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Healthy Behaviors for Healthcare Workers

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Healthy Behaviors for Healthcare Workers

Presented by Nicole McCullough

Introduction

I completed my practicum hours at ARC Healthcare under the direct supervision of Linda Bisca, ARC's Human Resources Manager. At ARC, my supervision shifted with my original supervisor being Rebecca Dunaway, Director of Administrative Support & Services. Linda was brought in after I had started my hours and offered her assistance in anything I needed to supplement my educational goals.

ARC Healthcare is a health technology contracting company that handles provider network development, software development, and healthcare consulting for large health plans and provider partners. ARC Healthcare is providing contracts to health providers in region 4 states to allow our focused, confidential client to make additional referrals to the providers who agree to the contract through a community care network. Patients who have been referred by the client will then be able to be seen by providers of countless practices and specialties.

ARC Healthcare partnered with the Ignite Health Foundation to organize health fairs for underprivileged communities during my time as a practicum intern. Ignite Health Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3), that was formed to improve health for the underserved.

Practicum Goals

1. Encourage health and wellness within the corporate office and healthy lifestyle choices outside of the corporate office by making free options available to all employees.
2. Gain familiarity with the responsibilities and roles associated with organizing a free health fair. Learn what backend planning is involved with obtaining volunteers and health vendors.
3. Bring environmental change options to the attention of leadership to promote productivity within the office bringing presenteeism and absenteeism statistics down.
4. Provide resources to help employees understand nutrition language and calculate basal metabolic rate (BMR) for employees who want to learn more about their personal nutrition goals. Help employees set nutrition goals.
5. Organize a yearly Health and Wellness Week for the corporate office employees to participate in to boost morale, practice healthy behaviors on their own, and learn how else they can make healthy changes in their personal and professional lives.

In Motion

Rebecca Dunaway suggested participation in the Fight for Air Climb, February 15, 2020. Two large fundraisers and several generous donations made it possible for 6 ARC Healthcare employees to participate in the Climb without spending a dime. A pound of Rwandan and Dark Sumatra blend coffee was purchased at \$6.50 and sold for \$15/bag and candy grams for \$5, \$10, and \$15 were sold and distributed just in time for Valentine's Day. Gaby the Blue Bird, ARC Healthcare's mascot, passed out the candy grams and sang to employees in support of the Climb. All 6 participating employees finished the Climb and expressed interest in doing more philanthropic events like the Fight for Air Climb. Other engaging exercise efforts included corporate group fitness sessions held 1-2 times/week and handing out free trial passes to Power Shack gym. The group fitness sessions included meditation, yoga, and chair exercises.

ARC Healthcare's partnership with the Ignite Health Foundation resulted in 3 successful health fairs in Antioch, Tennessee, Marion, Ohio, and Trotwood, Ohio. Each health fair took simple biometric screening information including height, weight, blood glucose, and cholesterol and provided attendees with laymen's health literacy information. All vendors at the health fair events advertised little to no-cost services they offered and ways to help the community's health at little to no cost to the consumer.

- Antioch served 8 individuals – planned in 3 weeks
- Marion served 23 individuals – planned in 6 weeks
- Trotwood served 58 individuals – planned in 12 weeks

The growth from the first health fair event to the third came not only from time planned, but from experience and learning from mistakes made from previous events.

Many of the environmental changes to the ARC Healthcare offices are upcoming with building designs for the new offices set to be ready for summer 2021. Ideas for better lighting, managed noise pollution while keeping an open office concept, and ergonomic friendly furniture for employee workspace are being considered for construction, design, and décor for the new office. Current actions for a healthier work environment include switching plastic plants for living plants, replacing fruit decorations in the kitchen with real fruits for employees to eat for a healthy alternative, and moving the designated smoking area from the parking garage to the fountain in the center of the parking lot.

Many ARC Healthcare employees were interested in calculating their basal metabolic rate (BMR) and roughly how many calories they should be consuming to gain weight, lose weight, or maintain their weight. After calculating BMR, MyPlate posters were placed in high traffic areas where employees eat their meals and snack.

ARC Healthcare's first Health and Wellness Week went off without a hitch, and employees had fun participating. Healthy lunch and snack options were brought in, employees were encouraged to bring their own healthy snacks, the walking path around the building was marked with ¼, ½, ¾, and 1-mile markers to encourage exercise on breaks, and each day had a spirit theme. Employees that participated were entered into a drawing where a gym membership to Lifetime Fitness, a Chick-fil-a gift card, and PTO were raffled off.

Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 put many plans for the practicum experience on hold and sparked creativity for smaller programs to finish the semester on a high note.

- **Blue Bird Bulletin**
 - Work from Home Health suggestions article
 - Healthy snack/drink/meal recipes to combat midday munchies and unhealthy meals
 - Shared MyPlate posters along with the recipes
- **Home Exercise**
 - Personalized home fitness routines
 - Abdominal/glute
 - Cardio
 - Resistance training

Healthy Shamrock Shake Mint Smoothie

This St. Patrick's Day Green Smoothie lets you have a Shamrock Shake the healthy way!

Ingredients

- 1 cup baby spinach or kale or other dark, leafy green of your choice
- 1 cup milk of choice
- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt or cottage cheese
- 1 frozen really ripe banana
- 1/2 teaspoon [vanilla extract](#)
- 1/4 teaspoon mint extract (or more, if desired)
- 4 ice cubes I used 4 regular-sized ones. This was probably about 3/4 cup. Adjust accordingly based on the size of your ice cubes and how icy you want it.
- Optional, honey, stevia, etc., if needed, depending on how ripe and sweet your banana is



WORK FROM HOME HEALTH

Nikki McCullough

The last few months I have taken initiative to bring physical health and wellness into the office to create a more health-friendly environment for employees. Since we are working from home for the next couple of weeks I want to highlight the importance of emotional and mental health.

Your overall health is a combination of your spiritual, financial, physical, emotional, mental, and environmental health. Now that we are working in a new environment which seems to be getting smaller and smaller each day, I have researched and listed ways to keep all other components of your health in line.

- **Keep some separation between your home space and your work space.** Doing this keeps you from "bringing your work home with you" once you have clocked out for the day. Having work materials spilling into your home space can create anxiety and can make your home not feel like home anymore and it can feel good to literally shut the door on work for the evening.

- **Opt to move your work items into a window or a good source of soft lighting to avoid eye strain,** to keep awareness of the time of day, and to get a little bit more vitamin D (if the sun ever comes out again). Studies show that working near a window boosts overall mood!
- **Surround yourself with a few objects, scents, and/or scenery that bring you joy and keep this space tidy.** The organization in your work space will have a similar organization feeling in your mind while your surroundings can make the work you're doing more enjoyable.

"Your overall health is a combination of your spiritual, financial, physical, emotional, mental, and environmental health."

- **Take advantage of your 10 minute breaks** by taking a walk outside or getting a chore or two done so you have more time after work to relax. If you find you do not utilize your 10 minute breaks as often as you should, set a timer for a specific time in the morning and afternoon to take advantage of this.

- **Use Skype, text, or email** to get in touch with coworkers you are used to seeing every day. Checking in with your work friends during social distancing can alleviate bouts of depression and anxiety.

- **Drink Water!** This small act will increase positive emotions, stimulate better brain functionality, and wake you up if you're feeling sluggish.

- **Take advantage of your kitchen.** So many of us are used to ordering food for lunch that we forget we even have a kitchen. Spend a little time in there and fix something like we're like it.
- **Meditate and/or pray** in your space and over your tasks for the day. Calming thoughts to start your day can give your day a better outlook.

These are just some quick tips on staying healthy overall. Follow one, a couple, or try all of them and see what you think. Stay healthy ARC family.

*<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.holcom.2020.05.005>



Future Directions

- Enthusiasm from the Fight for Air Climb team made its way to the rest of the office with employees wanting to participate in the Climb yearly. There has been interest in other local philanthropic races and events.
- ARC Healthcare has put their partnership with Ignite on hold, and leadership has discussed running local health fairs and partnering, instead, with local church efforts.
- A proposal has been submitted to install a bike rack outside the ARC Healthcare office to give local employees the option of riding their bike to work and to encourage exercise on work breaks.
- Living plants are being grown until they are mature enough to be transported to the office space to improve air quality, muffle noise pollution, and increase morale for those who do not have a desk near a window.
- Lunch and Learn presentations on nutrition are being orchestrated to present once all employees are working in the office again.
- The second annual Health and Wellness Week is set to kick off August 31, 2020 after it was rescheduled due to COVID-19.

Lessons Learned/Recommendations

- Fundraising for wellness events is easy when you are selling something desired and appropriate for the time of year. Added specials like a mascot and candy for Valentine's Day help.
- There is a lot of backend work that goes into putting on events. Trying to plan a large health fair in 3 weeks can be done, but it involves cutting a lot of corners. Planning a health fair in 3 months has a better result, but large health fairs and other events require 6 months or more of planning.
- When planning large events, like Ignite's health fairs, tasks should be divided up among leaders with the same outcome in mind. Different visions among leaders can cause haziness in lower-level instruction.
- Environmental changes, even small ones, can add up financially. Agreeing on a budget, fundraising, or soliciting donations are the best way to go when making environmental changes.
- When presenting nutrition facts to interested groups, be prepared to face fad mentality and individuals only interested in quick fixes with limited effort in changed behavior.
- Similar to environmental changes, planning for an annual Health and Wellness Week requires funds agreed upon by the finance department, fundraising, or solicited donations for incentives for participation.