



Module 3.1 Transcript

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Welcome to the first module of the Planning Development Cycle Step. In this module you will learn how to determine program priorities for your worksite wellness initiative. This will help focus your efforts by determining which health topic, or priority, you will focus on first.

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You are making steady progress as you work through the steps of the Wellness Program Development Cycle. We are now at a point where much of the work you have done thus far will come together into your overall wellness initiative plan. Now that you have completed the Buy In and Assessment steps of the Wellness Program Development Cycle, let's bring this all together to create the plan for your wellness initiative.

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What is strategic planning? Strategic planning is an organization's process of defining its strategy, or direction, and making decisions on allocating its resources to pursue this strategy. A written strategic plan is the organizational road map for developing and implementing a worksite wellness initiative. Writing a strategic plan for the wellness initiative is a crucial stage of program planning, development, implementation and sustainability. The strategic plan prioritizes which health risk or wellness interest you will focus on first based upon data gathered during the assessment step. This plan becomes your roadmap for your wellness initiative.

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In this module you will learn how to determine program priorities for your worksite wellness initiative. By the end of this module, you will be able to: Articulate the elements of a worksite wellness strategic plan, Determine program priority based on data gathered from your Employee Interest survey or using population statistics, and determine which supporting policies and environmental supports you will work on to support your program priority.

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There is evidence to show that wellness initiatives with a plan actually produce better results. The Health Enhancement Research Organization found that employers that set formal employee health management targets experienced better results. This chart demonstrates three areas where there were improved results for organizations with a plan, versus organizations that didn't have a plan. These areas included health assessment participation, improved health risks and improved medical cost trend.

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Based upon the information available to you from the Interest Survey and from the CDC Worksite Health scorecard, it's now time to determine which health priority you are going to focus on first.

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Look at the data available to you for interests and risks. What are your top three wellness interests of your employees? What are your top three population health risks? Do these align? In an ideal world, the top three population health risks and your top three employee wellness interests would align. In other words, the top three health risks that your employees face would align with the top three areas that employees would most be interested in changing. However, the real world can be messy. Your risks and interests might not completely align, or might not align at all. So, it is important to find ways to prioritize what health issues your organization will focus on first.

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To help prioritize which health issues to focus on, you will want to look at several data points to help make an informed decision. The first consideration is what are your employees interested in? What are your top three employee wellness interests based on a survey of your workforce? Because it is likely you are introducing your worksite wellness initiative to your employees for the very first time, building engagement is important. While these health issues might not have the greatest risk to your employees, you want to show that you are listening to what your employees are interested in addressing. Employees will not only be more invested in your programs and policies if they are bought in to the issues you are addressing, but it also can help ensure that your efforts are sustainable. You will want to ensure that your employees have interest in your health priority. A good rule of thumb is that early on in your wellness initiative your employee wellness interests should likely end up on your program priority list!

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In addition to looking at the wellness interests of your employees, you will want to think about other factors such as the easy win or 'low-hanging fruit.' These health topics are easily attainable in the short-term and don't require a lot of effort. For example, are there easy partnerships or free resources that you can take advantage of that meet a priority area? Did three other businesses in your building just switch over to a new vendor to supply healthier food choices in their vending machines? If so, you might consider selecting that health priority first as a health topic that is easy to solve and will likely gain buy-in and support for future priorities that require a bit more planning.

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As you think about prioritizing which wellness interest or health risk on which to focus your efforts, you will also want to make sure the priority issues align with the agreed upon values and benefits for your wellness initiative identified in the buy-in module. Think about which health priority will have the greatest impact on productivity, recruitment and retention, business performance, or culture of well-being.

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And finally, what budgetary or financial considerations do you need to consider? Will one priority likely require more financial resources than another?

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To help prioritize which health issues to focus on, you will use this prioritization exercise to sort through your top three wellness interests and three population health risks. From the resources tab, download the Prioritization Exercise.

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From the Resources Tab, you will download XYZ Inc.'s Prioritization Exercise. Use this example as a way to help guide your discussion with your Wellness Committee. This will help determine which health issue you will focus on for the first phase of your Worksite Wellness Initiative.

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To illustrate this, let's look at the XYZ case study and see how they prioritized their health issues. Notice the top three health risks and top three wellness interests. Then look at the top three program priorities: increasing amount of physical activity done by employees, increasing access to healthy food choices, and supporting employees in living tobacco free. Based upon the top three health risks and top three wellness interests, physical inactivity was chosen as the priority based on the top interest of sports league and the second interest of weight management. By choosing the sports league, XYZ will be attracting a significant number of employees to participate.

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Let's now look at the policy and environmental support considerations that align with your identified program priority.

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From the Resources tab, download the Workplace Environmental Support Guidance Document. Use this document to determine the top three policy/environmental considerations that your organization will implement that align with your program priorities.

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The data you gather from the CDC Worksite Health Scorecard and Workplace Environmental Support Guidance Document will provide you with a comprehensive understanding of your wellness culture and the worksite factors that influence health and your identified program priority. First, you will look at the results of the CDC Worksite Health Scorecard. Next, use the Supportive Environment Guidance Document to determine the top three policy/environmental considerations that your organization will implement that align with your program priorities. Remember, policy and environmental support considerations can take the form of policies and/or environmental changes. It's not enough to tell your employees to eat healthily, exercise, stop smoking, sleep more or engage in healthy behaviors. We need to make the healthy choice the easy choice by changing the environments in which we work.

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Let's look at an example. If your program priority is stress management, you might consider the following policy/environmental support considerations. Examples include, providing a dedicated rest and relaxation room, offering on-site stress management programs, onsite yoga classes, regular social events, and implementing flextime policies. These are some of the ways that your workplace can help create a culture of health and reduce stress for employees.

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From the Resources tab, you will download the Prioritization Exercise. With your top three risks and top three interests complete a copy of the prioritization exercise. Through discussion with your Wellness Committee, you will determine which health issue you will focus on FIRST in the planning efforts of your worksite wellness initiative. Once you agreed upon your priorities, you are now ready to enter this information in the Planning Section of the Worksite Wellness Action Plan with your top three program priorities and policy/environmental support considerations. Be sure to use the Workplace Environmental Support Guidance Document to help select which policy and environmental supports align with your program priority. We encourage you to focus your efforts on a single priority when starting your program.

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To see how XYZ used their prioritization exercise to complete the section of the Worksite Wellness Action Plan download XYZ Inc.'s Worksite Wellness Action Plan from the Resources tab. You will see the Worksite Wellness Action Plan with program priorities and policy and environmental support considerations completed. Use this example as a way to help guide your discussion with your Wellness Committee. This will help determine which health issue you will focus on for the first phase of your Worksite Wellness Initiative. Use your top priority to inform your goal statement in the planning process. This will be covered in greater detail in the second module of planning.

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In this module you learned, about strategic planning and why it is important. Having a strategic plan improves the likelihood of success for your wellness initiative. The strategic plan acts like the blue print for your wellness initiative. You also learned, how to select program priorities using your employee interests survey results and the Prioritization Exercise. And finally you learned key considerations for selecting the top three policy/environmental support considerations.

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Following this module, you will use your top three interests and top three risks, and download and complete a copy of the Prioritization Exercise. Through discussion with your Wellness Committee and Wellness Sponsor, you will determine which health issue you will focus on for the first phase of your Worksite Wellness Initiative. Fill in the Planning Section of the WWAP with your top three program priorities and policy/environmental support considerations that align with program priorities. In the Resources tab, you will find the Key Takeaways and Action Item Checklist Document and the references for this module.

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The next step is to revisit your Worksite Wellness Action Plan with the completed Buy In and Assessment sections and work with your wellness committee to start on the Planning Section. This includes top three program priorities and policy/environmental support considerations.

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Congratulations! This concludes Module 1, the first module in Planning. The purple icon with the green plus sign symbolizes the availability of additional resources. These additional resources are recommended to supplement what you've learned and are optional. They are not mandatory to complete the module. If interested, click on the Resources tab to access the supplemental Planning tools. These tools can also be directly found in the Healthy Workplaces Toolbox. To continue to the next module, click "Mark Complete" below.