Congregational Wellness Program

Sample Needs Assessment

Why Conduct a Congregational Needs Assessment?

In order to address your congregation's health needs, you must first understand their perspective. The only way to know what members of your congregation consider important and interesting is to ask them! What you may perceive as the most important health needs may be completely opposite of the congregation. However, as leaders you can make recommendations and make an influence through your professional knowledge. Perspectives may be very different, which is good, because the success of a congregational wellness program depends on a wholistic view of the congregation's needs and possible solutions.

What is the Purpose of a Needs Assessment?

To Discover:

- The demographics of your congregation
- What your congregation is already doing in terms of health and wellness
- What health needs, interests and concerns are important to members
- Who is supportive, interested and available to assist with the program
- Priority areas to implement services/activities

Information to Gather Before Distributing the Survey

- What size is your congregation? (average weekly attendance)
- Who attends? (singles, families)
- How would you describe your community? (rural, urban, inner city, commuter community, aging, professionals, blue collar, other)
- How would you describe your congregation? (rural, urban, inner city, commuter community, aging, professionals, blue collar, other)
- What are the ethnicities in your community?
- What are the ethnicities in your congregation?
- What does your faith-based organization already offer that is related to health lifestyle? (meals, visiting shut-ins, hospital visits, prayer chain, prayer shawl ministry, support groups, health fairs, hand sanitizer available, blood pressure screening, etc.)
- What is your faith-based organization's mission statement?
- What does the group conducting the Needs Assessment survey consider to be the most important health-related needs of the congregation?
- Who will benefit from the congregational wellness program being developed – members, community or both?

Note: "Wholistic" is not a misspelled version of holistic. In a congregational wellness program, the linguistic terms "wholistic" and "holistic" are not interchangeable – they have distinct meanings. When speaking of congregational wellness and faith community nursing, the "W" should be used. The Rev. Dr. Granger-Westberg first advocated for the use of the term "wholistic" rather than "holistic," to more closely relate the term to wholeness and to avoid confusion with the term "holistic" that connotes-non religious alternative health care practices.

Source: Eating Smart and Moving More

Guidelines for Conducting a Needs Assessment Tool

- Use check boxes and short, open-ended questions
- Enlist clergy and lay leadership to announce and promote the survey in advance
- Provide the needs assessment tool at all services, group/committee meetings, and/or events for a two-week period.
- Deliver it at the beginning of the service/event/meeting, provide time during the service from completion, and an explanation of returning the survey
- Deliver a survey to shut-ins
- Provide a way to access or request the survey for radio, TV and Internet audiences
- Place an announcement in the newsletter and bulletin prior to distributing, explaining the purpose, the procedures, and when results will be reported to the congregation
- If your organization has a website, post an announcement about the survey there; consider creating and online survey through a free survey site, such as www.surveymonkey.com
- Be sure to include all age groups
- Be specific with questions and use common terms

For assistance with creating a customized Needs Assessment Tool for your congregation or additional samples and resources visit the Well-Ahead website (www.wellaheadla.com) or e-mail wellahead@la.gov

Sample Health Ministry Needs Assessment for Congregations

1.	I eat 2-3 cups of vegetables on most days	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
2.	I eat 1.5 -2 cups of fruit on most days	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
3.	I drink soda every day	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
4.	I am interested in learning more about healthy food choices	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
5.	I am interested in learning how to incorporate fruits and vegetables into my diet	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
6.	I am interested in learning about healthier food choices and portions to help manage my weight	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
7.	I am interested in participating in “tasting/cooking” events to sample healthy foods	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
8.	I am interested in having healthy snacks available in our faith community	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
9.	I am interested in having healthy meals served in our faith community	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Source: Eating Smart and Moving More

10. I am physically active 3 to 5 days per week (this includes brisk walking, jogging, biking, aerobics fitness classes, swimming, etc.)	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
11. I am interested in learning more about the benefits of physical activity and how it can influence my health *(provide comment section)*	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
12. I am interested in increasing my physical activity level	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
13. I am interested in walking groups and other team activities to increase my physical activity level	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
14. I would like to see more places to be physically active in our faith community *(provide a comment section)*	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
15. I would like to receive health information that I can read, listen to or watch on my own	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
16. I would like to participate in health activities before services	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
17. I would like to participate in health activities after services	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
18. I would like to participate in health activities like physical activity breaks or healthy food tastings	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
19. during regularly schedule faith community events *20.* I would like for our leaders to talk about healthy eating and physical activity in sermons, messages or other talks	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
21. I would like to see health information in our bulletins, newsletters and on bulletin boards *(provide comment section for members to provide what type of information they would like to see)*	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure
22. I would like our faith community to offer regular classes on physical activity or healthy eating *(provide comment section for members to provide what type of information they would like to see)*	☐ Yes	☐ No	☐ Not Sure

Source: Eating Smart and Moving More