



# Creating a Staff Wellness Action Plan (SWAP)

**A Staff Wellness Action Plan (SWAP) allows your program to be intentional and thoughtful about creating a workplace that values staff wellness, mental health, and physical health.**

## Why create a SWAP?

If your program is just beginning to incorporate staff wellness activities, the SWAP can be a useful tool for planning. If your program already has a staff wellness plan, you may find the SWAP a useful tool for prioritizing goals and strategizing how to implement initiatives. Unexpected events, such as a public health emergency or another type of event that adds strain to the local community, are also appropriate times for revising your program's staff wellness plan — looking with fresh eyes and establishing new goals that place wellness at the forefront.

A great resource to help you focus on the well-being of your team is [ACF-IM-HS-21-05 Supporting the Wellness of All Staff in the Head Start Workforce](#). This Information Memoranda includes staff wellness requirements and many suggestions for activities to improve your program's efforts.

The [SWAP template](#) has four sections. Each section is outlined below. You can also create your own version of this SWAP to best meet the needs of your program.



## Section 1:

### *Identifying the Team*

**What to do:** List the team members who will develop your SWAP. Include a wide variety of roles and perspectives.

**Why is this important?** Including a wide variety of voices on the team ensures your SWAP incorporates the perspective of everyone who will participate in the activities that you propose and of program leaders responsible for implementing your plan.

**How to get started:** You might include staff members such as:

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| ■ Teaching staff          | ■ Program leaders   |
| ■ Site directors          | ■ Program finance and benefits administrators                                     |
| ■ Family engagement staff | ■ Head Start agency representatives if your program is part of a larger recipient |
| ■ Home visitors           | ■ Head  |
| ■ Content area managers   |   |
| ■ Start families          |   |

External team members might include:

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| ■ Infant and early childhood mental health consultants | ■ Nonprofit organizations             |
| ■ Child care health consultants                        | ■ Public health agencies              |
| ■ Health Services Advisory Committee members           | ■ Health insurance carriers           |
| ■ Representatives from local businesses                | ■ Universities and community colleges |



## Section 2:

### *Collecting Data About Our Program's Wellness Interests and Needs*

**What to do:** List the data sources you are using to inform your SWAP. Record the information they provide. Then use the space in the final column to identify some of the specific areas your program may want to address based on the information you learned from your data collection and analysis.

**Why is this important?** By defining your program's strengths and identifying any gaps, you can create a plan that builds on your assets, addresses challenges, and helps you define and accomplish goals more effectively. Be sure the information you collect specifically explores the staff's interests and also provides a variety of types of activities for staff's consideration.

**How to get started:** Below are some of the many options for data sources.

- Listening sessions
- Focus groups
- Motivational interviews
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Polls
- [MyPeers](#)
- Research studies on wellness in the workplace and "stay surveys" focused on why staff members stay in their positions over time

Identify your program's existing strengths around staff wellness. Then consider how you can build on or enhance what is already working well.

#### **Some considerations for the team to discuss include:**

- How have you gathered data in the past?
- How do you gather information about staff wellness needs?
- How much staff interest exists already around staff wellness action planning?
- Can you expand or improve an existing programs to address these interests and needs?
- Are there gaps in your resources or current staff wellness programming?
- What community assets may help you overcome existing challenges or barriers?
- How much administrative and community support do you have?
- What funding and resources are available to create and implement the staff wellness program?

## Section 3:

### *Creating Our Staff Wellness Goals*

**What to do:** Set one or more overarching goals for your program. Then, list several objectives that will help your program achieve these goals. Remember to write objectives that are SMARTIE: Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic/Relevant, Time-bound, Inclusive, and Equitable. List your desired outcomes. Outcomes describe the results of your actions. This information will help you to know if you have been successful.

**How to get started:** Consider these questions when creating your objectives.

**S = Specific:** What does your program want to accomplish?

**M = Measurable:** How will you know when you have been successful?

**A = Actionable:** Are these tasks concrete and will lead to action steps?

**R = Realistic:** Is this objective realistic? Will working toward this objective bring meaningful change?

**T = Time-bound:** When will this happen? What are the timeframe and due dates?

**I = Inclusive:** How will you include all staff and all voices in processes, activities, and decision-making?

**E = Equitable:** How will you ensure each objective is beneficial to everyone in your program?

#### **Example:**

- **Goal:** Expand our staff wellness program.
- **Objective:** Expand our staff wellness program into three new counties by the end of June.
- **SMARTIE Objective:** Expand our staff wellness program into three new counties by the end of June, with volunteers who are representative of the communities in age, gender, race, and other characteristics informing the expansion.



## Section 4:

### *Putting Our Ideas into Action*

**What to do:** For each objective, list the action steps you will take to be successful. Identify who will lead the work, others who can support the work, and resources needed. Set a timeline for your action step and monitor your progress.

**Why is this important?** One of the most challenging components of the action planning process is moving from identifying strategies and goals toward implementation. Describing each action step helps to put your objectives into action.

**How to get started:** Consider these guidelines to move your plans to action.

- Start by focusing on relationships—with staff, colleagues, administrators, families, and leaders.
- Seek, build, and maintain strong partnerships.
- Be engaged, responsive, and flexible.
- Communicate, share information, and meet often and regularly.
- Celebrate work accomplished to promote engagement.
- Brainstorm possible solutions to barriers.
- Keep solutions that worked and use them in the future.
- Discuss and record strategies that did not work this time. These may work in another context.
- Reflect continually on whether your approach promotes equity and fosters inclusion.
- Identify training and technical assistance opportunities to learn more about topics such as staff wellness interventions, stress reduction, reflective supervision, motivational interviewing, coaching, employee assistance programs, and other strategies.
- Learn about continuous quality improvement and how to implement plan-do-study-act cycles.
- Develop a system to measure progress through data collection and feedback to guide your improvement efforts.



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