

## MANITOBA ADDICTIONS AWARENESS WEEK

<b>TOPIC:</b>	Wellness in the Workplace
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	Adults

### Wellness in the Workplace

*"When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied." Herophilus*

#### Why Workplace Wellness?

Organizations today are recognizing the importance of employee well being as a primary factor in productivity as well as in time loss due to illness and accidents. In 2006, the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse reported that the annual cost of substance abuse in Canada (data collected in 2002) was \$39.8 billion dollars which represents a cost of \$1,267 to every Canadian.

Surveys indicate that the greatest source of stress among employees is due to overly demanding job expectations and attempts to balance those demands with personal care. Other stressors identified in the 2004 "Voices of Canadians: Seeking Work-Life Balance" include:

- Heavy workloads
- Work cultures that do not support balance
- Work-life policies
- Perception that one has to choose between career and balance
- Too much change
- Work-related travel
- Temporary and part-time work

Organizational wellness programs are now being viewed as an important strategy in addressing these issues. Does your organization promote wellness in the workplace?

## **What is Wellness?**

Wellness is not simply the absence of illness or disease, but a lifestyle and a work-style promoting a proactive, healthy approach to living. Workplace wellness goes even beyond that scope, encompassing such simple things as:

- the individual's response to the physical space and environment
- the quality of interactions among peers and coworkers

## **Developing a Wellness Strategy?**

Does your organization have a wellness strategy? Developing effective wellness programs requires commitment, purpose, achievable sustainable objectives and dynamic vibrant leadership at all levels within an organization. A wellness strategy not only addresses personal issues like exercise, eating habits and problems with substance abuse, it also promotes balance in individuals' professional and personal lives by providing healthy options.

## **Need Some Help With Your Wellness Strategy?**

Contact Janice Kostash, Workplace Services Consultant AFM @ 944-7063 or email @ [jkostash@afm.mb.ca](mailto:jkostash@afm.mb.ca).

## **How Can You Get An Employee Assistance (EAP) Program?**

One of the key "selling" points in the development of a company EAP is a sense of partnership between management, unions and employees. Other benefits include:

- improved morale
- reduction in absenteeism
- reduced employee stress
- reduced employee grievances

Setting up an EAP may be as simple as contacting your Human Resources Director or local Union Representative.

## **If You Have An EAP Program - What Do You Know About It?**

The employee assistance field has come a long way since it's origin in occupational alcoholism programs. Traditionally viewed as a "crisis oriented" resource, today's EAP is so much more. EAP's now provide a wide range of services that may include:

- ❖ individual as well as family counselling on a variety of issues,
- ❖ seminars on career change and retirement,
- ❖ health awareness sessions on issues such as blood pressure, nutrition, exercise, specific disorders such as alcohol, drugs and gambling, etc.

EAP's have recognized the benefit of social interaction within as well as outside the workplace and have been active in organizing family and social events. Examples of such internal and external events/activities can be found on the "Workplace Activities" page of the maaw website.

### **Workplace Wellness Information – Suggested Web sites:**

Workplace Safety and Health, Manitoba Labour and Immigration: this web site features the “Safe Work” Initiative and other occupational health and safety information:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety/links.html>.

Canadian School of Public Service: includes A FINE Balance: A Manager’s Guide to Workplace Well-being covering such topics as: Ergonomics, Ten Simple Things – Health Improvement Tips, Balancing Work and Personal Life, Time & Workload Management, etc.

[http://www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/Research/publications/pdfs/workplace\\_e.pdf](http://www.myschool-monecole.gc.ca/Research/publications/pdfs/workplace_e.pdf)

Canadian School of Public Service Web site: [www.ccmd-ccq.gc.ca](http://www.ccmd-ccq.gc.ca).

RESOURCES USED: Voices Of Canadians: Seeking Work-Life Balance, Duxbury, Higgins, Coghill, 2004.