

# Worksite Wellness Wednesday Series



## INCLUSIVE WORKSITE WELLNESS



*Marketing Kit*

The culture of a worksite can make or break participation in employee wellness programs. Consider how and if you are creating a culture of inclusion which welcomes all employees to improve their health. Use this kit to get you started with inclusive messaging and marketing! This “Inclusive Wellness Wednesday Series” provides 15 sample messages that can be used to share disability inclusive wellness strategies. Use these messages and associated marketing materials as part of a worksite wellness program. Each message includes introductory text that can be shared through email, on a webpage, social media or as an employee mailbox stuffer. You will also find shareable graphics and office activation ideas.

## ***Nutrition Messages:***

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### #1- Try It, You Might Like It!

Did you know? It takes 10 times for your taste buds to decide whether or not they really like a food! So don't stop trying new healthy options. It's good for your body, mind and soul. This Wellness Wednesday, I plan to try:

- A. One new vegetable that I haven't tasted before
- B. Cooking a vegetable a different way, such as sautéing, grilling, or steaming
- C. Baking my chicken instead of frying it
- D. Adding fruit to my water for flavor

Pick your choice and share with a co-worker for accountability!

**Office activation idea:** Provide tastings of healthy foods for employees in your lobby, staff kitchen or other communal space! Encourage your Wellness Committee to lead the preparation and marketing of the tasting. You can also reach out to a local farmer's market, culinary school, or grocery store to lead a tasting and demo for your employees.

### #2- Romaine Calm and Eat Your Fruits & Veggies (Kale Yeah!)

Preparing and cutting up fruits and vegetables soon after we purchase them increases our chances of actually eating them! What fruit or vegetable will you bring to work as a snack? Bonus: bring enough to share! Check out this [seasonal produce guide](#) to see a full list of what fruits and vegetables are in season and watch this [video](#) to get ideas for independent cooking and prep using adapted kitchen tools!

- Easy to prepare fruits and vegetables= apples, carrots, oranges, bananas, strawberries, cherry tomatoes
- Most affordable fruits and vegetables= apples, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, cucumbers, zucchini, pineapple
- Fruits and veggies in season=
  - Winter: apples, avocados, grapefruit, kiwi, pears, pineapple, pumpkin
  - Spring: apricots, broccoli, collard greens, mushrooms, rhubarb, strawberries
  - Summer: bananas, bell peppers, cucumbers, eggplant, mango, watermelon
  - Fall: Brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, green beans, sweet potatoes

**Office activation ideas:** Offer fresh fruits and vegetables in your break room for a day. Have employees complete a Bingo Board for the fruits and vegetables they ate in a week. Partner with a local farmer's market, farm co-op or community supported agriculture (CSA) program to provide fresh, affordable options for employees to get produce from work.

### # 3 – Fiber and Flow!

Fiber + Water = A Healthy and Happy Gut! There are many benefits to consuming fiber including healthy digestion, weight management and regulated blood sugar. Try out these swaps to increase your fiber intake:

- Look for breads with at least 3 grams of fiber or more per slice.
- Eat the edible skins on fruits and vegetables like apples, pears, cucumbers and tomatoes.
- Use whole grain pasta noodles instead of white pasta.
- Choose brown rice over white rice.
- Choose cereal with at least 5 grams of fiber or more per serving. Sugar should not be the first two ingredients!

What to eat?

The best sources of insoluble fiber are wheat bran, whole-grain products, and vegetables. The best sources of soluble fiber are oats, beans, dried peas, and legumes. Fruits, vegetables, and barley are sources of both insoluble and soluble fiber.

**Office activation idea:** The more we remain sedentary like at our office desks, the more likely we are to have irregular digestion. Host a fiber and flow day where you have healthy foods that are fiber rich available for staff to try, encourage departments or teams to walk and move together before, after or during a meeting, and have a water challenge for employees to drink water throughout the day.

### #4 – Are you Mindful or Mindless?

Do you ever find yourself munching on a snack in front of your computer and then next thing you know, you have eaten the entire bag? Is your “mind FULL” or are you being “mindful” and in the present? Practicing mindful eating is a great way to take charge of your health and maintain a healthy eating regimen. Check out this [article and video](#) to learn more. Instead of eating at your desk this week, take time and eat in the cafeteria, outdoors or grab a co-worker and enjoy your meal together. Eating without distractions is the best way to get started with mindful eating!

Mindful Eating Tips:

- Slow down
- Think about where the food comes from
- Create a healthy eating environment
- Consider your feelings when you eat
- Eliminate distractions
- Use a food diary

- Measure your food
- Pay attention to hunger cues

**Office activation idea:** Pick a day and have an employee healthy pot-luck lunch or go out to a healthy restaurant together. This will encourage employees to have lunch away from their desks and allow for socialization with your team!

## #5 – Hey, Sugar!

Are you aware of how much added sugar you are consuming? There are 120 teaspoons in one pound of sugar. The average American consumes approximately 160 pounds of refined sugars each year. That's over 19,000 teaspoons of sugar! Consistently consuming excess sugar can lead to tooth decay and cavities, obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and many other detrimental health conditions. The obvious sugar traps are soda, candy, baked goods and more, but did you know that sugar is also found in condiments, bagels, salad dressings and yogurt? Watch out for these sugar shocks and read your food labels carefully! Learn more about sugar and become aware with this [article and video](#). To satisfy your sweet tooth, aim for natural sugar like what is found in fruits – aka nature's candy!

Fruits with low and natural sugar amounts: strawberries, lemons, limes, raspberries, avocados, kiwi, grapefruit, blackberries, blueberries, watermelon, and cantaloupe.

**Office activation idea:** Set up a sugar cube display to educate employees and raise awareness on how much sugar is found in different types of foods. You can do this with sugary beverages, packaged granola bars and cereals, or fruit. You can even provide samples of fresh fruit for your co-workers to taste test!

## #6 – Water: The Essential Nutrient

Water is essential for every cell, tissue and organ in our body to work properly. To put this in perspective, you could survive around six weeks without food but not make it past a week without water. This is because water helps to regulate our body temperature, transport nutrients and oxygen throughout the body, carry waste products away from cells, maintain blood volume, and lubricate joints and body tissues. Water is an ideal source of hydration because it is usually free, easy to carry and contains no calories. Learn more about water and its benefits in this [article](#).

Tips to get more water in:

- Carry a reusable water bottle with you throughout the day.
- Improve the taste of water by adding fruit to infuse or no-calorie flavorings (Mio, Crystal Light, etc.).
- Order water when eating out in place of sugary or alcoholic beverages to save money and improve your health.
- Snack on healthy foods that are water-rich, such as watermelon, strawberries, cantaloupe, cucumbers, tomatoes, and peaches.

**Office activation idea:** Start a Water Wednesday series where different teams or departments

throughout your worksite volunteer to make a few jugs of infused fruit water for employees to try! Have each department also include the recipe they used and email it out or have printed with the water so employees can make for themselves. Infused water recipe ideas can be found with a simple Google search or using apps like Pinterest. Get started with these [videos and recipes](#).

## ***Physical Activity Messages:***

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### #7 – Get Moving!

Don't have time to exercise before or after work? Take short breaks throughout the day to move and add up minutes to get to your goal. The latest edition of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans states that any movement is good for you, so focus on improving your health by moving anytime, anywhere and by any means that gets you active. The standard goals are 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity which is anything that gets your heart beating faster and 2 days a week of muscle-strengthening activities. These goals apply to ALL adults including those with a disability or chronic health condition. Grab a co-worker and get moving during a break or over your lunch! Check out this [article](#) on finding your own path to physical activity.

**Office activation idea:** The culture of your workplace can go a long way in fostering whether employees get moving or not. If the idea of regular short physical activity breaks is supported by your senior leadership and included in employee policy, then employees will feel more comfortable doing it. Encourage your Wellness Committee to discuss this with senior leadership and human resources as necessary. Create maps of accessible routes throughout your place of employment or surrounding outdoor environments that outline distance and average time of the walking route and any descriptions related to accessibility (curb cuts, terrain, width of pathway, indoor/outdoor, noise level, safety, steep grades, temporary or permanent obstructions, etc.). Distribute the maps to all employees and encourage everyone to get moving while at work!

### #8 – Moving Meetings

A moving meeting is a great way to fit in some physical activity while meeting work goals! If your team is small, you can often have your meeting while walking, but if it's a larger group you can include time for movement before or after the meeting or conduct your meeting business at various stopping points along the route. Research shows up that physical activity improves our health and healthier employees tend to be happier and more productive employees. Many worksites include long hours at our desk or in meeting chairs so change it up and add in some movement for new results! To make sure you are including everyone in your moving meetings, use this quick checklist:

- Communicate in advance that you will be having a moving meeting so that employees can bring proper shoes or assistive devices.
- Plan and set your path ahead of time ensuring that you start and finish at the same location.
- Check out your route for accessibility, and if possible grab a co-worker with a disability to join you.
- Move at the speed of the slowest person so that everyone can stay involved and engaged.
- Consider your noise level so that everyone can hear the speaker if you are conducting the

meeting while walking.

- Try to pick a route that is as straight as possible so that everyone can keep up, see and communicate with each other.

**Office activation idea:** Implement a worksite challenge for the team or department that can log the most moving meetings in a month. Have them give a brief report out at an all-staff meeting or via email to share successes and challenges with the entire worksite.

## #9 – Deskercise!

Desker-what? Deskercise refers to exercise that can be performed throughout your workday and even from your desk! For sedentary desk jobs it is so important that we move often throughout the day. Being sedentary for long periods of time reduces our body's ability to deposit fat, interrupts our healthy cholesterol functioning and increases our risk of cardiovascular disease. All of these are preventable so deskercise your way out of those health detriments! Deskercise is a series of 20 cardiovascular, strength and flexibility exercises. Check out this link for [deskercise demonstrations and a video](#). Also, check out this [8 Minute Inclusive Workout Video](#) that can be performed in limited space and with no equipment.

**Office activation idea:** Encourage a deskercise break every hour on the hour at your worksite for at least 1 minute. You can communicate this to staff via email, intercom, in person or other appropriate ways. Each employee can choose what type of deskercise they want to do. This can be a fun time of exercise and comradery with your employees all moving together for 1 minute! Download and print this [poster](#) to pass out to your employees to keep at their desks.

## #10 – The Stretch Effect

Another form of a break from desk mode that can be very beneficial to your health and productivity is stretching. Have you ever held a stretch for a few seconds, taken a deep breath, and instantly felt rejuvenated? This is known as the stretch effect. Aside from making sure that we break up sedentary time with short bursts of activity, it is also important to be mindful of our posture when in the same position for a period of time. Check out this [article](#) for different stretches that you can do throughout your day to encourage a healthy body and break up your sedentary time. Hold each stretch for about 10 seconds or however long feels good and do not stretch to a level of discomfort.

**Office activation idea:** Encourage employees to perform The Stretch Effect series twice during the day. Reminder ideas can include using a sticky note, setting an alarm on your phone or with your email service provider, or grabbing a buddy and encouraging each other to stay on track.

## ***Self-Care Messages:***

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### # 11 – Emotional Wellness

Emotional wellness looks at our ability to maintain a positive outlook while managing and expressing our feelings. This also includes living life enthusiastically, seeking independence

and coping with our stress. Do you recognize, accept, and express your feelings freely? Do you have an optimistic versus pessimistic outlook on life and recognize challenges as being healthy? Are you living independently to the best of your abilities? Do you practice stress management techniques and identify potential stressors in your life? Use this quick stress assessment to see where you are at with your emotional wellness:

Check all statements which apply to you:

- Do you schedule more activities than you can handle into a day's work?
- Do you worry chronically?
- Are you addicted to excitement, stimulation?
- Do you tend to be overly concerned about what people think?
- Are you a multi-tasker?
- Are you an over-achiever or perfectionist?
- Do you neglect to practice self-nurturing activities?

Affirmative responses to any of the above statements indicate a need for improved awareness and management of your current stress levels.

**Office activation idea:** AmeriHealth has a free [Stress Awareness Employer Toolkit](#) that can be used to start a stress management program in your worksite. Consider small staff meetings or focus groups where employees from different departments can come together talk about their emotional wellness while at work and things in the work environment that can help improve it. When senior leadership recognizes the importance of employee's emotional wellness, you are likely to have a more healthy, happy and productive workforce.

## # 12 – An Attitude of Gratitude

Gratitude is about feeling and expressing appreciation. Having an attitude of gratitude can help you change perspective and feel connected to your co-workers. It can also help you not “sweat the small stuff” and stay tuned into the bigger picture of the work that you are doing. It is important to choose a career that is gratifying to us and mirrors our personal values and beliefs. Tapping into what we are grateful for helps us feel content, promotes better physical health, enhances sleep, strengthens our relationships with others, and helps us generally be more compassionate. Explore the reasons that you are grateful by making a gratitude list of 3-5 things. Another way to express gratitude with co-workers is by writing short gratitude letters to express appreciation for ways someone has helped you or been there for you.

**Office activation idea:** Have a gratitude wall where employees can use post-it notes to write down and share the things they are grateful for. Consider the accessibility of the wall or space and make sure that all employees can get to it and participate in the activity.

## # 13 – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Adds Value

We all benefit from diversity in the workplace because everyone's skill sets, perspectives, background, abilities and experiences are valuable and contribute to a healthy, thriving environment. By building a culture of inclusion in our workplaces, we can allow all of our co-

workers to feel comfortable in bringing their whole selves to work. If you don't fully understand diversity, equity and inclusion, take a self-assessment into your own personal unconscious bias. This can be a great tool to help us recognize and explore historical injustices and make sure that we are part of the inclusion movement going forward. Also, don't be afraid to ask for accommodations and supports that you need to perform at your best.

Here are some tools to explore:

- Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace <http://www.askearn.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/LGBT-Intersection-Document-4.11.19-A.pdf>
- Webinar training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) <http://www.adasoutheast.org/training/courses.php>
- Why health equity matters and what you can do <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/features/achieving-health-equity.html>
- Addressing unconscious bias micro learning series <https://www.grovo.com/addressing-unconscious-bias>

**Office activation idea:** Explore your company policies related to diversity and inclusion and prepare a short factsheet to distribute to employees. Offer professional development training to your employees related to diversity, equity and inclusion whether done in-person or online. Encourage your employees to have conversations about what diversity, equity and inclusion means to them and capture it on a wall board with post-it notes. Implementing a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion starts by listening to your employees and valuing their input, so start from a "grassroots" level and let that impact your leadership team and company-wide decision making.

## #14 – Mental Health

Mental health consists of our emotional, psychological and social well-being affecting how we think, feel and act. Another part of mental health looks at how we cope with stress, form relationships with others and make choices. Checking in with our mental health is very important and knowing that help is available and recovery is possible. In connection to our work, having positive mental health allows you to realize your full potential, manage stress, work productively and make meaningful contributions to your work and community. Follow this [link](#) to learn more about mental health.

Tips to maintain a positive mental health:

- Get professional help if you need it
- Connect with others regularly
- Stay positive
- Get physically active
- Get enough sleep
- Work on your stress management and coping skills

**Office activation ideas:** Make sure your employees are knowledgeable about how your company supports mental health and services that are available. For example, does your HR department

contract with an Employee Resource Service provider which would offer free counseling and screening related to mental health? Encourage your Wellness Committee to gather all available resources related to mental health that your company provides and develop a flyer that can be distributed to all employees. Another way to increase awareness about mental health is to participate in [Mental Health Awareness Month](#) in May.

## #15 – Day of Service

Taking time to give back to your community can help with your physical and mental health. Stepping out of our daily flow can help bring perspective to our work and life. Volunteering helps connect us to others, is good for our mind and body, and brings fun and fulfillment to your life. Find a charity or cause in your community that you feel strongly about and check out their volunteer opportunities. Volunteer together with co-workers for a fun team-building activity! Remember to choose accessible volunteer opportunities so that everyone can enjoy and benefit. Check out this [article](#) on including volunteers with a disability.

Tips for meaningful volunteerism:

- Choose skills-based volunteering
- Try out in-office volunteer opportunities
- Make it social with a group and for team-building

**Office activation ideas:** There are many benefits to incorporate corporate volunteerism in your worksite wellness program. Some of these benefits include employee retention, promoting your brand image, encouraging team building, instilling company values and many more. Outside volunteer opportunities like a Day of Service or Action and simply going to the place that you are volunteering for are great, but you can also make volunteer opportunities easier for employees by hosting in-office volunteer days. Sessions can be run throughout the day or over the lunch hour to maximize employee turnout. Examples include putting together kits, making items, cleanup days within a walking distance from the office, etc. Consider implementing a corporate volunteerism strategy if you do not already have one.

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