

“Let’s Work It Out” At Appalachian State University

Appalachian State University implemented a successful four-week worksite wellness incentive program for faculty, staff and their spouses or significant others called “Let’s Work It Out.” The program was offered by the University’s Health Promotion Department, which is funded through Academic Affairs and funds allocated for special events were used for implementing this program.

The program was designed to help individuals *Move More*. Each participant selected one of three fitness goals to focus on during the four-week program. Their choices included: to improve cardiovascular endurance, to lose weight and eat better, or to improve strength and flexibility. At the initial meeting, each participant completed a health history form, a personal contract, and defined three objectives that would help them reach their overall goal. Throughout the program, participants maintained activity logs including a food diary and exercise log. Every week the program coordinator, a health promotion intern at the Department, reviewed and offered feedback for each participant’s activity logs.

Each participant underwent pre- and post-fitness assessments to quantify their improvements. Weekly meetings were established to introduce educational materials and to maintain motivation throughout the four-week program.

At the end of the program, the group participated in a potluck luncheon. Participants brought their favorite recipe from a healthy-recipe booklet that was given to them during the program. Each participant received a certificate of completion as recognition and appreciation for their participation in the short program. This program was offered at the university through an intern project and received strong support from management.

Visit the Appalachian State University Web site at
www.healthpromotion.appstate.edu/index.html.

Key steps

- Getting participants started and maintaining motivation was an integral part of program initiation.
- Behavior monitoring with activity logs increased accountability for individual participants.
- Time and stress management were also contributing factors to the program success.

Next time

Recommendations for other worksites from Appalachian State University include:

- Offer more incentives.
- Work with individuals and groups.
- Offer four, two-week sessions so participants can take part in multiple goals.

