

Sparking Wonder in Workplace Wellness



START Assessment

Surveying a Team's Attitudes and Readiness for Transformation

*A science-based tool to understand whether your
workplace wellness program is likely to succeed.*

Designed by

Wunsupona

(443) 377-1986

Wunsupona.com

hello@wunsupona.com

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START is the beginning. Wunsupona works with organizations to interpret results, plan and implement next steps. If you want support using this tool, well, we're here to help.

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Plain Language Summary

Wellness programs often struggle because they are launched without understanding whether people actually have the time, safety, trust, and support to use them. Many workplace surveys miss this gap by focusing on opinions instead of the conditions that shape real behavior.

The START Assessment helps close that gap. It is a practical tool for understanding whether your organization is ready for a wellness program right now. It includes 19 questions that assess seven conditions known to influence participation.

Use this assessment to understand where your organization is today and what might make wellness efforts more possible going forward. Follow the scoring rubric to understand readiness and identify where attention is needed.

Many organizations choose support at this stage. Wunsupona helps teams use the assessment well, interpret results with care, and turn what they learn into clear and realistic next steps.

Many organizations choose to have support at this stage. Wunsupona helps teams use the START tool, interpret results with care, and turn what they learn into clear and realistic next steps.

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Introduction

Organizations invest meaningful time, money, and hope into workplace wellness programs. Even with good intentions, participation and sustained engagement are often lower than expected.^{1,2}

One reason for this, is how readiness is assessed before programs begin. Many surveys focus on satisfaction, preferences, or intentions, such as asking employees what they want or whether they would participate. Research shows these responses do not reliably predict behavior when people are busy, stretched thin, or unsure how safe participation feels.³⁻⁵

When people are overwhelmed or uncertain, even well designed programs can feel like one more demand. This disconnect helps explain why organizations often see low participation, uneven engagement, and unused benefits despite positive assessment feedback.^{6,7}

Workplace health research consistently shows that conditions matter. Time, trust, workload, leadership behavior, and culture shape whether people can engage in wellness efforts in real life.⁸

The encouraging news is that these conditions are visible, measurable, and responsive to thoughtful action. Assessment tools such as the CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard demonstrate the value of understanding these conditions before launching programs.⁹

The START Assessment is designed to help organizations understand whether the conditions needed for successful wellness programming are in place. By making readiness visible, the assessment supports clearer decisions about where to start, what to strengthen, and how to focus effort before introducing new initiatives.

How the START Assessment Is Designed

The START Assessment is built around *seven research supported constructs* that influence engagement with workplace wellness initiatives.¹⁰⁻¹²

The assessment emphasizes:

- recent and current behavior
- perceptions of safety and trust
- realistic capacity shaped by workload, time, and environment

This design reflects evidence showing that context, habits, and perceived control explain participation more consistently than stated preferences alone.^{13,14}

Construct	Why It Matters
Perceived Control over Time and Work	Autonomy supports proactive behavior and engagement in self-initiated activities. ¹¹
Psychological Safety for Wellness	Psychological safety influences whether employees feel comfortable trying new behaviors and discussing wellbeing needs. ¹²
Job Demands and Mental Exhaustion	High workload and cognitive strain reduce capacity for optional activities. ^{1,6}
Trust in Data Use and Low Surveillance	Concerns about monitoring, data misuse, or unintended consequences reduce participation and honest responding. ^{5,12}

Construct	Why It Matters
Existing Coping and Self Care Habits	Past behaviors and tendencies strongly predict future actions. ¹⁴
Structural and Environmental Supports	Policies, schedules, and physical environments shape what participation is realistically possible. ⁹
Leadership and Cultural Support for Wellness	Leadership behavior and organizational climate influence engagement and uptake. ^{5,12}

How to Interpret Results

The START Assessment provides directional insight into organizational readiness.

Scoring Rubric:

- ✧ Calculate the average score for each construct using the mapped questions.
- ✧ Look at overall patterns rather than focusing on any single item or individual response.
- ✧ Notice how many constructs score below 3.0. When two or more areas score low, it often means people face real barriers to engaging right now.
- ✧ Aim for a response rate of at least 60 percent so results reflect the broader organization.^{6,7}
- ✧ Lower response rates or uneven participation across teams make results harder to interpret.

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Construct-to-Question Mapping

Each construct in the START Assessment is measured using a small set of related questions. The following table below shows how the 19 assessment questions map to the seven constructs used for scoring and interpretation.

Construct	Question Numbers
Perceived Control over Time and Work	1, 2, 3
Psychological Safety for Wellness	4, 5, 6
Job Demands and Mental Exhaustion	7, 8, 9
Trust in Data Use and Low Surveillance	10, 11, 12
Existing Coping and Self Care Habits	13, 14
Structural and Environmental Supports	15, 16
Leadership and Cultural Support for Wellness	17, 18, 19

Wunsupona can help you understand your scores, interpret patterns and decide which steps will help you succeed.

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The START

A few notes for administrators:

1. The assessment can be shared online (e.g. SurveyMonkey, QR code) or on paper.
2. You may add a small number of demographic questions to help with interpretation.
3. The assessment questions should not be changed. You may adjust the timeframe if needed.
4. Assessment length is intentional and designed to balance insight with completion rates.
5. All questions, except optional demographic items, should have a 5-point Likert scale.
6. Include the answer labels for every question so respondents don't get confused.
7. You may request comments after each item, but do not make them required.

Instructions for Respondents:

Think about your typical workday over the last two weeks. If the last two weeks were unusual, answer based on the most recent two weeks that felt typical. Select the option that best reflects your experience.

1. I have control over how I schedule my work.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

2. I can decide when to take short breaks during my day.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

3. I have enough flexibility in my work to step away briefly for my wellbeing when I need to.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

4. If I participated in wellness activities at work, I would feel uncomfortable or embarrassed.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

5. People on my team can share their wellbeing needs without being judged.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

6. It would feel safe to try new wellness activities at work.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

7. By the end of my workday, I feel too mentally drained to think about wellness activities.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

8. My workload leaves little space for anything beyond my core tasks.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

9. Most days, I have to choose between getting my work done and taking care of my wellbeing.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

10. I am confident that information I share about my wellbeing will be kept private.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

11. I trust that any wellness data collected by this company would be used to support employees.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

12. I worry participating in wellness programs here would lead to bad consequences for my job.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

13. When I feel stressed at work, I usually do something helpful to take care of myself.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

14. I use small breaks, movement, or other strategies to manage stress during the workday.

- 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

15. In this workplace, there would be enough time in the day to join wellness activities if I chose to.
 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

16. Our work environment supports making healthy choices.
 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

17. Managers would protect time for employees to participate in wellness activities.
 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

18. Leaders here would support employees participating in wellness programs during work hours.
 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

19. Talking about stress and wellbeing is acceptable in this organization.
 1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neutral 4 Agree 5 Strongly agree

Expert Guidance Matters

The START Assessment is grounded in behavioral science, and interpreting results requires care. Response rates, sample size, subgroup differences, and uneven participation across roles all affect what conclusions can reasonably be drawn. Self report data and overlapping constructs can also influence how results appear on paper.^{5,6}

Wunsupona can help your organization make sense of these data, ask better follow up questions, and choose next steps. If you want support turning START insights into action, we are ready to help.

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