

Engaging Employees: Qualitative Findings from Be Hipp

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Be Hipp

Be Engaged: Help Integrate Promotion/Protection:

Design

Cluster randomized, controlled trial examining the effectiveness of group counseling (intervention) compared to quarterly newsletters (control) as a means of integration of health protection and health promotion interventions.

Study Population and Sites

Original: University office workers whose job involves primarily sitting.
Final: One University, 5 local businesses, and 1 regional business.

Randomization

280 participants; 139 Intervention arm ; 141 Control arm

Study Timeline



University



Local Business



Regional Business

Intervention Arm

Control Arm

End of Study

Group Session

Enrollment

Enrollment

Newsletter

End of Study

YR 1

9/07-8/08



YR 2

9/08-8/09



YR 3

9/10-8/11



YR 4

9/10-8/11



YR 5

9/11-8/12



Intervention

Facilitated monthly group lunch sessions with lunch provided and recipes offered to model healthful food.

Session Design Included:

- Building ownership
- Offering social support
- Supporting autonomy
- Creating non-judgmental environment
- Modeling

Control

Quarterly newsletter that mirrors group session topics and lunch recipes.

Study Retention

	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 2.5 or 3*
	139 I 141 C	129 I 136 C	124 I 129 C	75 I 76 C
N	280	266	253	151**
% Data collected	100%	99.6%***	100%	100%
Drops	0	0	0	0
Excluded-left employment	0	14	27	22
Percent data collection of 280	100%	94.6%	90%	N/A

* 173 total ppt. eligible for 2½ or 3-year intervention.

** 22 participants left their place of employment prior to 2.5 or 3 year study end.

*** 1 ppt. on bed rest for pregnancy– unable to complete study visit.

Absenteeism

	Intervention Arm			Control Arm		
	Baseline	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	Baseline	Yr. 1	Yr. 2
N	138	128	124	142	136	127
Total Sick Time (Hours)*	5521.6	4357.1	4794.1	5519.2	5417.6	5595.7
Avg. Hours per Participant	40.0	34.0	38.6	38.9	39.8	44.1
* Does not include hours taken for pregnancy						

Workers Compensation Cost

	Baseline		Combined Year 1 and Year 2 Costs	
	Intervention N=138	Control N=142	Intervention N=128 Yr. 1 N= 124 Yr. 2	Control N=136 Yr.1 N=127 Yr. 2
Total Cost to Employer	\$0.00	\$551.79*	\$1479.5**	\$9871.58***
Average cost per employee- Year 1 and Year 2 combined	\$0.00	\$3.89	\$11.93	\$72.73
<p>*2 claims-- \$366.96 lifting; \$284.83 repetitive motion ** 3 claims- \$457.00 stress from performing job, \$408.32 repetitive motion, \$614.18 lifting—all Year 2 *** 2 claims- \$2756.00 bilateral carpal tunnel, \$6852.00 carpal tunnel (Year 1) 1 claim--\$263.58 Repetitive stress injury-carpal tunnel (Year 2)</p>				

Participant Survey

At their final data collection visit, participants were asked to complete an open-ended six-question survey on the influence of Be Hipp on health behaviors and their satisfaction with the program. Survey results were coded into themes for qualitative analysis.

“What did you like best about the Be Hipp experience?”

“How, if at all, has Be Hipp supported you in starting and/or maintaining healthful behaviors?”

Participant Survey-Control-Newsletter

- “I like newsletters/opportunity to reflect and think about my health.”
- “ I took a yoga class as a result.”
- “Be Hipp has made me aware of my need to exercise and eat healthy. I am much more conscious of what I eat.”
- “It has not supported me in starting but more “mindful” reminder to maintain.”
- “I think it helped a little, but not a great deal.”
- “It was a friendly reminder for me to put myself and health higher on my priority list.”

Participant Survey-Intervention-Interactive Sessions

Build Ownership

- “Discussions were prepared and led, but *not scripted or dominated.*”
- “Meeting with the same group of people monthly for lunch.”

Social Support

- “I learned from the stories and suggestions of others.”
- “I liked learning how other people deal with situations I might be struggling with.”

Support Autonomy

- “I am considering a vegan diet for the month of July. Be Hipp helped give me *the confidence to try this.*”
- “Overall it has helped me recognize that changes are possible.”

Create nonjudgmental environment

- “I liked that it was *never* presented in a manner that it was *forced on us* or this is the only way to do things.”
- “The information provided was useful and presented in a manner that made it easily accepted and implemented.”

Participant Survey-Intervention

Modeling: Foods offered at lunch were not formally discussed unless participants brought up the topic. Yet, they provided a powerful unspoken message in healthful eating.

Impact of Food in Interactive Group Sessions

Response category	# times reported
Tried new foods	49
Took ideas home	30
Show easy ways to eat healthy	11
Added to environment and discussion	11
Incentive for attendance	7
Changed way of looking at food and cooking	5
Discussion more important	2
Didn't have to bring lunch	1

“It has been helpful in getting me to try new healthy foods that I probably wouldn't have tried otherwise.”

“I am more conscious of whole grains. I feel as though my eyes have opened up to new ideas.”

Participant Survey

Per cent of Be Hipp recipes used at home

Response Category	Interactive Group	Newsletters
0 recipes	20	26
10% of recipes	29	48
25% of recipes	50	32
50% or more of recipes	20	19

The increased use of recipes by the interactive group may have been the result of tasting food at the lunch sessions.

Conclusions

- Be Hipp participants in both groups commonly reported increased awareness and knowledge about health and wellness topics.
- Employees indicated personal interaction is an important component in wellness programming.
- Action-oriented behaviors — such as improved eating habits and increased physical activity — were more commonly cited among participants in the interactive group than in the newsletter group.
- Modeling healthy behaviors along with an interactive discussion may be important components to include in worksite wellness programs

Business Survey

- At the conclusion of the study, Human Resource Directors and/or Company Owners were asked to complete and return via email a survey on company health culture and policy.
- Five of six businesses provided responses.
- The University site was not surveyed given the nature of the organization.
- Numbers by each category represent the number of businesses citing a change.

Business Survey

In the following areas of wellness what, if any, culture changes has your company made as a result of Be Hipp participation?

Ergonomics

- 1 regular stretch breaks
- 2 computer initiated stretch break reminders
- 1 work station evaluations
- 0 new work station equipment
- 2 we have not implemented any changes

Stress Management

- 1 support groups
- 1 team building activities
- 2 counseling resources
- 2 we have not implemented any changes

Business Survey

Nutrition

- 0 more healthful food options in vending machines
- 1 more healthful food options in cafeteria
- 1 more healthful food options served at meetings
- 0 more healthful food options at potlucks
- 2 we have not implemented any changes

Physical Activity

- 1 walking groups
- 1 company sports teams
- 1 physical activity event at work
- 2 we have not implemented any changes

Business Survey

What, if any, company policy changes have been implemented as a result of Be Hipp participation?

- *We are more sensitive to healthful choices for meetings where food is served.*
- *Increased awareness of ergonomics to accommodate employee requests.*
- *Started a partnership with Health Solutions to help with wellness efforts.*
- *Awareness of food options---less pizza.*
- *Initiated daily stretch breaks with email reminders.*

Business Survey Summary

1. All the “company culture” changes reported were from 2 of the intervention sites; 1 company reported 6 changes (2 Ergo, 1 Nutrition; 1 Stress, 2 Physical Activity) and 1 company reported 7 changes (2 Ergo, 1 Nutrition, 3 Stress, 1 Physical Activity).
2. One control and one intervention site reported not making any culture changes.
 - *the intervention business stated they are one location of a larger company and any changes are made through top management rather than at the individual company sites.*
 - *the control site receiving the newsletter indicated there was limited company-wide influence but anticipated there was individual change.*
3. One control site indicated they would have liked the group sessions. They have started a partnership with a wellness company that includes diagnostics and health coaching.

Conclusions, Lessons Learned...

Research

- Remain flexible to accommodate changing environmental/economic events impacting research partners.
 - (made our study population and data base richer with multiple sized companies).
- Negotiate with participants to maintain participation for retention.
 - Email follow-up for interactive sessions, data collection, etc.
- Ensure program evaluation determinants are sensitive and are revised if programming/goals are changed.

Conclusions, Lessons Learned...

Wellness Programs—Interactive Intervention

- Providing healthful food at lunch may appear as an unnecessary expense but can translate into employees' increased awareness and willingness to try new healthful options.
- Employees appear to value programs that facilitate, not direct, participant interaction and learning and give them the autonomy for deciding if, and how, they incorporate health behavior change into their life.

Conclusions, Lessons Learned...

Wellness Programs—Other Elements

- Involving top company leaders in the interactive group sessions may lead to increased implementation of additional health promotion/protection programs improving the company's culture of health (COH).
- Newsletters can serve as a reminder and increase awareness but may not increase motivation for changing health behaviors especially for people who are not ready for action.