This manual describes the process of implementing a school workplace intervention for weight gain prevention. The goal is to make the workplace supportive of healthy eating and physical activity among employees, focusing on various aspects of the workplace environment and on related organizational or institutional policies.

The *School Worksite Weight Gain Prevention Intervention Study* (5R01CA132941) focused on the school worksite environment, especially the social and policy environments and to a lesser extent, the physical environment. Twelve public high schools were randomized to receive a basic intervention (print and web-based materials only) or an enhanced multi-level intervention described below in detail. This intervention took place over two school years with advance planning beginning in the previous spring semester. The interventions were directed at all high school employees. The interventions were evaluated using a cohort of about 54% of school employees, assessed at baseline, 12 months and 24 months on measures of BMI, weight, waist circumference and self-reported eating and physical activity behaviors and perceptions of the school climate relevant to healthy weight.

IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES FOR THE

ENHANCED SCHOOL WORKSITE WEIGHT GAIN PREVENTION INTERVENTION

Multi-level Intervention

This intervention acknowledges and addresses the profound role of the physical and social context in which the individual exists, which may support and/or hinder individual efforts to manage weight. It intervention provides resources for individual use and also provides a framework to address the physical, social, leadership and policy aspects of the workplace environment. A multi-level approach such as this offers the best chance for sustainable behavior change. We addressed policy, social and physical environments in this intervention.

The CDC's Community Health Assessment aNd Group Evaluation (CHANGE) tool identifies specific characteristics and conditions of communities related to various dimensions of health and wellness. The Work site Sector subscales for physical activity, nutrition and leadership are useful to identify features and factors of the environment that affect healthy weight, to plan and prioritize initiatives, and to assess the status of the worksites in these areas over time. See Appendix 1 for these scales. These are the ways that the CHANGE tool was used in this intervention.

1. Items in the CHANGE tool were discussed with the peer coach and the Employee Advisory Group.
2. The coach and/or EAG selected areas that were relevant and amenable to change. They were encouraged to start with one or two small, achievable areas and then proceed to address other areas.
3. Organizational leadership was enlisted to plan and implement change.
4. Changes were promoted to employees through email and bulletin boards, word of mouth, and other approaches (orientations and contests for users of a fitness center, for example).
5. The changes and their implementation were assessed and plans revised as needed/desired.
6. The scales were used by an external observer to assess the environment over time.

Policy Intervention

Formal and informal policies at the workplace can greatly impact worker health. The existence of employee health policy sends a powerful message to employees about the organization's priorities and is vital to program or service maintenance and sustainability.

The impact of workplace policies on behavior and health is potentially broad and deep, affecting facilities, their condition and access to them; employee time and its use; food and beverage availability and refrigeration/reheating capability; and material and financial resources supporting worker efforts to maintain or improve health.

Social Environment

Research shows that the social environment has a profound effect on behavior, and that support from other people is important in healthy eating, physical activity and weight management. Group interventions can build on existing relationships and create new ones to support behavior change.

Physical Environment

Characteristics of the physical environment can facilitate or hinder healthy behaviors. Detailed assessment of the physical environment and identification of areas needing improvement, can reduce barriers to healthy behavior.

Individual Interventions

To make changes for health, individuals need information, tools and skills they can use.

I. **Advance groundwork and planning**

A. **Involve school leadership in planning and implementation.** Visible support leaders shows that the school values employee health. Schedule meeting with organizational leadership to negotiate parameters of participation. Their visible support contributes to the intervention.

Agenda:

1. Negotiate or review project goals.
2. Describe multi-level approach and details of implementation within this organization.
3. Determine roles and process of identifying a peer coach to implement intervention.
4. Determine role and recruitment of employee advisory group (persons in relevant positions such as food services, facilities management, employee health, human resources, staff training; and other interested persons)
5. Discuss organization's process for policy change.
6. Identify ways to use and/or modify the organization's environment to support healthy lifestyle behaviors and healthy weight.
7. Plan for use of internal communications channels.
8. Plan leadership support for intervention and participation in activities that will be visible to employees
9. Determine assessment and evaluation goals and methodology and responsibilities.

B. **Focus groups**

Conduct one or more focus group discussions at the school at the beginning of the planning process to help identify areas where improvement is needed, identify individuals that would be able and interested to assist. See Appendix 2 for implementation guidelines and focus group script.

II. **Intervention leaders: Peer coach and Employee Advisory Group**

Find and encourage natural leaders to plan and lead the program and its various components. People with jobs related to health, physical activity and healthy eating, especially school nurses and physical education department members and sports coaches, may already be valued resources for coworkers. Look for staff that are committed to physical activity, have successfully lost weight or maintained a healthy weight.

A. Peer coach

Identify one or two staff members with an interest in the intervention topics who will receive additional compensation for a few hours per week. The coach(es) should be known by co-workers or well positioned to become known, have the confidence of the principal to work effectively with colleagues and approval to take the role, and have strong interpersonal and organizational skills.

Activities will include:

- Serve as contact and liaison for day-to-day activities and communication between the school and external stakeholders if any.

- Assess staff needs (informal, surveys, interviews, focus groups).

- Be a champion for the program and identify others who are or could develop into champions.

- Recruit and convene the employee advisory group
- Inventory resources – fitness day, fundraisers, Relay for Life, walking groups, fitness instructors, shared meals, Weight Watchers, scales, locker rooms/showers.
- Identify gaps in existing resources.
- Facilitate analysis of possible environmental/policy directions, selection and sequence of priorities. Provide support and generate staff support for policy changes

- Make arrangements for educational displays, onsite classes, weight loss groups, workshops and other activities. Organize and run contests and competitions.

- Keep a log of activities completed.

- Organize and implement program evaluation and quality improvement initiatives.

B. Employee Advisory Groups

A group of employees will meet several times during each school year to take part in program planning and implementation. The group will consist of up to 12 volunteer members from a variety of departments and types of jobs within the school to get as many viewpoints as possible. School employees may join at any time. A member of the school administration, such as a vice-principal, may be a good addition to the group with a view of the school as a whole and the influence to move things along. The EAG helps identify, plan and implement activities best suited to their particular school. This

mechanism will help ensure that employees have a say in their program and make it more likely that the program will be successful and maintained over time. The goal is to create an environment that makes it easier to choose healthy eating and physical activity options.

Role of EAG members

- Set priorities for policy and environmental changes at school.
- Actively participate in group meetings.
- Help organize and implement programs at school and develop support for programs among co-workers.
- Get co-workers involved in programs and encourage them to take advantage of all the programs, materials and tools.
- When changes are made to the environment or policies, encourage employees to show that they want those changes and will take advantage of programs, facilities or services that are made available.
- Networking: help the program reach employees through established channels and help find new ways to keep employees informed.

Meetings:

- Meet every 2 to 3 months during the school year.
- Set a date two weeks in advance.
- Develop a draft agenda and solicit items from all EAG members.
- Remind members the day before the meeting.
- Provide water or other zero calorie beverages and serve healthy refreshments.

III. Physical activity interventions

A. Environmental interventions

Indoor and outdoor walking routes:

- The peer coach identifies co-workers that walk or run at work, inside or outside.
- Ask the walkers or runners to share their routes and help create a map.
- Loan pedometers to walkers and ask them to walk the route, noting distance and time,
- Look for a 10-minute route, and 30-minute route and a one-mile route. The longer routes, and in some small buildings even the shorter routes, may require repeating part or all of the route to reach the time goal.

- Obtain a floor plan of the building and add lines and arrows for the route. This can be done using MS Word or Power Point.
- Obtain a map of the school's neighborhood (Google Maps or Mapquest are possible sources) and add lines and arrows for the route.
- Add time and distance for each route.
- Make available on school's website and have a supply on paper. Explore adding to staff handbook or staff pages of website.

Stairs:

- Interventions designed to promote use of stairs instead of elevators has been shown to increase physical activity in some settings.
- Assess the building layout, condition of stairs including locking doors, policies regarding use of elevators by able-bodied staff, and level of unnecessary elevator use.
- If appropriate, clean or improve stairs as needed, and place reminder signs near stairs and elevators.

B. Group Interventions

Exercise Classes:

- Assess facilities available for classes (fitness center, gym, track, other) and shower/locker room availability. Consider before and after school hours.
- Identify instructor resources: physical education teachers, other staff with experience in teaching fitness or sports, instructors from the local community, parents.
- Review focus group findings and consult with Employee Advisory Group to select specific types of classes. Try to offer aerobic activities (for example, Zumba or kickboxing) as well as activities such as yoga or pilates.
- Determine payment arrangements for instructor, and resources for payment.
- Offer classes in a series of several weeks. If individuals will be paying for classes, fees for the series should be collected before the first class.
- Arrange advance registration.
- Track attendance.
- Ask participants for feedback (formal or informal) including interest in and ideas for future classes.

<u>Team-based activities or contests:</u>

Walking Groups:

- Provide walking group toolkit (see Appendix).
- Identify walkers willing to join with others.
- Promote availability of groups to persons that would like to start walking for exercise at work.

Pedometer challenge:

a. Teams pool their data weekly (number of steps or distance). They are not required to walk or run together.
b. At least one week in advance, publicize the event and call for teams.
c. Teams can be a self-identified group, or a structure can be provided (members from more than one department, at least one person who has not been walking or running for exercise, at least one new employee, etc.)
d. Consider using a virtual destination such as hiking the Appalachian Trail, and provide teams and individuals with a way to track progress toward completion.
e. Consider providing a way for participants to count time spent in activities not measurable by pedometer (cycling, swimming, kayaking for example). A certain amount of time converts to a certain distance, such as 20 minutes of moderate activity = 1 mile walked.
f. It is easier to manage and report if teams are limited in size (10 or fewer.) If teams are not the same size, data can be compared based on averages rather than totals.
g. Each team should have a team name and one or more captain(s) to promote participation and coordinate reporting.
h. Determine and implement reporting arrangements, such as google spreadsheets with data entered by each individual, or excel sheets maintained by a team member or the peer coach.
i. Offer prizes that reinforce physical activity or healthy eating, such as gift cards to a sports equipment store.
j. Offer prizes for top group and top individual performance. Consider additional prize categories such as most improved from first week to final week.

<u>Staff Games:</u>

- Assess resource availability (gym, track, locker rooms, fitness center, other) and reserve space weekly.
- Identify employees willing to be "captains" or organizers.
- Promote activity.

Example: Staff involved in a planning focus group organized a weekly basketball game before school that continued at least 2.5 years. It was open to all staff. Many participants were former high school or college players and the game had a reputation of being competitive although it was a pick-up format.

<u>Buddy challenges</u>

- Determine format. For example, teams of two people between them completes 6 or more 30-minute exercise sessions per week, either together or separately.
- Establish start and end dates. Determine if prizes will be awarded and if so, whether weekly or at the conclusion is preferred.
- Promote challenge and register participants.
- Solicit participant feedback.

<u>5K Fun run and walk</u>

- Determine format and route.
- Create map and route markers.
- Order race numbers if desired.
- Determine prizes for participation and if desired, for performance.
- Select date and rain date.
- Provide bottled water at start/finish. Set up a water station midway if desired.
- Sign up participants several weeks in advance.
- Provide online and on-paper plans to train for a 5K (Couch to 5K).
- Promote group training or preparation.
- Consider weekly or race-day prizes for training work (most improved, etc.)
- Solicit participant feedback.

C. Individual level interventions

Pedometers: (see also team-based pedometer intervention above)

- Good quality pedometers are provided for each school employee.
- Distribute pedometers through an "event" in a centralized location. Offer pedometer set-up, inserting batteries and straps, and measuring stride length. Assist users with entering data as needed.
- Schedule pedometer distribution at the beginning of a multiple-week challenge or contest.

Individually based pedometer challenge:

- Individuals report on daily or weekly totals on a google spreadsheet or submit an excel sheet.
- Alternatively, individuals submit their name and the number of steps they walk each day on a ticket in a central location. A minimum number of steps to submit a ticket can be specified.
- Award prize(s) each week, based on best total performance and/or drawn at random among all participants.

Skill development:

Strength training workshop

- Identify trainer from among school staff, or use external resource if needed.
- Provide resistance bands and printed workout sheets with instructions and photographs or diagrams.
- Reserve space suitable for demonstration and practice.
- If desired and if weights are available, reserve hand weights for use during session.
- Publicize workshop and register participants in advance.
- Solicit participant feedback and interest in other topics.

Fitness machines orientation (if available onsite)

- Identify trainer from school staff.
- Select format (individual consultation or group session) and determine whether to use advance registration.
- Promote availability of orientation.
- Solicit participant feedback and interest in other topics.

IV. Healthy Eating Interventions

A. Environmental Interventions

<u>Cafeteria</u>

Explore collaboration with manager and staff.

Assess policies, practices and resources including:

- Availability of healthy foods: entrée salads, low-fat dressings, whole fruit, broth-based soups.
- Availability of healthy foods at time when employees are likely to be purchasing.
- Prominent display of healthy foods
- Fruit comparably or favorably priced compared to higher calorie snack foods.
- Portion management options
- Point-of-selection nutrition information

  Example: Point of selection nutrition information in the cafeteria was selected as an area for change. The peer coach worked with the cafeteria director to gather and display information. The cafeteria director agreed to place whole fruit next to the cash register to encourage sales. Moving cookies away from the register to make them less accessible was discussed but theft was an ongoing problem so this change was not pursued.

<u>Vending Machines</u>
Explore collaboration with staff member or contractor responsible for vending machines.

Assess policies, practices and resources including:
- Proportion of beverage slots used for sugar-sweetened beverages
- Proportion of beverage slots used for water or zero-calorie beverages
- Availability of high calorie snack foods
- Availability of low calorie snack foods

  Example: The peer coach/school nurse worked with the vending machine contractor to provide more water and zero calorie beverages and fewer sugar-sweetened drinks in a beverage vending machine in the teachers' room

Other foods at school

Food brought to share by employees

Consider ways to limit sharing without the limits seeming punitive. One principal expressed an unwillingness to create a policy, saying "I don't want to be the food police."

Example: the peer coach and Employee Advisory Group organized a post-Halloween candy collection and sent the candy to US troops. In previous years, leftover Halloween candy was brought in to be consumed by school employees.

Food at meetings:

- Encourage water, coffee or tea instead of soda.
- Encourage low calorie snacks, if any.
- Model healthy refreshments at Step Ahead events and meetings.

B. Group Interventions

Healthy potlucks   (see also Healthy Potlucks Toolkit in Appendix.)

- Identify date and/or time. Some schools select lunch on an early release day or a professional day because staff have more flexibility on those days.
- Reserve location with tables and seating.
- Publicize.
- Have participants sign up in advance and identify what dish they will bring. Use www.stepaheadprogram.com healthy recipe collection or provide participants with guidelines for healthy recipes: low calorie (low fat, low sugar), dairy ingredients should be low fat, emphasize vegetables and fruits.
- Research shows that having too many choices results in overeating. Look for a variety of dishes with only a few in each category (salads, vegetables, entrees).
- As an additional way to promote participation, consider awarding a door prize. If participants use their own recipes, consider a vote and prize(s) for favorite(s).
- Provide water and paper goods.

C. Individual interventions

<u>Food sampling</u>   (see recipe collections and displays in Appendix.)

- Identify a theme (healthy holidays, healthy desserts, healthy snacks for watching sports events, whole grains, beans, healthy breakfast, etc.)
- Select a few items (two or three) that exemplify the theme and are easily prepared and served. Some examples are chili, soup, grain-based dishes, chopped vegetable dishes, vegetable pancakes, cookies or bars or cakes, whole grain muffins. A healthy beverage display could include teas (hot or iced) and sparkling waters.
- Serve in very small containers (1 to 3 ounces depending on food item) with disposable or recyclable forks or spoons. Party supply stores are a good source for cups.
- Select a visible, high traffic location (teachers' room, main corridor) or join large event (just before a faculty meeting) or deliver samples to work locations.
- Have copies of recipes available. Recipe collections related to the theme are popular. Consider adding handouts on the theme and/or a simple information display.
- Have a trash receptacle at the display.

V. Weight management interventions

A. Group interventions

<u>Weight watchers</u>

- Larger schools may be able to pull together a large enough group to bring a Weight Watchers program to campus.
- Contact local Weight Watchers office and get information on group size requirements and cost to participants, and any other requirements and guidelines.
- Promote program and conduct advance sign-up.

<u>Biggest loser</u>

- Select a number of weeks and publicize program.
- Arrange for weekly weigh-ins (scale in nurses' office, gym, fitness center, etc.) and record-keeping.
- For additional support, have participants sign up in small teams.

- Consider participant buy-ins or payments to provide prizes. Examples: 1) All pay in an equal amount at the beginning, money is divided among top three losers. 2) Participants pay in for each pound gained each week, a lower amount if they maintain weight, and nothing if they lose. At the end, money collected is used for a group activity or donated to a cause.

B. Individual interventions

Self-monitoring

- Regular weighing, tracking food intake and calories and physical activity, are proven strategies for weight loss.
- Publicize availability of scale at school.
- Provide weight tracking charts and graphs.
- Offer private storage of records in scale area.
- Provide on-paper or free online tracking tools for food intake, calories, and physical activity. See Appendix for samples.

VI. Information Intervention

See also indoor and outdoor walk routes and point-of-selection nutrition information, above.

Printed materials

- An Employee Resource Book will be distributed to each employee in installments. Each installment includes information and tools for physical activity, healthy eating and weight management. See Appendix for a comprehensive table of contents.

Website

- www.stepaheadprogram.com includes all of the materials from the Employee Resource Book, all the weekly newsletters, and a healthy recipe collection.

Weekly e-newsletter

- Newsletter is one page with a brief spotlight article, the recipe of the week and the topic of the week.
- Customize with school-specific event information if desired.

- Identify resources for distribution working with school information department. (all school employee email list or all department lists).

Other electronic communication

- Use school website, employee sections or all school email blast to publicize events, competitions, pedometer distribution, etc.
- Use google docs for tracking individual and team progress in challenges, tracking individual weight and food intake and physical activity, etc.

Other communication

- Signs near staff mailboxes, in main office, in teachers' rooms, etc.

VII. Evaluation
- See specific intervention component sections for suggestions on gathering participant satisfaction information and suggestions.
- Decide on other evaluation measures. A framework such as RE-AIM can be used to assess:
  - Reach (numbers of people reached),
  - Effectiveness (outcomes of interest such as before-and-after weight, eating behavior, physical activity behavior, absenteeism, insurance costs, other)
  - Adoption if applicable (proportion of target staff offered the program that took part)
  - Implementation consistency, costs, and modifications made
  - Maintenance by individuals and settings over time.
  - See www.re-aim.org for details on the RE-AIM framework.

Appendices

1. Community Health Assessment aNd Group Evaluation (CHANGE) tool
2. Peer coach job description
3. Focus group implementation guidelines and script
4. Employee Advisory Group Manual

Appendix 1:

CDC's Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (CHANGE) Tool

http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dch/programs/healthycommunitiesprogram/tools/change/downloads.htm

Worksite Sector, Physical Activity subscale

1. Promote stairwell use (e.g., make stairs appealing, post motivational signs near stairs to encourage physical activity)?
2. Provide <u>flexible work arrangements</u> or break times for employees to engage in physical activity?
3. Encourage non-motorized commutes (e.g., active transportation such as walk or bike) to work?
4. Enhance access to public transportation (e.g., bus stops, light rail stops, van pool services, subway stations) within <u>reasonable walking distance</u>?
5. Support clubs or groups (e.g., walking, biking, hiking) to encourage physical activity among employees?
6. Provide a safe area outside (e.g., through lighting, signage, crime watch) to walk or be physically active?
7. Designate a walking path on or near building property?
8. Provide access to onsite fitness center, gymnasium, or physical activity classes?
9. Provide a changing room or locker room with showers?
10. Provide access to offsite workout facility or <u>subsidized membership</u> to local fitness facility?
11. Provide bicycle parking (e.g., bike rack, shelter) for employees ?
12. Implement activity breaks for meetings that are longer than one hour?
13. Provide direct support (e.g., money, land, pavilion, recreational facilities, sponsorship, advertising) for supporting community-wide physical activity opportunities (e.g., sports teams, walking clubs)?

CDC's Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (CHANGE) Tool

Worksite sector: Nutrition items

1. Institute <u>healthy food and beverage options</u> at <u>company-sponsored meetings and events</u>?
2. Institute <u>healthy food and beverage options</u> in vending machines?
3. Institute <u>healthy food and beverage options</u> in onsite cafeteria and food venues?
4. Institute healthy food purchasing practices (e.g., to reduce the caloric, sodium, and fat content of foods offered) for onsite cafeteria and food venues?
5. Institute healthy food preparation practices (e.g., steaming, low fat, low salt, limiting frying) in onsite cafeteria and food venues?
6. Ban marketing of <u>less than healthy foods and beverages</u> onsite, including through counter advertisements, posters, and other print materials?
7. Provide smaller <u>portion sizes</u> in onsite cafeteria and food venues?
8. Provide safe, unflavored, cool drinking water at no cost to employees?
9. Institute nutritional labeling (e.g., 'low fat,' 'light,' 'heart healthy,' 'no trans fat') at the worksite's cafeteria and onsite food service?
10. Institute <u>pricing strategies</u> that encourage the purchase of <u>healthy food and beverage options</u>?
11. Provide refrigerator access for employees?
12. Provide microwave access for employees?
13. Provide a sink with water faucet access for employees?
14. Provide direct support (e.g., money, land, a pavilion, sponsorship, donated advertising) for community-wide nutrition opportunities (e.g., farmers' markets, <u>community gardens</u>)?
15. <u>Support breastfeeding</u> by having maternity care practices, including providing a <u>comfortable, private space</u> for employees to nurse or pump?

CDC's Community Health Assessment and Group Evaluation (CHANGE) Tool

Worksite sector: Leadership subscale

1. Reimburse employees for preventive health or wellness activities?
2. Participate in the <u>public policy process</u> to highlight the need for community changes to address chronic diseases and related risk factors (e.g., poor nutrition, physical inactivity, tobacco use and exposure)?
3. Have a wellness coordinator?
4. Have a wellness committee?
5. Have a health promotion budget?
6. Have a mission statement (or a written policy statement) that includes the support of or commitment to employee health and well-being?
7. Adopt organizational or performance objectives pertaining to employee health and well-being?
8. Provide employees with a health insurance plan?
9. Provide office-based <u>incentives</u> (e.g., discounted insurance premium, gift certificates) to employees participating in health risk assessments, initiatives, or support groups that promote chronic disease prevention measures (e.g., quit smoking, log miles walked, blood pressure or cholesterol screening)?
10. Implement a needs assessment when planning a health promotion program?
11. Evaluate company-sponsored health promotion programs?
12. Provide opportunities for employee feedback (e.g., employee interest, satisfaction, adherence) about health promotion programs?
13. Participate in community coalitions and partnerships (e.g., food policy council, tobacco-free partnership, neighborhood safety coalition) to address chronic diseases and related risk factors (e.g., poor nutrition, physical inactivity, tobacco use and exposure)?

Appendix 2: Peer coaches job description

At each school, a staff member will serve as a "peer coach", to help implement the program. The coach will be expected to devote approximately 3 hours per week during the school year. Training will be provided. Each coach will receive a $2,000 stipend in school years 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 and $1000 in school year 2012-2013.

The coach's activities will include:

- Serve as liaison between UMMS and the school, along with the contact person

- Be a champion for the program

- Set up and staff displays and presentations, make arrangements for classes

- Organize and run contests and competition

- Provide support and generate staff support for policy changes

- Keep a log of activities completed

- Assist with gathering participant feedback and assessing school employee needs and interests

- Participate in the school's Step Ahead employee advisory group

- Take part in monthly conference calls with coaches from the other Step Ahead schools and UMMS staff; other networking activity among coaches will be encouraged.

Appendix 3: Focus Group(s) for Planning Purposes

Implementation Guidelines

1. Recruit 12-15 persons with diversity of departments and roles in the school.

   a. Recruit in advance through internal communication channels (school email, electronic or physical bulletin boards, departmental offices)
   b. Recruit via personal invitations to formal or informal leaders.
   c. Persons in designated leadership roles (superintendents, principals and vice-principals, possibly department leaders depending on organizational structure) should not recruit nor participate in groups, to allow for frank discussion and to avoid the appearance of a biased group.
   d. Send email reminders the evening before and/or morning of the group.

2. Schedule a 90-minute session onsite, before or after common working hours or during a common break time.

3. Serve healthy refreshments and compensate participants for their time ($20 to $25 gift card is adequate.)

4. Use an experienced facilitator that is not a member of organizational leadership. Consider an external facilitator.

5. Commit to privacy for individual comments and opinions and ask all group participants to do the same. Persons that are not willing to abide by this should not take part in the focus group.

6. Make audio recordings and have a note-taker for accurate records of what is said. Describe to participants how you will use the tapes and notes, who will handle and store them, and how you will protect their privacy.

Focus Group Script for Planning Focus Group Discussion

Thanks for coming today. As you know, this is a focus group discussion to help plan a new health program for teachers and other staff that Medford High School will take part in, working with UMass Medical School. This is a research study, and you are considered research subjects, so we need to have you look over and sign consent forms, which were given to you as you came in. Has everyone had a chance to look it over? (IF NOT) then I will review the highlights quickly:

- this is a single session, about 90 minutes long,

- we will be tape recording the conversation, we will keep the tapes confidential and not identify any participants by name in reports of our findings or any other way,
- please use each others' first names only and hold all things that are said confidential to protect others' privacy (i.e. what happens in this room, stays in this room),
- you have the right to refuse to answer questions and you have the right to leave at any time,
- Whether you are part of this group or not has no impact on your employment here,
- participants will receive a [gift], and food. Please help yourself to a box lunch now, during the group or on the way out.

Any questions? (RESPOND)

Please print your name on the front page and again on the last page, and sign on the top signature line on the back page. I'll sign under your name, and one of our principal investigators will sign, and then you will get a copy for your records.

Sometimes I will probably say "staff" or "employees" but I will always be thinking about all of the employees here, not just teachers or just non-teachers.

1. To start, let's introduce ourselves. Please give us your first name, job here at _____ High School, and how long you've been here. I am _____

2. How much interaction does staff have with each other during a typical work day? Is it mostly within departments, or with people across departments? PROBES: do people interact outside of school? Do you have the sense that people are friends as well as co-workers, or tend to socialize more with people who aren't connected with the school?

3. Are there things in this school that make it easy for teachers and other staff to eat healthy? What are they? Are there things that make it hard to eat healthy? What are they?

PROBES: are there co-workers who bring in baked goods or other snacks, are there traditions of eating certain foods at events or meetings, etc.

4. Are there things in this school that make it easy for teachers and other staff to be physically active? What are they? Are there things that make it hard to be physically active? What are they? PROBES: are there co-workers that encourage others to get exercise, access to fitness facilities, safe places to walk nearby.

5. From what you know, are the teachers and staff here concerned about their weight? What makes you think they are or are not?

6. What effect do your co-workers' eating habits have on you? Does it make a difference whether it is friends at work or other co-workers that you aren't as close to?

7. What effect do your co-workers' exercise habits have on you? Does it make a difference whether it is friends at work or other co-workers that you aren't as close to?

8. Think of people in general that you know (not just people who work here) who have successfully lost weight or stay at a healthy weight. What do you think are their sources of motivation?

9. How can school employees be good role models of controlling weight for students?

Let's talk about what you would think of a program that could be offered here at school with a lot of different components to it, to help teachers and staff manage their weight. It would be in two main parts, listed on these two posters (UNCOVER): components that focus on the **information and physical environment** like a workbook of healthy eating and exercise and weight control information, email newsletters, pamphlets, walking routes, creating access to exercise facilities, etc/ and parts that deal more with support for healthy habits in the **social** environment, such as policies that support healthy eating and exercise, and creating opportunities for groups of friends at work to exercise together and eat healthy (like challenges and contest, healthy potlucks, etc)

10. What would you think of a program like that? PROBES: What items would appeal to you or other employees here? Items that you think would NOT appeal?

11. What would motivate people to get involved in a program like this?

12. How should we "market" or promote this program to all school employees?

13. How should we talk about the goals of a program like this? (POSTER LISTING OPTIONS) Weight loss? Weight control, Healthy eating and more exercise, physical activity, health improvement, something else?

14. What are your suggestions for creating a school environment that supports healthy eating, physical activity and weight control?

15. Where do staff typically gather and when? What special events and occasions draw a good number of staff members? PROBE: benefits fairs, concerts and plays, other.

16. Is there anything you came in wanting to say, that you haven't had a chance to share?

EMPLOYEE ADVISORY GROUP MANUAL

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

WELCOME TO STEP AHEAD!

Welcome to Step Ahead, a program that promotes healthy eating and physical activity to help employees at your school prevent weight gain and lead a healthier life. Step Ahead is part of a research study being conducted by the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in your school's Employee Advisory Group (EAG). As a member of the EAG, you can make an important contribution to the Step Ahead activities at your school.

This manual will help you learn about Step Ahead, program activities and the role of the EAG.

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What is Step Ahead?

Step Ahead is part of a research study sponsored by the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This study will develop and test programs to prevent weight gain among adults in worksite settings.

Step Ahead is unique because it focuses only on public high school employees. Twelve public high schools in eastern and central Massachusetts are taking part.

The twelve schools were chosen at random from 35 that applied to take part. Six of the twelve participating schools were then chosen at random to receive the Step Ahead program.

Step Ahead activities will take place during the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years. We hope all employees at the Step Ahead schools will take part in program activities and make use of our materials.

At each school, about two-thirds of the employees also are taking part in the evaluation portion of the research study. They have completed the first round of measurements and questionnaires, and there will be two more rounds of measurement and questionnaires, in winter-spring of 2011 and 2012.

Background of Step Ahead

Most Americans slowly gain weight once they become adults, usually one to two pounds each year. This may not seem like a lot, but over the course of a lifetime it adds up. This is one reason why overweight and obesity have become such a problem in our country.   Obesity prevention has been deemed a national public health priority.

Goals of Step Ahead

Step Ahead is designed to work on several levels. Our program will address the school environment so that it has a positive impact on employees' eating habits and exercise habits. This will involve the policies by which the school operates, the physical environment of the school, the social networks and relationships among employees, and the information available.

Step Ahead also focuses on individual behavior, both on healthy eating and physical activity. We encourage employees to make healthy choices throughout their work day. Each choice may seem small by itself, but small steps are likely to lead to success over time. Drastic changes are very hard to maintain for a long period of time. It is best if people build healthy eating and physical activity into their lifestyle.

Research shows that there is more than one way to prevent weight gain. Many factors determine whether a person makes a healthy or unhealthy choice. At the worksite, these factors include the overall school environment, co-workers and the social environment, and the employees themselves. Step Ahead activities target all of these, to make the worksite a place that supports healthy eating and physical activity choices.

The Step Ahead Team

The home of the Step Ahead study is the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) in Worcester. UMMS is the state medical school of Massachusetts and its mission includes education, research and public service.

The Step Ahead team members are part of the Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine at UMMS.

Stephenie Lemon, PhD, one of the two principal investigators for Step Ahead, is an Associate Professor in the Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine at UMass Medical School. She received her Ph.D. in epidemiology from Brown University in 2002. She specializes in behavior change interventions for health promotion and disease management.

Lori Pbert, PhD, one of the two principal investigators for Step Ahead, is a Professor and Associate Chief of the Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine at UMass Medical School. She is a Clinical Psychologist who specializes in designing and evaluating interventions for health risk behavior change, in particular the prevention and treatment of nicotine dependence and obesity in adults and adolescents.

Susan Druker, MA, is the program director for evaluation. She has worked on studies with school nurses to help adolescents to quit smoking and another study with school nurses to help adolescents lose weight.

Barbara Estabrook, MSPH, is a certified health education specialist and is the program director for intervention. She has worked on projects to promote early action for heart attack symptoms, to promote use of cancer screening, and to prevent obesity at the workplace.

Karen Ronayne, AS, is website developer, research coordinator and administrative assistant.

Step Ahead Program Activities

Step Ahead activities address the school workplace environment, co-worker and social groups, and the individual employee.

The Cafeteria and Teachers' Lounges

Step Ahead will work with your school to make it easier to choose healthy foods. This includes providing nutrition information for cafeteria foods and adding healthy food options throughout the school.

Policies

Change in organizations is more likely to happen and to be maintained over time if there are written policies that support it. Step Ahead will work with your school to strengthen existing policies and implement new ones that make the environment supportive of healthy eating, physical activity and weight management.

The Buildings and Grounds

Step Ahead will work with your school to make it easier to be physically active at work. This will include developing maps of walking routes to promote walking within the building and outside on the grounds. Signs may also be used to encourage physical activity.

Group Activities

Research shows that support from other people is important in healthy eating and physical activity. Step Ahead wants to build on relationships among coworkers and friends by promoting group activities at school. For example, walking group toolkits will be available to help a group start a regular walking program. Potluck toolkits will also be available with recipes and ideas to help put together a healthy breakfast, lunch, dinner or snack for a group.

Workshops

Workshops offer the chance to learn more and develop skills needed to make changes in eating and physical activity. A variety of focused workshops will be offered.

Exercise Classes

Step Ahead will provide low-cost on-site exercise classes.

Information

We want all employees to know about our program and take part in activities that interest them. Step Ahead has several information sources. These include printed materials, a website and weekly newsletter sent by email.

Tools for Healthy Living

Step Ahead has tools to monitor progress including logs to help people keep track of what they eat, their activity and their weight. Other materials give "how to" information such as recipes, workout routines and indoor and outdoor walking route maps.

Special Events

In addition to the other Step Ahead activities, there will be frequent special events.

Our first special event will be the *Step Ahead Kick Off* to introduce Step Ahead to employees. Activities will include printed and email materials, displays, giveaways, promotional items and workshops.

Other special events will include periodic contests and special theme events such as Healthy Holidays; Super Bowl Smarts – Getting Ready for the Big Game and Step Ahead into the New Year.

Who at this school will be involved with Step Ahead?

School leaders: The top leadership at your school is committed to working with the Step Ahead study because they believe promoting health among employees is important. We are committed to working with school leadership and the EAG to develop a program that employees will want to participate in and that fits within the school culture.

The Step Ahead "coach": Each Step Ahead school will have one staff member who is paid to work a few hours each week for Step Ahead. This peer "coach" will be part of the EAG and will work closely with school leadership and UMMS staff to implement the Step Ahead program. Another very important role will be to actively encourage fellow employees to take part in Step Ahead programs and make use of materials.

The Employee Advisory Group: At each Step Ahead school, a group of employees will meet several times during each school year to take part in program planning and implementation. It will consist of about 12 members from a variety of departments and types of jobs within the school.

What is an Employee Advisory Group (EAG)?

The Employee Advisory Group (EAG) is an essential part of the Step Ahead program. The EAG will work with the Step Ahead staff to identify, plan and implement the Step Ahead activities best suited to their particular school. This partnership will make certain that employees have a say in their Step Ahead program and make it more likely that the program will be successful and maintained over time. Our goal is to create an environment that makes it easier to choose healthy eating and physical activity options.

What is your role as an EAG member?

You can help the EAG and Step Ahead work effectively by using these skills:

Setting Priorities: The Step Ahead staff and the EAG will work together to set priorities for policy and environmental changes at school.

Good Communication: Positive and open communication among EAG members leads to collaboration and creativity. All members should feel free to suggest ideas and express questions or concerns.

Organization and Follow-Through: EAG members will work with Step Ahead staff and the "coach" to help implement programs at school and to develop support for programs among co-workers.

Motivation and Enthusiasm: Part of your role is to get your co-workers involved in Step Ahead programs and encourage them to take advantage of all the materials and tools we have to offer. You will help plan activities that are fun and also help people learn, develop skills and support each other. When policies are changed it will be important to show that school employees want those changes and will take advantage of programs, facilities or services that are made available.

Networking: Step Ahead has developed several ways to let employees know about our program activities. You will help us reach employees through these channels and help us find new ways to keep employees informed.

How the EAG will work?

Membership: We seek volunteers from different departments and job categories to get as many viewpoints as possible. New members are always welcome.

Meetings: The EAG will meet every 2 to 3 months during the school year. This will give you the chance to help the Step Ahead team set priorities and plan and implement program activities. A Step Ahead staff member from UMMS will develop the agenda and lead each meeting. EAG members will be asked if they have items for the agenda before each meeting.

Together we can make Step Ahead a success by working creatively, collaboratively and with enthusiasm. Thank you for committing your time, talent and ideas to the Employee Advisory Group.

Contact Information

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