

Public Health Perspectives

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PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVES #14



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Building THRIVE: How I Created and Grew an Employee Wellness Program—From Monthly Education to Grand Teton

When I interviewed for my current role as an Employee Experience Coordinator, I shared a goal that was very important to me: I wanted to help build an employee wellness program. Creating something that supports both physical and mental well-being had always been a passion of mine, and being upfront about that interest from the beginning made all the difference.

Because I communicated that early, leadership brought me on with the understanding that this was something I could develop and grow over time. That openness laid the foundation for what is now our wellness initiative: **THRIVE**: focused on Total Wellness, Health, Resilience, Inspiration, Vitality, and Empowerment.

Although I have only been in this role just over a year, THRIVE continues to evolve as I learn what resonates most with employees and where we can make the biggest impact.

How I built the program (A practical “how-to”)

If you were asked to build a wellness program, here is the approach I took:

1. Be upfront about your vision

If wellness is something you’re passionate about, say it early.

Sharing my goal during the interview process helped ensure:

- Leadership alignment from day one
- Support for building something new
- Freedom to be creative within the role

2. Start simple and consistent

One of the core components of THRIVE is **THRIVE30**, a monthly, 30-minute wellness session held on the first Monday of each month via Teams.

These sessions are:

- Light on presentation
- Conversation-based and interactive
- Focused on practical, relatable topics

The goal is not to lecture, but to engage employees in meaningful discussions about their well-being.

3. Create supporting touchpoints

In addition to THRIVE30 sessions, I:

- Write monthly wellness newsletters
- Share tips, challenges, and resources
- Reinforce key topics throughout the month

This creates consistency and keeps wellness top of mind.

4. Stay flexible and creative

One of the most impactful lessons: wellness doesn't have to be confined to a meeting room, or even an office.

The Grand Teton THRIVE30: Bringing wellness to life

The Grand Teton experience came together organically.

I was planning a family trip to Yellowstone and Grand Teton and realized I would be out of office during our scheduled THRIVE30 session. Instead of canceling, I proposed an idea to my supervisor:

What if I facilitated the session live from Grand Teton National Park?

She immediately supported the idea.

That month's topic was **"Resets"**, and the setting could not have been more fitting.

During the session, we discussed:

- How to recognize when you need a reset
- The importance of intentional breaks
- How different environments and activities help people recharge
- Identifying personal reset strategies

For me, nature has always been one of those resets. Being able to facilitate that conversation while surrounded by the mountains, water, and fresh air made the experience more meaningful—not just for me, but for participants as well.

This moment reinforced an important principle:
wellness is not one-size-fits-all, and sometimes the most impactful conversations happen outside traditional spaces.

Budget, guidelines, and organizational support

THRIVE is still a growing program, and I've been mindful of working within reasonable boundaries:

- Currently I do not have a “budget/ funding” for THRIVE
- Creativity has been key in maximizing engagement without requiring expenditures

The Grand Teton session, for example, did not require additional funding, aligned with a trip I was already taking, demonstrating how innovation doesn't always require added cost.

Evaluation and program growth

Since launching THRIVE, I've focused on continuous improvement.

How I evaluate:

- Direct feedback from employees
- Participation and engagement levels
- Observing which topics generate the most discussion

What I've learned:

- Employees prefer interactive, discussion-based sessions
- Real-life application (like the Grand Teton session) increases engagement
- There is strong interest in ongoing and evolving wellness topics

Because of this feedback, I continue to:

- Expand topics
 - Refine delivery style
 - Introducing new ideas and formats
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Challenges

- Building engagement while the program is still new
- Balancing diverse wellness needs across employees
- Creating meaningful content within limited time (30-minute sessions)
- Continuously generating fresh ideas month after month

These challenges have helped me become more creative, adaptable, and intentional in my approach.

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What I found most fulfilling

The most rewarding part has been creating something from the ground up and seeing employees respond to it.

Moments like the Grand Teton THRIVE30 session reminded me that:

- Wellness can create connection
- Small shifts can have meaningful impact
- People value being given space to reflect and reset

Skills and strengths needed

To successfully build a wellness program like this, you need:

- Strong communication and facilitation skills
- Creativity and willingness to try new ideas
- Ability to engage and read an audience
- Consistency and organization
- A genuine passion for helping others improve their well-being

Suggestions for others

- Start small, consistency matters more than scale
- Focus on engagement, not perfection
- Make it personal and relatable
- Use your environment and experiences creatively
- Don't be afraid to try something different

Preparation for this type of work

Helpful backgrounds include:

- Public health
- Certified Behavioral Change Specialist
- Certified Personal Trainer
- Certified Health Coach

But just as important:

- A passion for wellness
- A willingness to learn and evolve
- Strong interpersonal skills

Resources

- Internal wellness communications (newsletters, sessions)
- Behavior changes and habit-building frameworks

LinkedIn reflection (excerpt):

“One of the projects I’m most proud of in my current role has been helping create and grow our employee wellness program, THRIVE.

Through THRIVE, I write monthly wellness newsletters and facilitate wellness classes on the first Monday of each month, all with the goal of helping employees prioritize their physical and mental well-being.

While my family and I were camping in Yellowstone and Grand Teton, I pitched the idea of teaching our monthly wellness class live from Grand Teton National Park...

Our discussion centered around something many of us need but don’t always prioritize resets... Experiences like this remind me that wellness isn’t one-size-fits-all—and sometimes the best conversations happen outside the office walls.”

[Link](#) to LinkedIn post

Final reflection

THRIVE is still evolving, but that’s what makes it meaningful. In just over a year, it has grown from an idea I shared in an interview into an active and expanding wellness initiative.

The Grand Teton THRIVE30 session was a reminder that impactful wellness programs don’t require perfection, they require intention, authenticity, and a willingness to meet people where they are.

This article is available now at:

<https://www.bettycjung.net/Phenomcareers.htm>

<https://www.bettycjung.net/Phenomblog.htm>

You can contact Angelina at: angelinasantoro55@hotmail.com

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