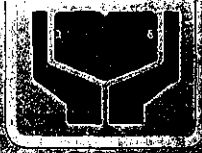


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MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR
Number 13
Series of 2013

SUBJECT: Guidelines in Promoting Wellness in DSWD

I. Rationale

The Human Resource Development Bureau (HRDB) is mandated to address the Department's human resource requirements and ensure the well-being of personnel towards greater employee productivity and overall organizational effectiveness.

The development and expansion of sectoral and poverty alleviation programs, the use of convergence strategy and increasing involvement of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) have radically changed the workplace situation in the past five (5) years. The workload has increased the pace and various challenges that need to be addressed escalated at different levels. This requires the ability of personnel to maintain the high level productivity protected/managed to ensure an uncompromised quality of service delivery.

An employee is most productive if he/she possesses the right competencies for the job and manifests the following:

- is able to cope and overcome challenges at work;
- is able to strike a good balance between his professional and personal life;
- is able to establish a healthy relationship in the workplace;
- and is able to check and respond to identified needs in aspects of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing in order that feelings of loyalty, enthusiasm, and desire to achieve organizational goals are kept at its peak.

Given these, the Department shall provide opportunities for employees to nurture relationships, avoid burn-out, de-stress and maintain their passion for work. Further, as part of the agreement in the DSWD-SWEAP 2013 Collective Negotiation Agreement, a Comprehensive Employee Welfare Program shall be implemented.

This guideline is issued as reference of the Central and Field Offices in developing/identifying options for wellness program packages for its personnel, and that provision/allotment of funds shall be subject to existing rules and regulations.

II. Objectives

General

Provide opportunities and avenues to promote and uphold the wellbeing of personnel in the areas of health and interpersonal relationships by offering wellness packages designed to boost *esprit de corps* or morale¹ and the ability to cope with the challenges in the workplace.

Specific

Provide a framework and guide by which offices can design/develop a wellness package for their personnel.

III. Scope/ Coverage

The DSWD Employees Wellness Program shall offer opportunities and services that will promote and sustain healthy well-being and harmonious relationships among DSWD Personnel. Purposive activities will help them cope with the physical, mental, emotional and social challenges of day to day work. The Wellness Program package shall be made available to all DSWD personnel.

IV. Definition of Terms

1. Department - refers to the Department of Social Welfare and Development
2. Personnel - refers to all employees (regular, contractual, casual, co - terminus) including Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) workers of the Department.
3. Wellness - refers to the state by which the personnel is able to reach his fullest potential along physical, psychological, emotional, and social aspects in fulfilling his role expectations in the workplace.
4. Physical - refers to of or relating to the body as distinguished from the mind or spirit;
5. Mental - or psychological shall refer to of or relating to the mind including the ability to manage emotions and disposition;
6. Counseling - shall refer to professional service designated to guide an individual to a better understanding of his/her problems by using psychological principles and methods. A counselor should be licensed.

¹ According to Alexander H. Leighton, "morale is the capacity of a group of people to pull together persistently and consistently in pursuit of a common purpose". (Source : Wikipedia; Alexander H. Leighton, Human Relations in a Changing World: Observations on the Uses of the Social Sciences (1949))

7. Psycho-social support services – shall refer to service provided to relieve an individual's feelings of helplessness, despair, due to or brought about by stress. This may be provided by a DSWD Psychologist, Social Worker or trained personnel in the subject/process.
8. Morale - refers to the mental and emotional attitudes of an individual to the tasks at hand; also esprit de corps;
9. Esprit de corps - the common spirit existing in the members of the group;
10. Team Building - Appreciation of individual staff contribution in the attainment of office goals and objectives and creating opportunities for social interaction and conflict resolution, among employees;
11. Auxiliary Services –refers to augmentation or support assistance consisting of, but are not limited to psycho-social services and referrals to appropriate organizations outside of DSWD that may provide needed assistance.

V. Legal Bases

1. The Administrative Code of 1987 authorizes the Department to "... prepare a career and personnel development plan... which shall include provisions on performance evaluation, in-service training (both local and overseas scholarships/grants), job rotations, incentive rewards systems and other provisions for employees' health, welfare, counseling, recreation and similar services..."
2. DSWD Memorandum Circular Number 01, series of 2012 or the Re - Clustering of Offices, Bureaus, Services at the DSWD Central Office

VI. Basic Policies

1. The DSWD Employee Wellness Program in the Central Office and Field Offices shall be designed based on the tenets of "having a healthy well-being to include a healthy mind and body" as well as ensuring that *esprit de corps* is nurtured.
2. Services and activities to promote morale among personnel shall be purposive and responsive. HRDB at the Central Office and Human Resource Development Unit in the Field Offices shall take initiatives to determine personnel needs, level of morale, and the like through the conduct of assessments or surveys, discussions/interaction and the like on a regular basis (at least once a year).
3. Activities for the Wellness Program shall be incorporated in the Annual Work and Financial Plan of Offices, Bureaus and Services (OBS), subject to parameters set by the Department and pertinent oversight agencies such as Civil Service Commission, Commission on Audit (COA), etc.

4. The OBS shall officially inform its personnel of the wellness "package" available to them in a fiscal year.
5. Wellness Program that will be conducted to promote health and morale are not limited to those listed in this Circular.

VII. Program Description

The Wellness Program is an organized set of opportunities with activities, services or strategies executed by the Central Office and Field Offices to uphold the wellbeing and promote morale of employees by focusing on health care and fostering team spirit.

A. Five (5) Dimensions of the Wellness Program.

The following five (5) dimensions of the Wellness Program are necessary to achieve balance and attain wellness:

1. Physical Health – Level of physical fitness and absence of disease, e.g. provision of health coverage that includes annual physical examination (one (1) day paid leave for staff to undergo Annual Physical Examination (APE) for employees in the Field Office), vaccination, opportunities for physical exercise and other health services
2. Mental/ Emotional Health – ability to control emotions such that the employee is comfortable expressing them in an appropriate manner. Services such as but not limited to the following may be provided:
 - 2.1 Regular stress debriefing
 - 2.2 Managing anger session
 - 2.3 Counseling
 - 2.4 Encourage the organization of support groups
3. Social Health – ability to interact well with people and to have satisfying interpersonal relationships.
 - 3.1 A regular session for sharing and bonding like "Kapihan" "Talakayan" Friday Club organized at the Cluster or Office level.
 - 3.2 Group activities like greening of the office vicinity, planting of vegetables and fruit bearing trees that can be harvested by the employees, easy to maintain flowers or a mini garden of potted vegetable plants where employees can own and cut;
 - 3.3 Organizing sports and cultural activities
 - 3.4 Participation in theme or inter-agency celebrations (e.g. anniversary, children's month, women's month, Earth Hour, etc.)
4. Spiritual Health – basic belief in a unifying force with faith as the concept and respect for the religious beliefs of every member of the organization. Tolerance and support for this through the following:

- 4.1 Organizing ecumenical faith services;
- 4.2 Supporting activities to enhance faith e.g. recollection, meditation; Bible reading sessions

- 5. Environmental Health and Conducive Workplace – a healthy and supportive setting in which to function. Ensuring that facilities are well maintained (clean, well-lighted, access to safe drinking water), sufficient and adequate resources/equipment to allow personnel to be effective in their jobs, etc.

B. Holistic Preventive Care

Preventive care takes into account the total well-being of an individual. It is recognized that one's well-being is the individual's own responsibility; however, the Department shall create a workplace that provides opportunities and services that will help its personnel achieve this in the context of the five dimensions described above.

- 1. Aspects of health such as nutrition, physical exercise and mental relaxation are covered herein.
 - a. Educating personnel about preventive health care by organizing seminars/ forums on topics of choice (e.g. diseases, stress management, nutrition, developing a health program) or through partnership with other agencies/ organizations.
 - b. Organizing physical activities such as aerobics and running, hiking, and walking clubs, among others.
 - c. Setting up a mechanism for stress debriefing or counseling. Imperative is a specially trained staff designated as Counselor of the Day, who will hold the session/ activity within the office premises or in any other location, as the situation requires;
 - d. Services for settling workplace dispute resolution methods (e.g. mediation) and the DSWD grievance machinery or institutionalization of a quarterly "Talakayan" in every division/ center.

Health Care Services

- a. Provision of medical and/ or dental services through a Health Maintenance Organization (HMO), subject to Collective Negotiation Agreement (CNA) between the Department and the Social Welfare Employees Association of the Philippines (SWEAP) or its accredited employee's organization.
- b. Provision of health services in Offices where there are existing clinic facilities or health service providers such as Medical Doctors, Nurses, Nutritionists, Dentists, among others.

Health providers may be tasked to extend assistance by conducting hospital/home confinement visits, offering medical/nutritional/health related advice.

- c. Provision of an office space/ staff room which can be used as Reflection/Counseling Room, Nursing/ Lactating/ Breastfeeding station to allow the employee some privacy or that can be used as needed.
- d. Organization of a Medical First Responders group, ably trained in advanced life support and emergency First Aid. The group in rotation basis must be equipped to respond to internal emergencies. First Aid Kits shall be made available and accessible to personnel.

2. Building Camaraderie

Creating or maximizing opportunities for socialization and interaction among co-workers.

- a. Encourage participation in agency-wide or inter-office/inter-agency activities and celebrations.
- b. Organize cultural and sports activities in relation to special national celebrations (e.g. Agency/office Anniversary, Women's Month, Social Workers Week).
- c. Organizing home/hospital visits by co-workers to lend support to colleagues by keeping in touch and checking on a colleague especially during illness, in times of grief, extended absence.
- d. Organizing gatherings for spiritual purposes e.g. prayer meetings/ services, Bible study, and holy retreat; Prayer room for Muslim employees and other Christian practitioners depending on what is appropriate in the practices;

3. Auxiliary Services

Referral and / or networking – the Department, through the Crisis Intervention Units (CIU) may refer the employee to other government and/ or private entities that can potentially assist them in meeting their needs.

Organize activities that will cater to other topics of interest such as but not limited to financial management, augmenting income, retirement, geriatrics;

VIII. Implementing Procedure

Offices shall take into consideration employee's ability to cope and flourish in the workplace.

The HRDB in the central office and its counterpart in the Field Offices shall determine the prevailing needs and concerns of personnel and propose a package of services and/or set up the support system to respond to these identified needs.

This shall ensure an objective programming or scheduling of activities and services for a calendar year and to ensure that they are included in the Annual Work and Financial Plan.

The Undersecretary for the Institutional Development Group and the Regional Director in the Field Offices are authorized to approve wellness packages for the Central Office and Field Office respectively provided these are consistent with existing rules and regulations.

Institutional arrangement, monitoring and evaluation, reportorial requirements and documentation of program implementation are to be undertaken.

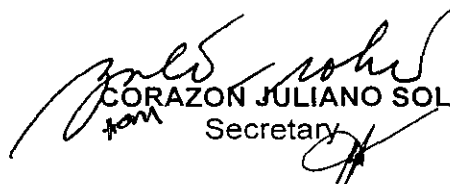
IX. Funding

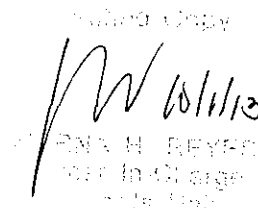
The Department shall appropriate an annual budget for the implementation of the Employee Wellness Program based on the package of services that will be determined by the Offices concerned, and subject to existing rules and regulations.

X. Effectivity

This order shall take effect immediately.

Issued in Quezon City, this 30TH day of SEPTEMBER 2013.


CORAZON JULIANO SOLIMAN
Secretary


RINA W. REYES
Acting Director