Social support is the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has assistance available from other people, and that one is part of a supportive social network at work. Social support creates shared experiences, increases communication, and group cohesion that can foster a sense of well-being.

Social Support and the Healthy Workplace

1. **Social support encourages physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.** Consistent empirical evidence suggests that people who maintain strong social relationships are healthier and live longer. Social support interventions in the workplace build, strengthen, and maintain strong social relationships that can help advance behavioral change, specifically in terms of physical activity. Moderate physical activity done most days of the week for 30 minutes is recommended to improve or maintain one’s health.

2. **The formation of like-minded social groups builds camaraderie and support at work.** Groups can take a number of forms such as staff members walking together at lunch, participating in a health challenge, and joining the staff hula dancing group or other team activity. These groups can not only advance physical health, they come with additional benefits such as increasing employee engagement, accountability, and overall job satisfaction. This is especially helpful for those whose family circumstances make participation in physical activity difficult.

3. **Involvement by managers and other influential staff members as wellness champions increases organization-wide health.** By socially connecting with others and helping to educate their co-workers about program offerings, wellness champions strive to achieve a shared goal of improving health in the workplace. These wellness champions share information with co-workers and organize activities at the worksite such as walking groups and promoting healthy vending machine choices. These efforts are, not surprisingly, more sustainable when they are continually reinforced from the top-down.

Find source information at http://hiphi.org/sources