

Academic Leader Toolkit

For Promoting Employee Wellness



Health and Wellness Services
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

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SURGEON GENERAL'S FRAMEWORK

The United States Surgeon General recently released a framework that can help us to understand the essential and core components to workplace well-being. Health and Wellness utilizes this framework in conjunction with the [Eight Dimensions of Wellness](#) when considering the needs of our employees for workplace wellness.

Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being

Centered on the worker voice and equity, these five Essentials support workplaces as engines of well-being. Each Essential is grounded in two human needs, shared across industries and roles.



Components

Creating a plan with all workers to enact these components can help reimagine workplaces as engines of well-being.

Protection from Harm

- Prioritize workplace physical and psychological safety
- Enable adequate rest
- Normalize and support mental health
- Operationalize DEIA* norms, policies, and programs

Connection & Community

- Create cultures of inclusion and belonging
- Cultivate trusted relationships
- Foster collaboration and teamwork

Work-Life Harmony

- Provide more autonomy over how work is done
- Make schedules as flexible and predictable as possible
- Increase access to paid leave
- Respect boundaries between work and non-work time

Mattering at Work

- Provide a living wage
- Engage workers in workplace decisions
- Build a culture of gratitude and recognition
- Connect individual work with organizational mission

Opportunity for Growth

- Offer quality training, education, and mentoring
- Foster clear, equitable pathways for career advancement
- Ensure relevant, reciprocal feedback

*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility

Office of the U.S. Surgeon General

For more detailed information regarding the framework you can access the entire publication released by the Surgeon General [HERE](#)

WORKPLACE WELLNESS CULTURE SELF ASSESSMENT

Having a solid understanding of where you are currently at as a academic leader and team in terms of wellness is crucial to moving forward in a way that best meets everyone's needs. As a starting point, we have created a Wellness Culture Assessment (adapted from University Health Services at UC Berkeley).

Tick the correct column then self-assess your work

**ALWAYS/
OFTEN**

SOMETIMES

**RARELY/
NEVER/ NA**

Wellness Leadership & Organizational Support

1.	Leadership promotes and supports the health and well-being of faculty and staff through their own participation, role modeling, and/or communication.			
2.	Health and Wellness programs offered to faculty and staff are integrated into the department new employee onboarding/training.			
3.	Themes of health and well-being are incorporated into the department's values, mission, and/or vision statements.			
4.	Leadership supports the health and wellbeing of staff through praise and recognition for healthy choices and outcomes.			

Department Managers & Supervisors

5.	Are Provided with the Manager Toolkit for Promoting Employee Wellness when beginning role.			
6.	Staff participation in wellness-related activities is supported.			
7.	Are supported in their own completion of training on workplace health and wellness issues.			
8.	Are aware of and communicate to staff about campus health-related policies and guidelines such as (remote work agreement, lactation stations, accommodations policy, and tobacco free policy)			
9.	Strive to foster healthy workplace interactions and dynamics.			

Department Culture

10.	We participate in training, skill building, and career development.			
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WORKPLACE WELLNESS CULTURE SELF ASSESSMENT

Tick the correct column then
self-assess your work

**ALWAYS/
OFTEN**

SOMETIMES

**RARELY/
NEVER/ NA**

Department Culture Cont'd

11.	We take breaks, including eating lunch away from our desks or workspaces.			
12.	We share healthy snacks in the breakroom.			
13.	We allow time between meetings to transition and minimize the stress created by back-to-back meetings.			
14.	We begin meetings with a breathing/relaxation break to promote staff focus and engagement.			

Wellness & Sustainability

15.	There is access to food storage and preparation options (refrigerator, microwave, etc.)			
16.	There is access to tap water from a well-functioning kitchen sink, drinking fountain, water pitcher, or water dispenser.			
17.	Faculty/staff are aware of and support using active transportation options (walking, biking, public transportation)			
18.	Faculty/staff have access to storage space for personal exercise items (athletic shoes, towel, exercise clothes)			
19.	There is access to or knowledge of options for shower(s) for those engaging in exercise or other related activities during the workday.			
20.	There is awareness of proper hand-washing guidelines and/or bathroom signage.			
21.	There is a reduction in waste by promoting reuse of materials such as the use of reusable water bottles and cutlery.			

Physical Activity

21.	We engage in walking groups or walking meetings.			
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WORKPLACE WELLNESS CULTURE SELF ASSESSMENT

Tick the correct column then
self-assess your work

**ALWAYS/
OFTEN**

SOMETIMES

**RARELY/
NEVER/ NA**

Physical Activity Cont'd

22.	We gather at specific days/time to participate in a 5-10 minute stretch or activity break.			
23.	We are aware of memberships and opportunities for faculty/staff at the rec.			
24.	We actively take the stairs as an alternative to the elevator for those who are able.			

Stress Management & Emotional Health

25.	We provide recognition through praise, positive feedback and campus recognition programs (i.e. service awards)			
26.	We promote and organize opportunities through department wide events (celebrations, retreats, recreational activities)			
27.	We have quiet space available for relaxation and/or meditation.			
28.	We have a healthy process for dealing with workplace challenges, tensions, or conflicts.			

Equity & Inclusion

29.	We foster an environment of respect and inclusion.			
30.	We demonstrate value for diversity and the importance of ensuring an inclusive climate for all.			
31.	We ensure productive, supportive, and equitable resolution of issues around harassment and bias behavior.			
32.	We ensure that department infrastructure and environment are supportive of faculty/staff with disabilities.			

WORKPLACE WELLNESS CULTURE SELF ASSESSMENT

Tick the correct column then
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**ALWAYS/
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SOMETIMES

**RARELY/
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Ergonomics & Safety

33.	We encourage faculty/staff who need an ergonomic evaluation to request one through Human Resources.			
34.	We promote sitting, standing, and moving every hour.			
35.	We are required to review the department building emergency plan.			
36.	We receive regular training/updates on safety-related policies and procedures.			
37.	We are aware of fire extinguisher and AED locations.			
38.	We ensure our safety plans are inclusive of people with disabilities and non-English speakers.			

Final Tallies

**Total the Number of Responses
for Each Column**

HOW TO USE THE RESULTS

- Use the question content to give you ideas for improving the wellness culture in your department, college, or school.
- Focus in on sections that have a particularly low score and begin making improvements in one area at a time
- Provide the self assessment to your team to see if your assessment matches theirs
- Find resources and services at CU Boulder that can help you make a change in the area you identified as opportunities for growth.

SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT IN WELLNESS

SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADING AN ENGAGED TEAM

KNOW WHATS HAPPENING AT CU

- Ensure team is aware of resources and programs available and how to access and use them
- Publicly endorse wellness initiatives and programs
- Discuss upcoming wellness events and services via email, during meetings, and encourage your team to sign up for (newsletter? Emails?)
- Embed health and well-being promotion in multiple aspects of your departments structure (onboarding, training, meetings, celebrations, etc.)

ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION

- Find ways to schedule wellness activities for the team
- Provide support or alternatives for employees whose jobs make it difficult to participate in wellness while at work
- Create a “backup” for employees who work at a service point

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

- Demonstrate the importance of wellness for your team by participating in activities and wellness trainings
- Build wellness into your routine and share with your team
- Take vacation time and limit email access while away
- Participate in and encourage your team to utilize stress management tools

SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT IN WELLNESS

SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADING AN ENGAGED TEAM

COMMUNITY & CONNECTIONS

- Check in with direct reports regularly, especially during times of transition
- Go beyond “how are you” by being intentional with questions and actively participate in conversation with your team member(s)
- Don’t assume what individuals need, take a customized approach to helping address stressors
- Recognize wellness achievements and milestones, show appreciation regularly
- If one of your team members looks burnt out, anxious or depressed, talk to them and ask “are you okay?”
- Create connection opportunities for your team members throughout the weekly touch bases or Microsoft Teams channels

SET & RESPECT HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

- Limit or stop sending emails after work hours
- Save emails as a draft and send the next day or use delayed delivery
- Create “email holidays” or schedule days where sending emails should be limited to allow the team to focus on individual work

INCORPORATING WELLNESS INTO YOUR TEAM

TIPS AND IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED

MEETINGS

- Start meetings with gratitude by having people name one person or thing they are grateful for
- Encourage standing movement (Standing, stretching, walking, etc...) during in person or virtual meetings
- Hold meetings outside in a place where the team can see nature or just a different view than usual
- Shorten meetings by 10-15 minutes and use the extra time to disengage from work and engage in a wellness activity (e.g., practice mindfulness, take 5 deep abdominal breaths, take a brisk walk, climb the stairs, dance to music, etc.)
- Create “meeting holidays” where meetings cannot be scheduled (except for emergencies) to allow the team to focus on individual work

TEAM ACTIVITIES

- Share wellness ideas and successful wellness activities
- Create a gratitude board, post one for the office or use Teams or a similar software to develop one digitally
- Host free trainings and seminars aimed at building relationships with team members
- Collaborate to create team wellness goals

LEAVE & FLEXIBLE WORK

- Use sick leave for self-care as appropriate
- Communicate the importance of using time off to prevent burnout
- Discuss how to plan as a team to take time off to reduce stress and workload upon return.
- Encourage regular breaks from mental tasks, allowing team members time to generate new and creative solutions or ideas.
- Time away reduces stress and helps employees maintain focus when at work.