



## UCS Values Worksite Wellness

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Worksite Wellness is an important component of our employee benefit package. Our staff spend much of their day at the worksite and it is important that we promote healthy lifestyle choices to support them. Our Worksite Wellness Program is a five-time recipient of the Excellence in Worksite Wellness Award from the Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. We have a robust Wellness Committee that meets monthly to plan and implement initiatives. Following are some of the core strategies of our program.

**Healthy Eating:** We know that healthy eating improves overall wellness. We promote healthy food choices by providing healthy food options at all agency functions, making the healthy choice the easy choice. We hold healthy cooking workshops through the year for our staff and their family members. Our staff have an employee garden that produces a beautiful harvest and we offer container gardening workshops for those who may not have the space to have a garden at home.

**Tobacco Free Workplace:** The Vermont Department of Health identifies tobacco use as a leading cause of preventable death in the state. We are a tobacco-free organization with clear policies in place. We offer tobacco cessation support for our staff.

**Physical Activity:** Physical activity plays a critical role in our overall health. It reduces the risk of obesity, heart disease and diabetes. It also reduces stress and supports emotional health. We support our staff in getting regular physical activity by partnering with local fitness clubs and training programs and sponsoring physical activity challenges throughout the year. We also encourage our staff to hold "Meetings on the Move" where staff and their supervisor walk and talk while wearing buttons identifying that they are Meeting on the Move.

**Emotional Well Being:** Work related stress is an issue for many. When stress becomes excessive it can impact physical and emotional health. We encourage our staff to practice mindfulness and regular self-care. We have a "Mindfulness Minute" on our company intranet where staff can pause to re-center their thoughts and intentions. We provide coloring books and quiet places for staff to take pause. We offer restorative yoga sessions and held our first Self-Care Day for our staff and clients in February. This event was well-received and very much appreciated by all who participated. We also host Kindness Rocks Painting Potluck session for our staff and their family members and we have an Employee Assistance Program for our staff and their family members.

We have found success in social media. We have a private Facebook group called Accountabilibuddies for our staff and their family members to log their progress, share recipes and activities and to support each other.

We offer a free, on-site weekly weight-loss program and in coordination with our insurance carrier and our staff nurses, we provide health screenings and on-site flu shots for our staff.

The activities and initiatives that I mentioned are a sampling of the great offerings that we hold for our staff and at times their family members throughout the year. We appreciate our staff and the hard work that they do each and every day. Their health and wellness is a priority to the leadership of UCS. We look forward to continuing this meaningful work to support our staff in living a healthy life.