



**YOUR WELLNESS PROGRAM QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE**



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“Imagine a world where the vast majority of people wake up inspired to go to work, feel safe while they’re there and go home fulfilled by the work they have done.”

- **Simon Sinek**, British/American author, motivational speaker and marketing consultant



**WELCOME TO THE JG WELLNESS QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE. THIS GUIDE IS DESIGNED TO HELP YOU CREATE AND MAINTAIN A WELLNESS PROGRAM THAT WORKS FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION AND PROMOTES GREATER EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND HEALTH.**

There is no template for a perfect wellness program. Ultimately, success comes down to well-defined goals, commitment from the top down, and a willingness for all the stakeholders (employees, their families, management, board members, executive team, etc.) to promote a culture that embraces wellness. We hope this can be a helpful guide as you develop a culture of wellness within your organization.

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# Why Wellness?

Wellness programs address employee challenges such as health, motivation, productivity, and absenteeism. But for busy business owners, implementing a wellness program can seem time-consuming, expensive, and, ultimately, even a waste of time.

The reality is, launching an effective wellness program is a proactive business decision that can directly affect your bottom line. Here are some Canadian health statistics that might help you decide to begin your journey to wellness:



**THE CANADIAN ECONOMY  
LOSES OVER \$16.6 BILLION  
EVERY YEAR DUE TO  
ABSENTEEISM**

**OBESE CANADIAN EMPLOYEES  
HAVE 77% HIGHER DRUG COSTS  
AND SPEND 35% MORE ON  
HEALTH SERVICES**



**23%** OF WOMEN  
AGED 40-59 AND  
**9%** OF ALL CANADIANS ARE TAKING  
ANTIDEPRESSANTS



**MENTAL HEALTH AND  
ADDICTIONS ACCOUNT  
FOR TWO-THIRDS OF  
ALL DISABILITY CLAIMS  
IN CANADA**

“Intellectuals  
solve  
problems,  
geniuses  
prevent  
them.”

- **Albert Einstein**, Theoretical Physicist



**1 IN 4 CANADIANS  
EXPERIENCE  
CHRONIC STRESS**

**80%** OF TYPE 2 DIABETES CASES

**80%** OF HEART DISEASE CASES

**40%** OF CANCER CASES

**ARE LINKED TO BEHAVIOURS  
THAT CAN BE AVOIDED**

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# Wellness is a Business Decision

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

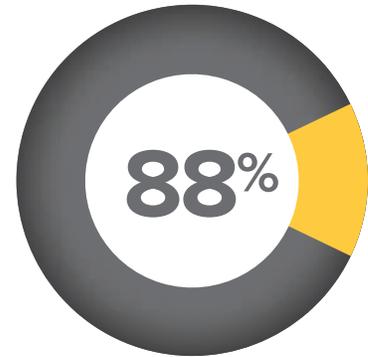
- World Health Organization



**HARVARD UNIVERSITY META-ANALYSIS RESEARCH SUGGESTED AN “ROI OF \$3.27 FOR EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED IN WELLNESS PROGRAMS WITH \$2.37 RELATED TO A DECREASE IN ABSENCE ALONE.”**

**“THE BIGGEST CAUSE OF CHRONIC ILLNESS IS STRESS, AND THE BIGGEST CAUSE OF STRESS IS WORK. WHEN 88% OF PEOPLE DO NOT FEEL THEY’RE PART OF AN ORGANIZATION THAT CARES ABOUT THEM, WE ARE MANUFACTURING THE HEALTHCARE CRISIS. AND THEN WE GO TO THE BY-PRODUCT, WHICH IS PILLS AND MEDICATIONS AND HOSPITAL VISITS.”**

- Bob Chapman, Chairman and CEO of Barry-Wehmler



**1 IN 4 CANADIANS CITE STRESS AS THE NUMBER ONE REASON THEY QUIT THEIR JOBS.**



**ONLY 16% OF CANADIAN WORKERS SAY THEY ARE ACTIVELY ENGAGED AT WORK.**

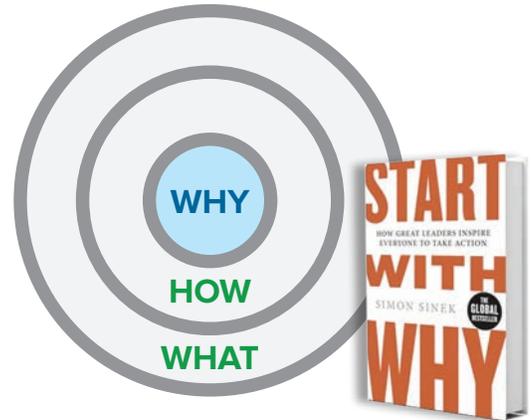
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By focusing on the holistic wellness of your people, your company has the opportunity to not only create a healthier, more-engaged workforce, but to help support a better life for your employees.

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# How to Start Your Wellness Program

Defining its purpose is a critical first step in the development of your wellness program. It's important to be clear as to **why** you, as a company, will be investing time and energy into wellness. It will help plot your course and make decisions related to its execution. When employees know why the organization is launching a wellness program, it helps gain their acceptance and buy-in, which is critical to the program's success.



## FIND YOUR TEAM

Start by clearly demonstrating the value your company's leadership places on wellness. Employees are leery of taking steps to improve their well-being, fearing they may appear unable to handle pressure. In particular, there is often a stigma attached to participating in programs that support mental, social or emotional health. When leadership participates in wellness initiatives, that stigma is erased.

Once your leadership team understands their role, we recommend you share your idea for a wellness program. Invite employees to become involved in guiding its development. Find those individuals who are most engaged! Get them excited about the program. It's crucial your employees be involved in determining its foundational elements, and participate in creating the activities that will support them in reaching their collective and personal goals.

## ESTABLISH A WELLNESS LEADER AND WELLNESS CHAMPION(S)

Your program will need someone to manage it - preferably not the owner, though that may be unavoidable. This person needs a connection with employees as well as with management to ensure the company's interests are taken into account while achieving wellness goals. In larger companies, this person will lead a team or committee whose role is to be the catalyst, ensuring the wellness culture remains top of mind. In smaller companies, you can choose a person or leave it to the employees if that is reasonable. The person or team will lead goal setting while paying attention to the interests of the company, ensuring the wellness program is sustainable for the long term.



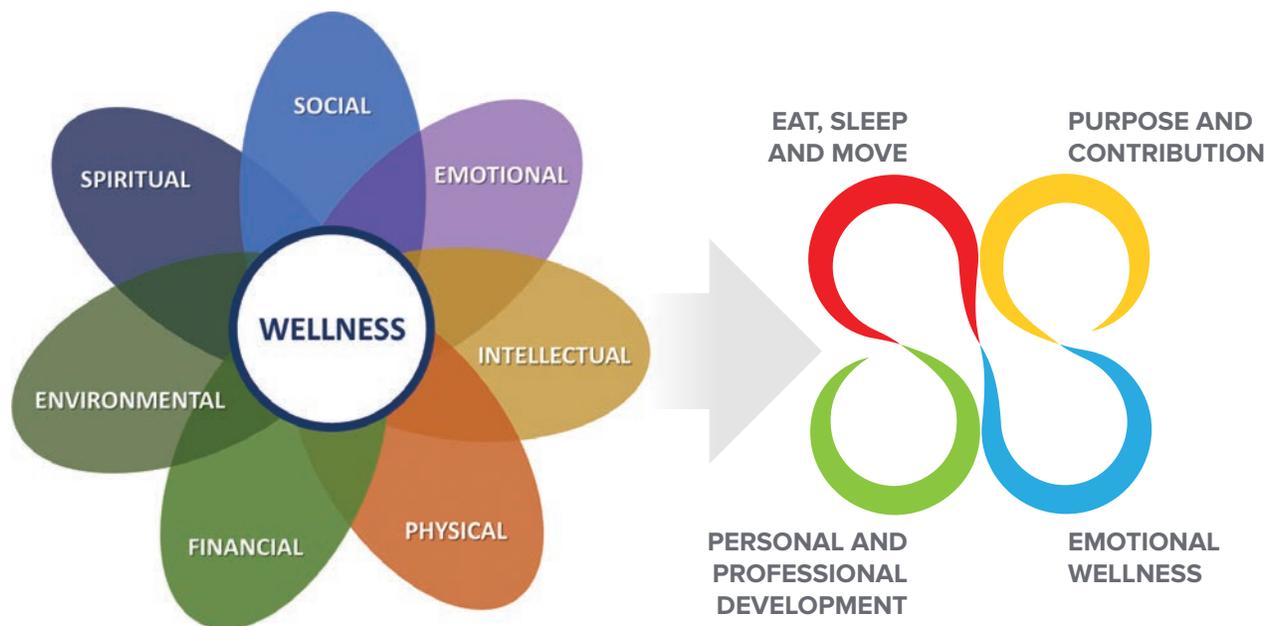
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## LISTEN

The first task of your wellness team/leader is to talk to as many people within the company as they can to find out what “wellness” means to the employees and what they would like to see the organization do to support it. Every company is different, so be sure to prioritize the needs and values of your people and incorporate them into your vision for the program. Larger organizations can put out a survey to the company; smaller companies can have a roundtable discussion or individual meetings. Also incorporate any concerns already known to management.

## FIND THE COMMON THEMES

After receiving feedback the wellness leaders can start grouping the responses into themes. Some companies form “pillars” of wellness to focus on. Below is an illustration of how we (Johnston Group) took the “wellness wheel” (a representation of the many elements to consider in holistic wellness) and encapsulated it into our own four areas of focus - our “pillars”.



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## ESTABLISH THE BASELINE

To know where to begin, it's helpful to establish a baseline. We suggest looking at both the health of your employees and the culture of wellness within your organization.

- Analyze available claims data (absenteeism, disability, etc). Also, ask your Human Resource Manager if there are recurring issues that could be tracked and addressed.
- Conduct a wellness survey with a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions. Based on the conversations you've had with your team and the answers from the wellness survey, you will get a feeling of the pressing needs of the organization.
- Determine what resources are currently at your disposal. For example, *my-benefits health*<sup>®</sup> offers a free health risk assessment and a plethora of health information. Your benefits plan might already include tools such as access to an Employee Assistance Program or a Health Care Spending Account.
- Evaluate what programs you already have in place (access to financial advisors, training, legal support, specific policies, etc.). Maybe you already support professional development, subsidize gym memberships, or provide tickets to events. How much of this is being used? How many employees take advantage of your existing programs? Don't discount what you're already doing - build on it.



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## LAUNCH, MEASURE AND ADJUST

### THINK BIG - START SMALL

Once you have organized all of the feedback from your team, it's time to put a plan into action. You can't do it all at once, so we suggest thinking big – what your program might look like in 1-5 years – but get started right away with something small. Success with smaller steps will help you build momentum to add more initiatives in time. It can be as easy as providing healthy snacks, initiating a step challenge, or even holding 10-minute meditation sessions.

The key is to just get going! As Reid Hoffman, founder of LinkedIn suggests, “You build the airplane while you're flying it.” Try things out and encourage feedback, make adjustments as you go, stick with what works, learn from what doesn't, analyze and adapt.

### DEMONSTRATE AND NURTURE SELF-LEADERSHIP

Self-leadership begins with taking ownership of your personal wellness and continues, usually independently, as lifestyle changes. Encourage employees to take the reins by giving them access to literature and experts and, when possible, accommodate them when they need to attend appointments or require sick leave as they deal with their challenges. A small investment in this area can have a significant, long-term impact on your employees.



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Wellness is more than health. Make sure your program also addresses mental well-being, lifelong learning and emotional strength. Celebrate all accomplishments, big or small and keep the momentum going.

#### **IMPLEMENT NEW NORMS REGULARLY**

Plan to add two or more “new normals” to the workplace every year. These should focus on elements of wellness but can be anything of a general benefit to employees. For instance, you can allow an afternoon off as an annual birthday gift, set up a library in your workplace, or start a public speaking club.

#### **ACTIVITIES**

These could be policies, supports, engagement opportunities – just about anything that adds to the well-being of employees. Here are a few ideas: Order activity tracking devices for every employee; offer time off and/or opportunities for employees to volunteer; implement a mid-morning “Recess” once per month with playground games.

#### **CHALLENGES**

Sometimes adding a little competition and a prize can invigorate people to put in a greater effort. Keep it fun and easy to participate. Here are some ideas to get you started: Healthy Bingo: Give everyone a bingo card made up of healthy tasks; Go the Distance: Track steps toward a distance goal; Act of kindness week: Encourage employees to perform acts of kindness, big or small, in the community and share the experiences with the team.

#### **NUDGES**

A “nudge” is a gentle style of choice architecture, encouraging specific behaviours in people without taking away their ability to choose a different option. Some examples of nudges include: providing fruits and vegetables for snacks in a highly visible area; sending emails with links to articles about healthy choices, habits, and activities; or offering to provide standing desks.

**For more ideas on activities, challenges and nudges,  
check out the *my-benefits wellness* toolkit.**

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## MEASURE

Measuring progress is vital on two fronts - in evaluating sustainability, and in determining whether the efforts are having a positive effect. Your program will never be perfect and the key to successfully creating a culture of wellness is to continually learn. Measurement can be quantitative (participation rates, number of steps taken, shifts in absenteeism, etc.), but they can also be qualitative (how people feel at work, “What type of activities are you more likely to participate in?”, “Is today a good day?” etc.).

## ADJUST

All feedback is good feedback – it will help you determine your next steps. Maybe you’ll need to communicate more, or make the challenge time shorter. Maybe nobody eats the bananas because your employees prefer grapes. Based on the measurements and feedback from the staff, make adjustments to future activities, challenges and nudges.

Your employees don’t live static, unchanging lives. Be open to adapting your wellness program to meet your employees’ new realities as they arise. A robust and successful program will evolve indefinitely!



“Behind all the statistics are human beings who can learn to change their habits...”

- Rose K Gantner, Ed. D., NCC

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## **BUILD A CULTURE OF WELLNESS**

Wellness is a concept that is greater than the sum of its parts. There are the environmental elements, like access to natural light, organizational structure, policies, safety measures, and resources available to employees. You can plan activities, provide fruit, and make desks more ergonomic.

Wellness is all these things and infinitely more, because true wellness will become enshrined in the “collective spirit” of the employees. For this to happen, your employees must have a positive perception of the organization and its approach to wellness. It also requires them to be dedicated to becoming healthier and happier.

Culture change doesn’t happen overnight. Leadership in the company must live the culture. Wellness champions must promote a positive climate and identify areas for improvement. And employees have to sincerely engage in self-leadership.



A culture of wellness, ideally, is not a program. It’s the mindset of the company from executives to interns.

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## References and Guidance

We don't profess to be experts in the field of wellness. This guide constitutes the highlights of many publications and interviews on the topic, combined with our own experience.

If you're interested in a deeper understanding of the concepts we've shared here, we highly recommend a number of books and other resources to help you develop your wellness program strategy.

### **Zero Trends: Health as a Serious Economic Strategy**

Dee W. Edington, PhD  
Health Management Research Center, 2009

### **Shared Values, Shared Results**

Dee W. Edington, PhD; Jennifer S. Pitts, PhD  
Edington Associates, 2015

### **Workplace Wellness that Works**

Laura Putnam  
John Wiley and Sons, 2015

### **Leaders Eat Last**

Simon Sinek

### **Harvard University Meta Data Analysis (ROI of Wellness)**

[www.bcidaho.com/\\_assets/Employer/2010-Harvard-Wellness-Program-Meta-Study-Health-Affairs.pdf](http://www.bcidaho.com/_assets/Employer/2010-Harvard-Wellness-Program-Meta-Study-Health-Affairs.pdf)

### **The Sanofi Canada Healthcare Survey 2017**

[www.sanofi.ca/l/ca/en/layout.jsp?scat=C3588838-0978-4F25-9A92-6F37FA912C05](http://www.sanofi.ca/l/ca/en/layout.jsp?scat=C3588838-0978-4F25-9A92-6F37FA912C05)

### **Government of Canada Health Concerns**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-concerns.html>

### **Government of Canada – Diseases and Conditions**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/diseases-conditions.html>

### **Government of Canada – downloadable materials**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/publications/diseases-conditions.html>

### **Start With Why – Simon Sinek**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/simon\\_sinek\\_how\\_great\\_leaders\\_inspire\\_action](https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action)

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