



Health and Wellness Program(s) for the Employees – The Change Needed at the Organizational level: Systems Approach

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BACKGROUND

Stress accounts for about 80% of all illnesses for human beings and is currently the prime reason linked to mortality in developed countries. Stress is regarded as an occupational hazard and a significant health problem. Almost 80-90% of all illnesses and diseases are stress-related - the prime reason linked to mortality. Approximately, 500,000 Canadians miss work due to mental illness every week, with an estimated cost of \$51 billion annually to the Canadian economy.

Burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do “people-work” of some kind and is associated with physical exhaustion, despair, helplessness, and negative attitudes towards the work, life & others It is also a term that is used to describe reactions of chronic stress in workplace settings.

For organizations, it could also mean increase in health benefit costs because of higher usage of services, high turnover rate for employees, difficulty in filling job vacancies, difficult situations involving employees and patients, resulting in low patient satisfaction ratings.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, severe burnout was typically found in 20%-40% of healthcare workers. By spring 2021, prevalence rate was greater than 60%.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

To create a comprehensive program that not only promotes the overall well-being of employees including physical, mental, emotional, and economic health but also organizational health and quality of patient care.

OUR PROGRAM

We utilized systems-level based approach to develop the program-collaborating with management, employees, and an outside consultant.

The **Workplace Wellness Committee** consists of employees that empowers them to bring change and develop wonderful programs in the work environment. The committee develops programs such as special recognition days for teammates, birthdays, special day celebrations, and social events.

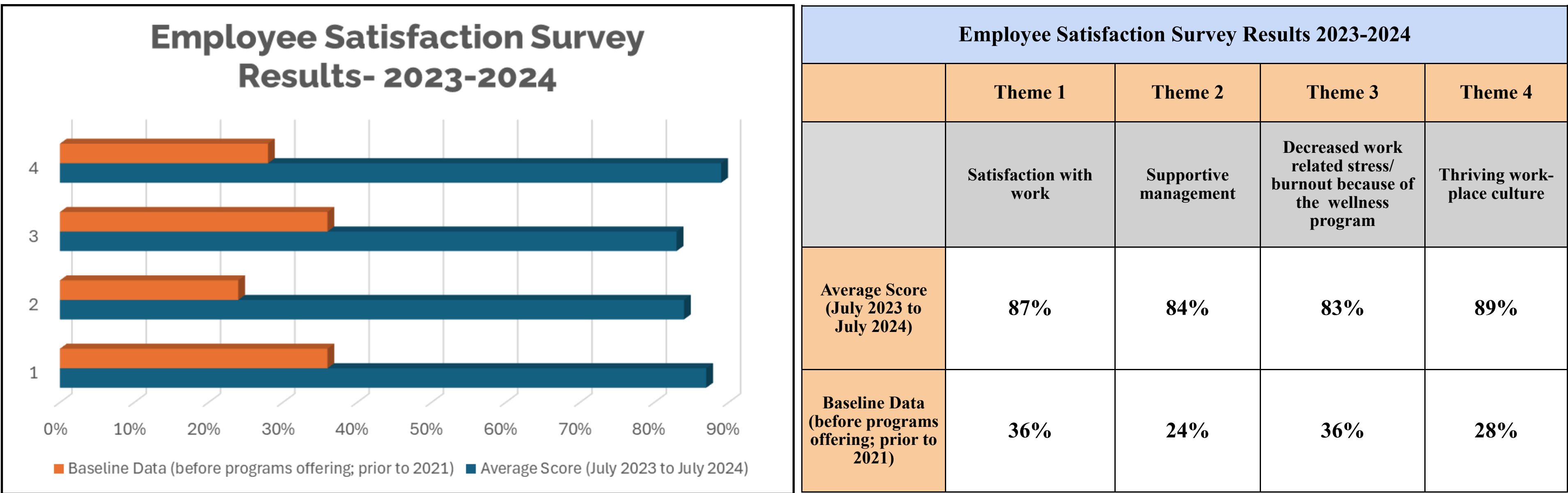
The **Dynamic Employee of the Month Program** recognizes employee’s contributions (recently modified to **Leading Lights**). The employee is selected by their peers. Organization recognizes the employee through social media posts and offer a small gift amount to enjoy treats. Employees also get **FOUR amazing gift coupons** that they can use each week, on top of their usual deserved break times like 10 minutes break to listen to their favorite music, 10 minutes walking break, an extra 10 minutes coffee break, and get out of the office 10 minutes early.

We also have **Buddy Program** to help our new employees adjust to the work environment.

Building Healthy Habits Initiative to improve lifestyle that allow employees to become healthier, happier and more energetic both inside and outside the workplace.

At organizational level, we also hold regular team huddles, team building sessions (gamification), and annual employee health & wellness event. We promote open communication with the management and collect regular employee feedback through satisfaction surveys.

RESULTS and LESSONS LEARNED



- ◆ The workplace wellness program is a team effort and not just the company's responsibility
- ◆ Design your program based on your needs
- ◆ Funding is an issue- look for alternate sources
- ◆ Do not wait for all employees to participate & not all will appreciate the program!
- ◆ Always strive to do your best- might not be perfect!

