

## Healthier U Motivation Guidelines

Guiding principles for motivation:

- Tap into people's innate drive to do things.
- Three core elements from studies on motivation: Autonomy, Mastery, and Purpose.
  - Autonomy:** People have choice over how they accomplish a goal, when they do it, where they do it, and with whom. Provide choice within set goals; allow them to choose their own teams; and tap into their desire to be self-directed.
  - Mastery:** People are motivated to work towards mastery. Mastery is defined as requiring effort over the long haul, and involves the desire to become better and better at something that matters. In a happy state of striving toward mastery, goals are clear, feedback is immediate, and the relationship between what a person has to do and what s/he can do are evenly matched.
  - Purpose:** People who attain goals that have a greater purpose are happier and more satisfied than those who attain goals that are just about individual benefit. Connecting to a cause larger than yourself drives the deepest motivation.
- People love trinkets, but we must be careful that they are not used to drive behavior change.
- Rewards should be limited to short run, relatively simple, one-time mundane tasks.
- Use rewards sparingly.
- Use rewards to create an atmosphere of fun.
- Do not use rewards to motivate people to work in teams.
- Do not use rewards for behavior change over time.
- Do not use rewards to encourage people to solve problems.
- Use nontangible rewards such as praise and positive feedback (e.g., one on one conversations, peer/team support, success stories highlighted in department newsletters).
- Provide useful information: ***the more the praise is about effort and strategy*** rather than about achieving a particular outcome, the more effective it can be.

Guiding principles for environment change: "Nudges," or how the environment can be structured to support healthy behaviors.

- People are likely to do what people around them do (e.g., your study habits are greatly influenced by your college roommate, if your best friend makes unhealthy choices you are more likely to make unhealthy choices).

- Spotlight effect; people follow along because they think people are watching and noticing more than they do.
- Asking people what they intend to do helps people to do it. “The nudge can be accentuated by asking them when and how they plan to do it.” (*Nudge*, Thaler and Sunstein)
- Changes to the environment matter: “Often we can do more to facilitate good behavior by removing some small obstacle than by trying to shove people in a certain direction.”

Summary learnings from *Nudge* research:

- Find the path of least resistance (remove obstacles, make it easier for people to do what they want or what you want them to do).
- Expect error.
- Give feedback.
- Give people information to help them make choices and structure complex choices — give people fewer choices so they can think through the tradeoffs, alternatives, etc.
- Translate actions into benefits: how much activity = how many cookies, pieces of pizza, etc. to help with trading short-term enjoyment for long-term gain.

### **Lessons learned from pilot:**

- People are motivated by those around them.
- Team support was a big driver of behavior change.
- Visible leadership support is a powerful motivator for widespread participation.
- Competition based on individuals or teams reaching a collective goal can be a powerful motivator. Competition is very serious and should be used with thoughtful planning and execution.
- Make the easy thing, the right thing. Remove obstacles and barriers.
- Recognition is a very powerful motivator.

### **Elements of an effective program:**

- Utilize the support of teams.
- Build community.
- Change environment/culture.
- Make the healthy thing the easy thing.
- Use rewards sparingly and only to drive a one-time action (nudge).
- Avoid using extrinsic rewards to drive behavior change.
- Focus communication and messaging around intrinsic benefits of wellness.
- People are more likely to be motivated if they have options; can develop mastery and feel that they have purpose.
- Provide feedback on their progress.