

Step 3. Needs assessment

Employee needs assessment—Healthy People

An employee needs assessment will help you tailor a workplace wellness program to meet your employees' needs and interests. In addition, this helps you to identify health topics important to your employees.

Assessment options

Not sure how to find out about your employees' health issues, needs and interests? Here are a few ways you can get started:

- › Hold a healthy morning tea or staff meeting to help identify health issues and initiate a commitment to workplace wellness.
- › Ask managers to add workplace wellness to team meeting agendas (and provide tips for managers to guide discussions). See [Healthy People questions for small groups](#).
- › Use anonymous suggestion boxes to collect ideas for your wellness program.
- › Focus groups with 8 to 10 people in each group can help you gather more in-depth information. Ask general questions to start the discussion. Guide the conversation as people feed off each other's comments. Ask specific questions to find out 'how' and 'why' needs can and should be met.
- › Conduct a survey—a lifestyle risk assessment can provide a health profile for individuals. Questions can cover an individual's:
 - own assessment of health and wellness needs
 - level of awareness about health and wellbeing
 - current lifestyle behaviours
 - willingness to make changes in those behaviours
 - interest in participating in the wellness program.

Some tools to help

- › [Healthy People questions for small groups](#) provides broad questions that can be asked within a small group to spark discussion on wellness issues.
- › [Healthy People Snapshot](#) is an employee lifestyle assessment, which provides a brief confidential summary to each employee.
- › [Healthy People Survey](#) is an in depth lifestyle risk assessment, which provides a confidential summary to each employee. When 5 or more employees complete the survey, the workplace can receive a de-identified summary report of the findings to help with developing an action plan.

Designing and conducting a survey

It's important to let people know why you are doing a survey to encourage participation. Ask employees to help design the survey.

What to ask in a survey

- › Collect demographic information, such as gender, age, language spoken at home and their work area. If only a small number complete the survey, do not release this information as it could identify employees.
- › Include questions on lifestyle behaviours such as fruit/vegetable consumption, physical activity, social and emotional wellbeing, sun protection practices and alcohol and tobacco use. Use this information as baseline data to help evaluate the program.
- › Ask what could help change lifestyle behaviours.
- › Collate health and wellness topics of interest.
- › Seek ideas for wellness activities and changes in the workplace that could support healthier lifestyle behaviours.
- › Call for volunteers to help with the program or to join the wellness committee.
- › Protect the privacy of employees by ensuring the information collected stays confidential. Make it clear that the survey is voluntary.

How to ask questions

Use a combination of open, closed and multiple-choice questions in your survey. Open questions allow people to explain their answers, but the results can be difficult to summarise. Closed and multiple-choice questions ask respondents to choose an answer that is easy to collate and review.

Consider an online survey

Once you develop your survey questions, you can enter them into an online program that uses a database to collate the information. You can refer employees to the database link to complete the survey. For an example, see Survey Monkey <www.surveymonkey.com>.

Communicate results

Tally up survey results and/or write brief summaries. Use charts and graphs to highlight key results. Share the anonymous results with others such as in a newsletter article, executive summary or presentation.

Do it again next year

Employees' wellness issues, needs and interests will change over time. Conduct a needs assessment on an annual basis to inform longer-term workplace wellness planning.

Use the results to develop your action plan in [Step 4](#).