



INSIGHTS PAPER

Health coaching today looks different than it used to – and that’s a good thing

Over three decades ago, StayWell introduced a cutting-edge approach to behavior change that later became known as telephonic health coaching.

It wasn't long before telephone-based coaching became a cornerstone of workplace well-being programs. Over time, this form of health coaching has become firmly established as a key component of best practice health and well-being programs and remains a cornerstone of employer health and well-being efforts. In fact, a [recent industry report](#) indicated that 67% of employers currently offer health coaching and another 13% intend to offer the service in the near future.

Yet, it's obvious that our world has changed. For instance, in 2015, [millennials became the largest generational group in the U.S. workforce](#), producing different expectations for employers in terms of benefits strategies and talent retention. There have also been important shifts in where, when and how we work. In addition, use of mobile technology has grown exponentially, for example, [use of health-related apps has increased substantially in recent years, from 16% in 2014 to 33% in 2016](#).

This has created a number of opportunities for health coaching to evolve to effectively meet people where they are. Moreover, the notion of well-being is changing from something you “do” to something that’s baked seamlessly into the fabric of our lives, significantly enabled through advances and innovations in technology. Some of the same technologies driving the evolution of our lives, in and out of the workplace, are enabling proven strategies like health coaching not only to remain relevant, but to be even more engaging and effective for many more participants. Coaching now leverages video conferencing, mobile access, digital content, and messaging support. Technology has enabled more flexible participation such that people can participate when it works best for them with 24/7 access and access outside of work hours.



67%

of employers currently offer health coaching
NBGH_Fidelity 2017 report

Technology has enabled access to a health coach

24/7



Health Coaching



At StayWell, we apply science-based coaching strategies and techniques. We consider the whole-person, by providing individuals with the information and the support they need to successfully manage their health risks while also assisting them with health behavior change. Our approach to coaching follows established behavior-change science to address the individual's goals, emotional triggers, barriers, willpower, beliefs, and current readiness to change.

Individual Goals

Emotional Triggers

Barriers

Willpower

Beliefs

Readiness to Change



Our research shows that different forms of health coaching appeals to different people, and that choice of modality plays a positive role in helping them change their health behaviors. Evolution of technology has enabled the advancement of StayWell's health coaching solution – one that includes individual, supported and group coaching.



INDIVIDUAL COACHING

Self-paced digital coaching programs that guides individuals to achieve – and sustain – health lifestyle changes.

Individual coaching is supported through digital solutions, such as StayWell's Self-Directed Coaching, and tends to appeal to people looking for flexibility to meet their individual needs, while still using behavior change theories and tailored content to create a true coaching experience.

SUPPORTED COACHING

One-on-one phone or in-person (onsite) coaching programs based on personalized and tailored coaching conversations designed to meet each individual's unique needs, preferences, and interests

Supported coaching – delivered via telephone or onsite at the workplace – provides a human touch wherever a participant is, and is connected to online dashboards for ongoing monitoring. Onsite coaching offers a visible well-being presence in the workplace providing participants with convenient access to an experienced behavior change expert.

GROUP COACHING

Coach-led programs utilizing video conferencing to connect groups of people all dealing with a specific health risk factor

Group coaching leverages the power of social connections through digital, video and audio technologies, to bring people together to meet their health goals. The group dynamic requires a higher level of commitment and accountability, which is fostered within the established peer support system.

Health Coaching



In our view, health coaching is not an isolated program. Rather, it is a process or combination of strategies designed to build skills and knowledge by applying solid, evidence-based behavior change principles. It's about fostering motivation and confidence. It's about connections – connecting individuals to the right tools and resources based on their personal preferences, needs and interests. It's about supporting and meeting individuals where they are and when they need it.

There has been growing speculation that employers are done with health coaching. What that speculation ignores is that health coaching is one of the most effective tools there is to improve health and well-being, and it is still considered a best practice in population health and well-being programs. Health coaching, in various forms, has been associated with reduced weight, improved tobacco use, eating, and exercise behaviors, and other positive outcomes, such as improved hemoglobin A1C levels and reduced hospital admissions.

StayWell's individual coaching solution – Self-Directed Coaching – has demonstrated effectiveness in moving individuals further along the behavior change pathway. Data from over 10,000 assessments in this program show about one quarter are progressing to a higher stage of readiness to change. This migration is one of the first steps toward behavior change and health improvement. It is further supported by the fact that vegetable servings and vigorous exercise were improved by about half of the participants.

Group coaching has been a wildly popular approach to behavior change with demonstrated effectiveness for those individuals dealing with substantial health challenges such as obesity. In fact, StayWell's Ignite group coaching program has seen the greatest uptake in our history. We find that participants are quickly enrolling and taking advantage of the social components of the program, including tracking tools, discussion boards, and coach messaging. Program retention is high (over 70%) and program impact has been impressive, with over 70% of program participants losing weight over a 12-week intensive program period.

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StayWell's Ignite group
coaching program

To learn more contact StayWell at
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