

Finding Worksite Wellness Solutions that Extend Beyond the Office

Healthi Kids Coalition: an Initiative of Common Ground Health

Worksite Wellness

Compeer Rochester's Healthy Meeting Policy Reaches More than Just Staff

Across New York, there is a dedicated group of community champions on a mission to help increase access to healthier foods and physical activity in their communities. Whether it is where people live, work, play or pray, New Yorkers are asking for better access to healthy food options and opportunities for physical activity.

From policy development to implementation, worksite wellness initiatives are a priority of *Creating Healthy Schools and Communities* (CHSC), a New York State Department of Health funded initiative which aims to create places that support healthy behaviors. The Healthi Kids Coalition, an initiative of Common Ground Health that advocates for healthier more active children in Rochester, NY and Monroe County, is one of 25 teams across New York taking part in this initiative.

The Impact of Unhealthy Work Environments

Americans spend on average at least one-third of their day at work. It is estimated that obesity related diseases cost the U.S. \$190 billion annually, and obesity-related absenteeism costs employers \$4.3 billion annually. Furthermore, an unhealthy worksite environment not only impacts its employees, but also the employees' families and anyone that the worksite serves in their community. Compeer Rochester is a mentoring agency that works to find mentors and create supportive friendships for youth, adults, families, and Veterans living with mental illness. Through the power of supportive friendships, Compeer serves as a bridge to enhanced wellness and community integration for those with social and emotional barriers. Compeer recognized that there is a strong connection between physical and mental health, and a need to enhance their wellness policies so they would have a positive impact on those they serve.



Healthi Kids is a grassroots coalition that advocates for healthier, more active kids in Rochester, NY and Monroe County.



Compeer Rochester is a mentoring agency that supports those living with mental illness.

"Volunteers who work with the kids in Compeer's Youth Program serve as role models. It was important to us to act as role models ourselves. We know that there is a strong correlation between mental health and physical health so we wanted to be sure that we were providing opportunities for healthy eating when our Compeer friends are in our office for meetings and events. It is never too early for kids to learn about making better food choices." –Compeer's Wellness Team



Creating Healthy Schools and Communities

A Healthy Meeting Policy for More than Just Staff

In an effort to create a healthier environment for the employees at Compeer Rochester, Inc. that would also promote health beyond their office walls, the Healthi Kids coalition conducted an assessment of their policies and practices to gain insights on where there was room for improvement. Walking through the assessment with Compeer's wellness team revealed that developing a healthy meeting policy would provide a way to impact their staff, volunteers and those they provide mentorship too. Compeer made the decision to implement a healthy meeting policy that applies to their internal staff meetings, as well as the youth and family workshops that they host, and any other Compeer-sponsored events.

Success Snapshot



Compeer will increase access to healthier foods and physical activity for nearly 250 people by applying their healthy meeting policy to all Compeer-sponsored workshops and events, rather than just their internal staff meetings.

Creating a Community Culture of Health

Compeer created their healthy meeting policy to set guidelines for three different categories: nutrition, physical activity and health promotion for staff. In terms of food, they will no longer serve sugar-sweetened beverages, will always include a fruit and/or vegetable option, and will be aiming to provide whole-grains and foods prepared in a healthful way whenever possible. Compeer will also support walking meetings when possible, as well as activity breaks built in to the agenda of longer meetings. Lastly, the policy advises staff to model healthy behaviors to the youth and families that they work with. It asks that they avoid smoking or consuming food or drinks that do not adhere to their nutrition guidelines in the presence of the people they serve.

By extending their healthy meeting policy to include all Compeer-sponsored meetings, workshops and events, they have not only created a healthier environment for their internal staff, but have established a way to transfer those benefits to the youth, adults, families and Veterans they work with that are living with mental illness. Worksite wellness initiatives that extend beyond the walls of the office will be an important component of creating a culture of health in communities across New York State, as unhealthy environments do not live in silos.



Kids get active at Compeer's Day of Play event

Learn more about Healthi Kids!
Visit us at
healthikids.org



A Compeer mentor and youth spending time outdoors together.