity of the facility, **develop programming to maintain interest and provide instruction**, such as training on the use of particular equipment, or new routines or circuits.
6. **Assess the worksite's liability insurance and develop a legal waiver** for those using the facility and require that all employees who will be using the facility submit a signed copy before use. Ensure that it is clear on the waiver and through optional signage that the facility is not monitored and use is voluntary. Other security measures can be taken for built facilities, such as card access and security phones.

7. **Promote use of the facility** through a variety of communication efforts. Ideally, this should also include a policy for use of the facility that addresses when and how employees may use it. This helps to reinforce use of the facility as part of the organizational culture.
8. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:
- **Promote the existence of the facility and its features**, as well as the stress-reducing benefits of being physically active.
- **Have an information board in or near the facility providing instructional information** about use of the facilities and equipment as well as information on the stress management benefits of physical activity.
- **Periodically promote the facility by sharing users' success stories:** Success Story Data Collection Tool: CDC Steps to Wellness page 111: http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/steps2wellness_broch14_508_tag508.pdf

Opportunities for incentives:
Offering on-site fitness facilities is an incentive in itself; however, offering additional incentive items can facilitate the use of facilities (such as water bottles or gym gear) and increase visibility among other employees.

Sample:
Liability waiver: http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms/dhs/dhhs-0002.pdf

Potential evaluation measures:
- Use of facility in terms of number of employees, frequency of use, and duration of visit
- Perceived stress level
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Additional resources:
Promoting Fitness, Protecting People fact sheet on workplace fitness centers: http://www.acwajpia.com/filecabinet/rmnopw/09-10-0583.pdf
American College of Sports Medicine's Health Fitness Facility Standards and Guidelines

National Institute for Fitness and Sport corporate fitness services: http://wellness.nifs.org/corporate-fitness-management/

North Carolina Worksite Wellness Toolkit:

http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Worksites/Toolkit/Texts/Toolkit%201-17-12.pdf

Walking routes

Purpose:
To make walking in the area of the worksite more accessible and appealing by creating designated walking routes or "trails" for employees in order to reduce stress through physical activity.

This intervention involves creating access to and promoting a safe place for employees and others to walk. It can be particularly effective in fostering physical activity as a stress management tool, because it helps to provide environmental supports that can keep employees active long-term (provided that walking routes are maintained over time). Creating walking routes can help to facilitate and support other strategies such as "walk and talk" meetings or active breaks. Finally, creating walking routes, particularly if done in collaboration with the community, provides your company an opportunity to demonstrate goodwill and receive positive publicity.

Costs and materials:
Staff time will be required in the planning, implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of walking routes. Materials and other direct costs for the creation of a walking route will vary from community to community and worksite to worksite. For example, a walking route may be in a more urban area and therefore entirely concrete, or may be able to take advantage of fields, forest, or undeveloped land. Trails may require clearing (of brush or foliage) and improvements such as paving or wood-chipping (CDC Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity: Steps to Wellness, 2012). Tools and volunteers might be required to develop a trail. If in an urban or suburban area, creating a trail may require clearing of trash or other obstacles, improvements to sidewalks, signage, or other kinds of maintenance or safety measures (such as installation or replacement of lights).

Walking maps of the trail as well as other promotional efforts come with minimal costs. Signage and mile markers can cost several hundred dollars to produce and install, but are optional. There may be costs associated with incentive items if your worksite chooses to offer them, and staff time and other resources might be required to maintain routes.

Steps:
Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Build a team** of employees who are invested in and enthusiastic about encouraging their coworkers to get walking as a stress management tool.

2. **Consider whether there are opportunities to partner** with others in the community, including other worksites, community-based organizations, or the municipality. This can create goodwill, help to pool resources, and ultimately increase use of walking routes among a variety of audiences. Partnership or collaboration with other groups or the municipality (such as the parks and recreation department) may be required if there is not land your company has immediate access to for a walking trail.

3. If you are creating a trail on your worksite's campus or company-owned land, **map out a route and lay out a plan for steps to take to get the trail walking-ready.** Depending on the amount of work to be completed, select days for groups of people to volunteer, including employees and/or groups like the Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts or Big Brothers Big Sisters, or other community groups (CDC Nutrition, Physical Activity, Obesity: Steps to Wellness, 2012). Plan for volunteer days by acquiring all the necessary tools, supplies, and refreshments volunteers will need, and promote volunteerism.

4. If you are not developing an entirely new trail, **conduct a walkability audit or assessment of the area surrounding your worksite.** This will help you to identify what routes are safe for walking and where there may be improvements to make. Step-by-step assessment guidance, including an audit tool, can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/walkability/audit_tool.htm. The audit examines walking surfaces, pedestrian safety, maintenance status, accessibility, aesthetics, and other factors. Share results with the municipality and other companies in the area to determine whether there are opportunities to combine resources and make improvements.

5. Whether the walking route is on company or other property, **determine if there are opportunities for aesthetic improvements** to make the trail more appealing and pleasant for walkers. This could include planting flowers or trees or adding outdoor artwork.

6. **Create a walking map of your trail and share with employees** and, if appropriate, other community members. Internet mapping programs such as Google Maps or Map My Run can be used to create maps and show distance.

7. If possible, **physically map out route(s) with signage or markers.** This can include a sign identifying the walking route as well as mileage markers.

8. **Promote use of the walking route** internally and (if appropriate) publicize the walking route to the larger community. Ideally, this should include a policy for use of the route that addresses when and how employees may use it. This helps to reinforce use of the route as part of the organizational culture.

9. **Encourage further use of the walking route** by creating walking groups or holding a steps challenge with employees.

10. **Create a maintenance plan** delineating aspects of the train to be maintained, with what frequency, and responsibility.

11. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives

Recommended communication activities:

- **Announce the start of the walking route effort and seek volunteers** for the planning committee.
- **Communicate the progress of the walking trail** to create anticipation and interest, and offer opportunities for employees to contribute (such as in clearing trails).
- **Consider holding a steps challenge** to encourage employees to try out (and continue to utilize) the walking route.
- **Promote the use of the walking route** in walk and talk meetings and active breaks.
- If your worksite chooses to create a walking group, **promote the group in conjunction with the walking route,** and recognize employees who are using the route.

Opportunities for incentives:
- Offer pedometers to employees who show interest in utilizing the walking route or engaging in a steps challenge or walking group.
- Offer other incentive items (such as T-shirts or visors) to walking group or challenge participants, and consider a higher-value raffle item (such as an iPod Nano or Fitbit) for participants.

Potential evaluation measures:
- Number of employees using the walking trail – self-reported or through observation
- Number of trail miles walked (self-reported)
- Number of non-employees using the trail (may be conducted with a paper survey along the trail, an online survey, "person-on-the-street" interviews, or through collaboration with other groups that contributed to the development of the trail)
- Perceived stress level
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Additional resources:
American Heart Association Activity Tracker and personalized Walking Plan:
http://www.startwalkingnow.org/mystart_tracker.jsp

AWARENESS AND EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

Building awareness about the value of stress management and educating employees so that they can engage in healthier behaviors is an important component of a multi-strategy effort to increase stress management. Awareness and educational efforts can help to get attention, shape attitudes, contribute to healthy norms or worksite culture, and build skills so that individuals are more able to effectively manage their stress. Educational efforts can offer employees some of the "tools" they need to in order to engage in healthy behaviors, such as understanding how stress is related to overall health and how to work stress management into one's day.

Information and education are often the foundation for the success of other complementary strategies, such as in building understanding of the value of even spending a short break meditating or relaxing. However, awareness or educational efforts alone have limited effect given that they rely solely on individuals making the healthy choice, rather than the healthy choice being the easiest or most affordable choice. For example, providing an on-site fitness facility or meditation space that is free or low-cost, and is easy to utilize during the day with flex time, offers many of the circumstances employees need in order to manage their stress. Awareness and educational strategies should ideally support other strategies and be part of an overall healthy worksite plan that utilizes multiple strategies.

Educational materials

Evidence:

CDC ScoreCard #64 (3pts)

Mass in Motion Worksite Wellness Toolkit – p.159 – Recommended
http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/mass-in-motion/worksite-wellness-toolkit.pdf

NIOSH – Stress at Work - Recommended
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-101/default.html

Purpose:

To provide employees with materials on stress and stress management to help build a basic knowledge base around stress and stress management techniques.

These materials can be distributed in a variety of media – fact sheets, quizzes, videos, instructional materials, brochures, etc., and can cover a wide range of topics from information on your organization's EAP to instructions on deep breathing techniques. Talk with your EAP

provider, as many companies offer brochures, newsletters, and fact sheets as part of their services.

It is important to note that knowledge alone is often not enough to bring about behavior change in an individual; it is key that these materials not only provide information, but also cues or facilitators to action. Utilizing incentives or other activities alongside these materials will encourage employee participation in stress management techniques.

Costs and materials:

The cost of creating and distributing educational materials can vary depending on your company's budget. Free online resources can be distributed electronically, eliminating the need for printing or purchasing materials. However, if your budget allows for it, materials can be purchased, downloaded and printed, or created by employees (for example, stress management educational videos), which may cost additional money depending on what you utilize.

Implementation Steps:

Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a champion or team** of employees to research, develop, and distribute educational materials on stress management. The team should ideally comprise employees from all levels of the worksite to guarantee input from all areas of the organization, and ensure that materials are relevant to employees serving a variety of roles.
2. **Survey employees** on knowledge of stress and stress management techniques to assess educational need across the organization.
3. **Determine what materials you will use, and if you will develop additional materials.** Be sure to include information on stressors both in and out of the workplace that contribute to workplace stress (for example, frequent unwanted overtime or lack of dependent care). Some examples can be found in "Additional materials" below.
4. **Develop a timeline for delivery of materials.** One strategy is to hold a "Stress Management Month" (See "Additional resources" for a Stress Management Month toolkit) during which these materials will be distributed as your worksite offers other programmatic interventions. (See "Recommended communication activities" below).
5. **Distribute materials** through a variety of media, both paper and electronic/online (See "Recommended communication activities").
6. **Create an online database**, such as on a worksite intranet, where employees can access materials utilized during the promotional period at a later date.
7. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:

- Distribute materials through multiple routes (such as emails, company newsletters, "payroll stuffers", signage around the worksite, etc.)
- Implement a "Stress Management Month" during which these materials will be widely distributed and heavily emphasized. Provide incentives for practicing different stress management techniques outlined in these materials (e.g., practice yoga 3-5 times per week to get entered into a raffle for prizes). Consider tying this into National Stress Management Awareness Month, held in April of each year.
- Send short informational videos in departmental/company-wide emails.
- Create a company-wide challenge for engaging in stress management techniques outlined in these materials. This not only builds visibility of stress management efforts, but also strengthens organizational culture regarding stress management.

Examples:

A number of examples of educational materials can be found in the link below, including fact sheets, instructions for a deep breathing exercise, and quizzes:
http://www.amerihealth.com/worksite_wellness/employer_toolkits/stress_awareness.html

Potential evaluation measures:

- Number of (pamphlets, fact sheets, videos, etc.) distributed
- Number of events and participants in Stress Management Month activities
- Perceived employee stress level
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Considerations for different industries and sectors:

Use initial assessments as an opportunity to determine what stressors are most prevalent among employees in your specific industry and tailor your materials based on that knowledge. Just as well, tailor the communication methods used to what workers in your industry will most likely utilize. For example, workers involved in physical labor are less likely to read an email about stress management than they are to see signs posted around their worksite, or read brochures they might receive in the mail.

Additional resources:

Federal Occupational Health - Stress Management Month
http://www.foh.hhs.gov/dbdmarketing/nsam.html

Stress@Work: An Introduction to Job Stress (Fact Sheet), UMass Lowell
http://www.uml.edu/docs/IntroductionToJobStress_tcm18-42460.pdf

Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace (CPH-NEW) Stress@Work Resources
http://www.uml.edu/Research/Centers/CPH-NEW/stress-at-work/resources.aspx

Stress Management: How to Reduce, Prevent, and Cope with Stress
http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-management.htm

Practical Business Training: The Complete Stress Management Toolkit
https://www.practicalbusinesstraining.com/the-complete-stress-management-toolkit_11348

Manager trainings on stress

Evidence:

CDC ScoreCard #66 (3pts)

NIOSH – Stress at Work - Recommended
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-101/default.html

Purpose:

To provide managers and supervisors with the knowledge and tools to successfully recognize and reduce workplace stress.

Managers are frequently in "high-demand" positions. It may often seem like a burden to reduce the stress of others when their own stress may be high. However, manager trainings on stress are meant to provide managers and supervisors with communication tools, personnel management skills, assertiveness, time management skills, conflict resolution skills, and performance review tools. These trainings should also help managers to clearly define roles and responsibilities to their staff that are in accordance with their abilities, review work for stressors, and ensure the health and safety of their staff. This should include ensuring a continuous feedback loop between employees and managers – that is, establishing a standard in which employees and managers alike are able to provide feedback without fear of consequence. This creates an environment that lends itself to improved communication, opportunities to improve productivity, and increased satisfaction for both managers and employees. Ideally, this intervention should be coupled with a benefit plan, such as an EAP, that includes treatment and rehabilitation services for stress-related symptoms or conditions. Always provide a means for managers to escalate potential problems and/or receive additional support in resolving issues of employee stress.

Costs and materials:

Costs may entail the price of any training materials or any outside professionals brought in to conduct the training.

Implementation steps:

Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a champion or team** to spearhead assessment and training efforts. Employees from all areas of the organization should be represented.
2. **Survey both managers and their employees** to assess managers' level of competency in managing the stress of their employees. Utilize the Stress management competency indicator tool (University of Essex) http://www.essex.ac.uk/ohsas/stress/stress%20competency%20tool.pdf.
3. **Emphasize utilization of EAPs** as a resource to lessen any burden managers may feel in resolving employees' outside stressors.
4. **Conduct trainings**, ideally at a series of "Lunch & Learn" sessions.
5. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives

Recommended communication activities:

- Require all managerial staff to participate in trainings, emphasizing the supervisory skills they can gain and resources they will be able to utilize.
- Offer "Lunch & Learn" sessions to encourage participation and enthusiasm.

Examples:

Stress Management Guidance for Line Managers
http://www.essex.ac.uk/ohsas/stress/managers.htm

Outlook EAP – Management Training Seminars
http://outlookeap.com/seminars/

Potential evaluation measures:

- Manager perception of own ability to manage effectively, recognize stress, and reduce stress among employees
- Employee perception of managers' ability to manage effectively, recognize stress, and reduce stress among employees
- Employee perception of stress level
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Additional resources:

American Management Association – Supervisory and Management Skills
http://www.amanet.org/training/seminars/management-and-supervisory-skills-training.aspx

EMPLOYER-OFFERED HEALTH BENEFITS

Your worksite can encourage stress management as part of an overall compensation package including health insurance coverage as well as other services or discounts related to employee health. Such benefits can widely vary and be modest to more costly in terms of employer investment, from as simple as identifying and offering an employee health insurance package that includes coverage, subsidies, or discounts for mental health services or massage therapy. A strategy requiring more worksite resources but that may yield greater results is offering counseling and management programs right at the worksite, a significant source of employee stress.

Employee assistance program (EAP)

Evidence:

CDC ScoreCard #64 (3pts)
CDC ScoreCard #65 (3pts)

Purpose:

Employee Assistance Programs (or EAPs) provide services to employees regarding personal issues that negatively affect job performance. This may include: substance abuse, dependent care, management of chronic medical conditions, financial management, time management, conflict management, gender issues, education retirement planning, and others. They can also assist with policy development, employee education, and supervisor training. EAPs can also help to reduce pressure felt by managers and supervisors who feel responsible when their employees are facing issues affecting their job performance.

EAPs can be highly effective in addressing sources of stress outside of the workplace that can negatively impact employees' stress levels (and thereby their health, productivity, and job engagement). Partner with your EAP to foster a productive and healthy work environment. There are several different types of EAPs that may be more effective for different types of workplaces and varying budgets. The main types are listed below:

- *Internal/in-house programs*: These are most often found in large companies with substantial resources. The EAP staff is employed by the organization and works on-site with employees.
- *Consortia:* An EAP consortium generally consists of smaller employers who join together to contract with an EAP service provider. The consortium approach helps to lower the cost per employee.
- *Fee-for-service contracts:* Employers contract directly with an EAP provider, but only when employees use the services. Because this system requires employees to make individuals referrals (rather than employees self-referring), care must be taken to protect employee confidentiality.

- *Fixed-fee contracts:* Employers contract directly with an EAP provider for a variety of services, e.g., counseling, employee assessment, and educational programs. Fees are usually based on the number of employees and remain the same regardless of how many employees use the EAP.
- *Peer-based programs*: Less common than conventional EAPs, peer- or-coworker based EAPs provide education and training, assistance to troubled employees, and referrals - all through peers and coworkers. This type of program requires considerable education and training for employees.

It is important to note that EAPs are NOT substitutes for other worksite stress management. Implementing EAPs alongside other interventions is the most effective way to manage employee stress

("Implementation and Promotion Plan", Managed Care Concepts; "Employee Assistance Programs", Decatur Chamber of Commerce; "An Employer's Guide to Employee Assistance Programs: Recommendations for Strategically Defining, Integrating, and Measuring Employee Assistance Programs", National Business Group on Health: Center for Prevention and Health Services).

Costs and materials:

Implementing an EAP at your organization may have some initial upfront costs. However, EAPs can ultimately produce a significant return on investment by:

- Reducing absenteeism (unplanned or not)
- Decreasing workplace accidents
- Lowering employee turnover (and related replacement costs)
- Facilitating return to work for employees after short-term and extended absences
- Reducing healthcare costs
- Increasing organizational investments in wellness, health promotion, self-care, continuity of care, and other work-related efforts
- Increasing efficient use of health care through early identification, care management, and recovery efforts

("An Employer's Guide to Employee Assistance Programs: Recommendations for Strategically Defining, Integrating, and Measuring Employee Assistance Programs", National Business Group on Health: Center for Prevention and Health Services)

The Decatur Chamber of Commerce developed an estimation of annual EAP costs per employee based on number of employees. Cost per employee tends to be relatively low, but as mentioned previously, the return on investment can be considerable. Some EAP types, such as the consortium included in the table below, can be less costly per employee than others.

COSTS OF EAPs
Annual EAP Costs per Number of Company Employees

Number of Employees	Cost Range	Cost Mean	Number of Employees	Cost Range	Cost Mean
More than 5,000	$14-25	$20.29	100-250	$24-60	$32.70
1,000-5,000	$17-39	$20.42	26-100	$29-75	$36.70
500-1,000	$21-36	$25.00	Fewer than 25	$30-100	$50.00
250-500	$23-45	$27.31	Consortium	$10-25	$18.00

(Employee Assistance Programs, Decatur Chamber of Commerce)

Implementation steps:

Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a champion or team** of employees who are invested in and enthusiastic about the implementation of an EAP. This team should represent employees from all levels to ensure representation in the decision-making process throughout the company.
2. **Consider whether partnership with other companies** (in a consortium) would be a cost-effective option for your company, or if your company would be better suited to a different approach to EAP (as listed above).
3. **Determine the cost** of implementing an EAP and whether or not it is feasible for your company.
4. **Survey employees** to assess need for EAP and potential services available through EAP.
5. **Gain support from leadership** to help promote the EAP favorably into organizational culture.
6. **Formalize the availability and role of the EAP as part of company policy**, such as including it in an employee policy manual.
7. **Prior to implementation, communicate the existence and benefits of an EAP**. This may include highlighting the EAP in emails, newsletters, company-wide meetings, departmental meetings, etc.
8. **Conduct informational sessions or trainings** with employees to educate them on the benefits of EAPs and how to utilize them. These sessions should also address breaking down stigma around EAPs and/or issues of mental health. Advertising the full breadth of services available (such as financial assistance and dependent care) is one potential way to encourage employees to learn more about and utilize EAPs. If possible, conduct sessions during work hours, or hold a "Lunch & Learn" session. If necessary, incentivize attendance by providing food or other rewards. (If providing food, take the opportunity to provide healthy options for your employees to promote healthy eating as well). If you are utilizing an outside company for your EAP, individuals from the organization can come in to conduct these sessions.

9. **Provide manager training** on how to recognize when to involve an employee with the EAP. Managers may be stressed from feeling that they are responsible for dealing directly with employee issues that are affecting their work; however, simply recognizing when there is a problem and referring the employee to the EAP should take that burden from managerial staff.
10. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:

Employee assistance programs can effectively reduce the adverse effects of workplace stress and other mental health issues, but research shows that most EAP-based mental health services are underutilized by employees. This is primarily due to poor communication about the services available to employees and their families and the stigmatization of EAP use and mental health issues in general. Companies can combat this by offering targeted communications to employees and their families with messages normalizing use of EAPs. For example:

- Prior to implementation, send out notices via email, company newsletters, organization-wide meetings, etc. notifying employees and their families of:
    o The implementation of the EAP
    o The EAP's offerings and how they can benefit employees
    o Date/time/location of informational session
- Provide informational sessions to educate employees on the benefits of EAPs and how to utilize them. To reach a wider audience, offer the informational sessions during paid time if you are able, or hold "Lunch & Learn" sessions. Take advantage of company-wide meeting time to promote services as well.
- Engage in ongoing communication efforts to normalize the use of the EAP, such as emphasizing the diversity of reasons employees may find the EAP useful. This should include information about how EAPs can be helpful in addressing financial difficulties, which are commonly major stressors for many employees. Your EAP provider can give you more specific information on the scope of benefits available to your employees.

Examples:

An Employer's Guide to Employee Assistance Programs: Recommendations for Strategically Defining, Integrating, and Measuring Employee Assistance Programs (See Appendix 2 for four case studies)
https://www.easna.org/documents/PS2-NBGRecommendationsforDefiningandMeasuringEAPs.pdf

PENN Behavioral Health Corporate Services - EAP Implementation Booklet (for companies transitioning EAP services)
http://www.pennbehavioralhealth.com/documents/EAP_Implementation_Binder_Website.pdf

Potential evaluation measures:
- Number of employees utilizing EAP
- Number of employees utilizing EAP before/after communication/education efforts (if EAP was already in place)
- Employee perceived stress level
- Rate of absenteeism
- Employee productivity
- Retention rate
- Turnover rate
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Utilize "An Employer's Guide to Employee Assistance Programs: Recommendations for Strategically Defining, Integrating, and Measuring Employee Assistance Programs" to develop a set of evaluation standards relevant to your organization.
https://www.easna.org/documents/PS2-NBGRecommendationsforDefiningandMeasuringEAPs.pdf

Utilize the "How Should We Evaluate Our EAP?" section under Chapter 3 of the US Office of Personnel's "Work-Life Reference Materials: Administering Employee Assistance Programs" to develop evaluation guidelines suited to your organization.
http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/worklife/reference-materials/employee-health-services-handbook/#url=Chapter-3

Considerations for different industries and sectors:
Consider the different types of EAPs listed previously. Depending on the size of your company, utilizing outside services may not be feasible unless your company decides to enter into a consortium with other organizations to decrease cost of implementing the EAP.

Additional resources:
EASNA – the Employee Assistance Trade Association
http://www.easna.org/

EASNA – Implementation of EAPs
http://www.easna.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/EASNA-Research-Notes-Vol-1-No-9-Implementation-APR2010-102209.pdf

California State University Sacramento – EAP Report

http://www.csus.edu/indiv/h/heflintl/group/section-1/group-9/EAP%20-%20REPORT.doc

PROGRAMS

Programs that encourage stress management can generate enthusiasm, participation, and visibility – such as in the organization of company-wide social events. Engaging in a stress management program can also teach individuals skills for better managing their stress, such as how to do an activity (e.g., yoga or t'ai chi) or how to set and meet individual goals (e.g., one's participation in a work-sponsored stress management challenge). Such programs are ideally part of a multi-strategy approach or plan to increase stress management at the worksite, as programs often have limitations as well. Programs such as a challenge or group activity like yoga require active participation on the part of the individual, and only those who participate are impacted. Programs also generally require ongoing resources, whether it is staff time and/or financial resources, and often cannot continue without ongoing investment. Stress management programs should complement other strategies for maximum impact, such as in offering a life skills seminar-style program in combination with a flextime policy that provides employees time during the workday to participate.

Organize social events and social supports

Evidence:
CDC ScoreCard #63 (1pt)

Mass in Motion Worksite Wellness Toolkit – p.159 – Recommended
http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/mass-in-motion/worksite-wellness-toolkit.pdf

Purpose:
Provide employees with opportunities for social interaction through company-sponsored/organized social events.

One of the simplest methods of stress management is positive social interaction. By providing employees with the opportunity to interact with others and participate in work teams, employers can support coworkers and foster camaraderie. Consider offering the following social supports:

- Sponsor social events (e.g., company picnic)
- Allow employees who share a common interest or purpose to participate in work teams
- Organize peer support groups (e.g., elder caregivers)

Costs and materials:

Depending on the types of social events your organization sponsors, your company may implement this intervention at little to no cost or spend a considerable amount of money. Events such as a "Field Day" at a local park where employees contribute food potluck-style could be of minimal cost to your organization, whereas spending money on food, beverages and a venue for a social event may be considerably more expensive.

Implementation Steps:
Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a team** to form a Social Committee. The team should represent employees at all levels of the organization.
2. **Survey all employees** for interest in different types of social activities (e.g. holiday or seasonal parties, sports teams, company outings, team building events, etc.) and social supports such as support groups
3. **Determine budget** for social events/social supports and brainstorm ideas for inexpensive activities if necessary.
4. **Hold regular Social Committee meetings** to plan upcoming events. If feasible and useful, determine roles within the committee (ex. treasurer, secretary, etc.).
5. **Promote events.** See "Recommended communication activities" below.
6. **Continue to survey employees** to engage their interest and improve upon quality of social events and social support activities. Use their input to inform future events.
7. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:
- Promote events through several means of communication, including email, newsletters, and departmental and company-wide meetings.
- Post pictures from social events on company social media, emails, or newsletters to build further interest in events.

Potential evaluation measures:
- Attendance at company-sponsored social events
- Employee perceived stress levels
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Considerations for different industries and sectors:
Take into consideration that it may be more difficult to provide opportunities for employees who do not work standard business shifts or telecommute to engage in social events as well.

Offer a variety of different social activities at different times and/or consider offering alternate activities, such as an on-site catered breakfast for employees with short breaks between shifts.

Life skills + work/life balance seminars

Evidence:
CDC ScoreCard #65 (3pts)

Purpose:
Provide employees with opportunities to develop life skills and improve their work/life balance through company-sponsored seminars.

By giving employees the knowledge and tools they need to act on stressors outside of the workplace that may negatively impact how they function as an employee, they are 1) better able to manage their stress, and 2) have a greater sense of control (referring to the Demand/Control Model), thereby helping to reduce their stress even further. General topics may include (but are not limited to): health promotion, relationship/communication skills, and career advancement.

It is important to note that while this intervention can be implemented as part of an EAP, it can also be implemented independently of an EAP.

Costs and materials:
Cost of this intervention can vary, depending on the seminar materials utilized. Your company may choose to invite an outside company in to conduct the seminars, which will be more costly than using an in-house trainer and free online materials.

Implementation Steps:
Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a champion or team** of employees to spearhead assessment efforts and organization of seminars.
2. **Survey employees** to determine their interest in participating, as well as interest in specific seminar topics. Use this data to tailor seminar content to your employees. Some examples of "life skills" topics may include financial management, communication skills, emotional management, etc.
3. **Consider who you will utilize to conduct seminars -** an outside source or an in-house employee.

4. **Schedule seminars** on a regular basis. Ideally, seminars would be given in a "Lunch & Learn" setting. Provide food to encourage participation.
5. **Encourage participation by providing incentives** – for example, when an employee has attended 3 or more seminars in a certain period of time, they are eligible to win a prize. To keep the prize stress management-related, offer a gift certificate for a massage, or a yoga class pass.
6. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:
- Promote date/time/location of each seminar through multiple routes (ex. emails, company newsletters, "payroll stuffers", signage around the worksite, etc.). Provide a quarterly/biannual schedule of what seminars will be held during that period.
- Take advantage of "Stress Management Month" implementation, during which seminars will be held more frequently. Provide incentives for attending multiple seminars (e.g., after attending 3 seminars, enter your name in a raffle to win a prize).

Examples:
Outlook EAP Healthy Lifestyles Seminars
http://outlookeap.com/seminars/

Potential evaluation measures:
- Participation in programs offered
- Employee perceived stress level
- Employee perceived level of control
- Employee satisfaction/morale
- Employee opinion of seminars (valuable v. not valuable)
- Employee perceived ability to successfully act upon skills learned at seminars

Considerations for different industries and sectors:
Provide webinars or recordings for employees whose schedules may not permit them to attend these seminars during normal business hours.

Additional resources:

LifeSkills Toolbox
http://lifeskillstoolbox.ca/corporate/seminars/

Relaxation methods training

Evidence:

CDC ScoreCard #62 (1pt)

Mass in Motion Worksite Wellness Toolkit – p.160 – Recommended
http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/mass-in-motion/worksite-wellness-toolkit.pdf

Purpose:

To provide employees with the skills and tools they need to engage in a variety of relaxation methods in order to reduce stress.

Relaxation methods have been shown to reduce stress and improve a number of different health outcomes including heart disease and high blood pressure.

Relaxation methods include a wide range of activities, such as breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery relaxation, relaxation to music, yoga, t'ai chi, body scan meditation, mindfulness meditation, and others.

Costs and materials:

Depending on what relaxation methods your organization chooses to implement, you may be able to conduct this intervention at little to no cost. Many free online resources are available with easy to understand instructions on how to participate in such relaxation methods. Should you choose to implement methods such as yoga or t'ai chi classes, you may incur costs for instructors and space to hold classes in. However, you may offset these costs by charging employees a discounted rate for classes.

Implementation Steps:

Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a champion or team** of employees who are invested in and enthusiastic about implementing relaxation methods training as a means of stress management. Members of the team should represent all levels of the organization.
2. **Survey employees** for their interest in different relaxation methods. If employees show interest in one particular method over others, it is important to utilize their opinions in order to garner more excitement about the program and ultimately encourage participation.
3. **Consider whether partnership with community organizations** (such as local yoga and/or t'ai chi instructors, etc.) would be useful or affordable for your worksite.
4. **Determine which relaxation methods** you will implement, keeping employee input in mind.

5. If necessary, **provide or create the space required to practice the methods.** There may not be a need for extra space based on the methods you choose – many relaxation methods can be practiced without need for any extra space at all (e.g. breathing exercises). However, if you choose to implement methods such as a yoga or t'ai chi classes, you will need to find or create ample space in which to hold these classes. You may also choose to partner with a nearby yoga or t'ai chi studio to offer employees discounted rates without having to find an appropriate space at the worksite to hold these classes.
6. **Promote use of the chosen methods** through company-wide emails, notices in company newsletters, and at company-wide meetings.
7. **Hold informational sessions** to learn about and practice the methods your worksite has chosen.
8. **Offer incentives for regular participation** in various methods. For example, give employees a punch card. Every time they participate in a class or informational session, they receive a punch. When an employee has attained a certain number of punches, they may win a prize or become eligible to enter a raffle.
9. **Encourage further use of different relaxation methods** by creating groups that regularly participate in these methods. This form of social support encourages employees to use these methods on a more regular basis.
10. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:
- Ensure that not only informational sessions and classes are promoted, but also provide educational materials on how to engage in various methods. Employees who may not be at the workplace during normal hours will benefit from still receiving information on how to practice these techniques.

Examples:
University of Texas at Austin: Relaxation Training
http://cmhc.utexas.edu/clearinghouse/files/DP031.pdf

Potential evaluation measures:
- Participation in informational sessions
- Participation in classes offered (e.g. yoga & t'ai chi)
- Number of informational materials distributed
- Employee perceived stress level
- Employee productivity level
- Utilization of health care services
- Employee morale

Considerations for different industries and sectors:

Keep in mind that employees who participate in physical labor, work night shifts, or telecommute may not be able to participate in informational sessions or classes held at the workplace. Make sure to provide educational materials in other venues such as through emails, company newsletters, brochures, and other print/electronic materials.

Additional resources:

Cleveland Clinic – Relaxation and Other Alternative Approaches for Managing Headaches
http://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases_conditions/hic_Overview_of_Headaches_in_Adults/hic_Relaxation_and_Other_Alternative_Approaches_for_Managing_Headaches

Relaxation Techniques for Stress Relief
http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm

Mayo Clinic – Stress Relief: Relaxation Techniques
http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/stress-management/in-depth/relaxation-technique/art-20045368

National Institutes for Health – Relaxation Techniques for Health
https://nccih.nih.gov/health/stress/relaxation.htm#hed3

Massage therapy program

Evidence:

Mass in Motion Worksite Wellness Toolkit – p.160 – Recommended
http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/mass-in-motion/worksite-wellness-toolkit.pdf

Department of Labor – Workplace Wellness Study Summary – Recommended
http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/pdf/workplacewellnessstudysummary.pdf

Purpose:

To provide massage therapy as a stress management technique for employees.

Massage therapy can serve as an effective means of reducing stress as well as improving musculoskeletal health (and other stress-related conditions). Given the availability of massage therapists who are able to provide on-site seated chair massage therapy, this intervention is fairly simple to implement. It can sometimes even be covered by employees' health insurance.

Costs and materials:

Worksite massage therapy is typically conducted in the form of seated chair massage, where massage therapists bring a portable massage chair to your place of work. While this not may require considerable extra space, your company will be charged the price of the massages. One way to offset this is to cover part of the cost and offer massages at a discounted rate to employees. Some health insurance policies may even cover massage therapy. It is important to determine whether your company's health insurance makes this a viable option for your employees.

Implementation Steps:
Use the Healthy Arizona Worksites Program's Worksite Health Improvement Plan to outline tasks and timeframe, who is responsible, and communication and evaluation activities.

1. **Identify a champion or team** of employees to spearhead efforts to bring massage therapy to your workplace. The team should represent employees from all levels of the company to ensure input from all types of workers is heard.
2. **Survey employees** to determine interest in a massage therapy program.
3. **Determine whether you will bring massage therapists into the worksite or reimburse employees for utilization of an offsite massage therapist.** To be inclusive of workers with different schedules, it may be most effective to include a mix of both. Employees who are at the workplace during standard business hours can utilize onsite massage therapy, and employees who do not work during standard business hours or work offsite can be offered reimbursement for offsite massage therapy or subsidized pricing.
4. **Promote massage services offered** through emails, newsletters, and departmental/company-wide meetings. Be sure to include times, dates, and prices for when massage will be available.
5. If participating in a "Stress Management Month," **promote massage therapy** as one of the available activities.
6. **Evaluate success** in how the intervention was implemented, participation in the intervention, and whether the intervention helped to meet your healthy worksite objectives.

Recommended communication activities:
- Send out a variety of notices regarding implementation of the program, including emails, letters (see p. 52 for example http://www.tuftshealthplan.com/employers/health/pdfs/worksite_wellness_program_development_guide.pdf), and announcements in company newsletters and at company-wide meetings.
- Utilize "Stress Management Month" to promote massage therapy services as an effective and accessible stress management method.

Examples:
San Mateo County Worksite Massage Therapy Program
http://hr.smcgov.org/worksite-massage-therapy-programcalendar

Potential evaluation measures:

- Number of employees utilizing massage therapy services
- Frequency at which employees utilize massage therapy services
- Perceived level of employee stress
- Number of reported injuries
- Employee satisfaction/morale

Considerations for different industries and sectors:

Employees who engage in physical labor and sedentary deskwork may benefit equally from massage therapy. It is important to ensure that all types of workers have the opportunity to participate in massage therapy programming. Consider different ways of including employees who participate in night shift work and telecommuting – for example, providing reimbursement for offsite massage therapy.

Additional resources:

Example Worksite Massage Therapy Registration Form (San Mateo County)
https://hr.smcgov.org/sites/hr.smcgov.org/files/massage_reg.pdf

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