

## Wellness Interviews: Heather Martin, PharmD, CDCES

### **1. What inspired your involvement with the Staff and Faculty Health and Well-Being Program and participation as a Wellness Ambassador?**

My area of pharmacy practice is Ambulatory Primary Care. Most of my 15+ years of clinical practice have been supporting patients in chronic disease management including diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and hyperlipidemia. The longer I worked with this population I started noticing common trends in their personal habits that were worsening or causing their diseases. Essentially, most of these conditions are preventable through healthy lifestyles, nutrition, and weight management. I became very invested in not just helping them treat disease with medicines but reverse or prevent diseases by changing bad habits and developing healthy habits. I also realized that every patient is also a person. Preventing disease can start by promoting wellness in any setting- not just the medical office. As a pharmacist I tried to learn as much as I could about nutrition, behavioral change and motivational interviewing. I became a Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist and Certified Health and Wellness Coach. Developing these skills helped me feel like I could provide a more holistic, well-rounded patient-care service. They were also practical in real-life as well. So, when I joined UC Davis in 2019 I immediately looked for what wellness resources we had here for patients and for staff. When I learned about the Wellness Ambassador program it was just natural for me to join and support it.

### **2. What is your role in promoting wellness at your institution? How do you encourage wellness within your staff?**

I think my main role in promoting wellness is to talk about it. To ask people about wellness and share what resources are out there- both at UCD or elsewhere. If you ask people what is important to them and what struggles that is the first step. Also, if you are sharing resources, inspirations, and success stories with enthusiasm and compassion it can help people overcome their own barriers and start engaging more with their personal concept or identity of wellness. So with my staff I ask a lot of questions, give praise and encouragement for any effort they make toward wellness, and energetically share any cool new thing I find related to wellness. Everyone has an individual journey with wellness and they are all starting at a different starting line. It's more important to stay aware, engaged, and trying than doing nothing at all.

How do you balance incorporating wellness with being 'another time commitment'?

Well, it comes down to mindset. Either you want wellness in your life or you don't! How can you help people cultivate that mindset that wellness is possible for them?

In research studies asking people who quit smoking "what is the reason you were able to quit smoking?" the number 1 reason cited is simply "I wanted to quit". What they are basically saying is..they wanted it, they believed it was possible, they were ready to take action, they made a commitment, and they took action.

You will hear people say all the time "Oh I want to lose weight." But deep down their mindset is telling them excuses "it is too hard. I can't do it. I don't want to fail again....". The best thing you can do to establish your own positive mindset is have an honest conversation with yourself and ask what are you MOST ready to do right now? Maybe you know you should stop drinking soda but you feel more

ready to start walking for exercise. Then start walking now and keep asking about the soda later. When you are ready, believe you can do it, and take action to quit drinking soda- you will! These types of success experiences help build your sense of self-efficacy at sustaining your own wellness. It will feel a natural, easy part of your life rather than "another time commitment"

Also, if you are helping people in your teams find this mindset help them focus on the positives. Yes-exercising may make you sweaty and tired while doing it but how will it make you feel later that day? Will you sleep better? Will you have more energy tomorrow? How will you feel in 6 months from now when you finish that 5k race? Help people focus on the positive rewards of healthy habits and help them connect with the long-term goals instead of short-term obstacles.

### **3. In what ways do you think your wellness activities can promote wellbeing or prevent burnout?**

Physical fitness, eating habits, and mindset all work synergistically to support or challenge one another. What does burnout mean? To me it means a feeling of constant stress (real or imagined) that is unsustainable. In modern healthcare workplaces I think there are many things that can contribute to this. Long hours of using electronic devices (video visits, text messaging, EMR charting, email etc) that help us efficiently stay connected but may provide lower-quality connection experiences than face-to-face person to person connections would. Additionally, they may contribute to multiple simultaneous interruptions or distraction that impact our ability to focus and tax our brains. However, we have choice about how we use these tools, how we respond to notifications/distractions, and what other things we incorporate into our day to combat the realities of a modern digital workplace. Helping people in your workplace develop wellness habits can absolutely help to prevent burnout in this way. If you know you are going to sit all day at the computer than commit to going outside for a walk break or to eat lunch. Take action to schedule somethings in person- not digitally. Pack a healthy lunch so if you get too busy you won't be tempted to buy something less healthy. Don't wait for someone else to hand wellness to you. Be your own champion and make conscious choices about what actions you will take to keep wellness part of your normal routine. You are the person responsible for preventing burnout or allowing it to happen.

### **4. What resources would you suggest others seek out within their institutions to promote overall wellbeing?**

Check to see if your organization has a wellness program or officer. They may already have great resources available for you that you can incorporate into your work practices.

If they don't have one then make friends with a dietician and ask them for advice/suggestions. I've learned so many things about different nutrition resources from my dietician colleagues. Also, get curious and ask other people you know for their advice and suggestions. Maybe you are able to form a small group of like minded colleagues who can support one another and be wellness accountability partners. Google can also be helpful if you check for reputable sources.

You can also check your health insurance providers website. Many insurers offer wellness resources or health coaching as part of your benefits coverage. Many people don't even know they get this free service as part of their insurance.

A few resources I have found to be consistently helpful include:

<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/> - Focus is on Positive Psychology and behavior change

<https://www.noom.com/> - This is a weight loss app that is so much more than that. It uses behavioral psychology principles to teach healthy habits and be a health coach all in one. It is not free but very comprehensive, well designed, and effective.

<https://charlesduhigg.com/the-power-of-habit/> - great book and easy read to help increase your understanding of habit change

<https://jamesclear.com/atomic-habits> - another good book on how to change habits

## **5. Any advice for preceptors? How do you model wellbeing for your learners?**

Take a lunch break. A true, legitimate lunch break away from your desk. Model this for learners and expect the same of them. This should be a norm in our workplaces.

Start all meetings with gratitude. Gratitude practices are a super-power to having a healthy mindset. Start meetings on a positive note. Talk about the good things first. Thank people for even the little things they've done to help you or your team. Celebrate your personal or team successes! People will often collaborate more effectively the rest of the meeting by starting the meeting with a positive mindset.

Don't vent and gossip in front of learners- ever. Try not to do it even when learners aren't present. It can feel alluring to let off steam over a vent session with a coworker. But, all it does is reinforce your negative feelings AND spreads them to others (leaving other people hot, sticky, and wet from all your steam). It won't solve the problems causing the anger or frustration. Wait until you are calm and reflect on why you feel that way. Use your energy to come up with positive solutions and have constructive dialogue with others. It will go along way toward protecting your work relationships and protecting yourself from the negative mind trap of burnout.

## **Wellness Interviews: Annette Hanna, PharmD**

### **1. What inspired your involvement with the Staff and Faculty Health and Well-Being Program and participation as a Wellness Ambassador?**

I have been a part of the UC Living Fit Forever family for many years. UCLFF is a free program offered by the health system for staff and students. One of my coaches recognized my enthusiasm for healthy living and asked me to join the wellness ambassador team. I didn't know what that meant or what a wellness ambassador (WA) did, so I got on the website for Staff and Faculty Health and Wellbeing and got educated about what being a WA was all about and what I needed to do to get involved. I was excited to join this team of people who spent time building and improving team morale and helping those that work with them to be healthier, be that mental health or physical health.

## **2. Can you tell us a little more about the grant you received and how you hope to promote wellness amongst your peers?**

The first step to earning a grant is to go through the process to have the department that you are a WA for certified healthy. There is a lengthy questionnaire that each WA fills out in partnership with their supervisor that assesses the overall "health" of your department. Once this is completed and submitted, a WA is welcome to begin the process of applying for their grant. Step one is to communicate with staff in some fashion to determine what they might like to use their grant for, or what wellness activities they might be interested in. Once that's done, WA's put together a specific plan for their grant, including a financial breakdown and a timeline. This information is put into their grant application and sent off for approval.

For my grant this year, one of my technicians asked for blankets so that they could have a picnic outside on lunch. This request sparked an idea for me related to meal prepping. My staff eats out too much, and we are terribly wasteful with non-recyclable paper and plastic items used for eating (cups, plates, forks, etc...). I noticed also that many of them had been asking about the meal prepping that I do (and have done for quite a while now), and the food that I make, which is completely vegan. Several staff members had expressed interest in losing weight and being healthier.

From these conversations was born the idea to spend time teach my team how to meal prep and why do it at all. I used our \$500 to purchase blankets, meal prep container, and sustainable flatware for every single member of our team. I have been a teacher for 10 years in a variety of places and have taught a wide variety of topics. I am also a Certified Nutrition Coach. I capitalized on those skills to put together an hour-long class related to healthy eating and meal prepping, which I delivered to our staff during one of our staff meetings. I also presented staff with their new meal prep kits. To ignite some excitement I purchased raffle prizes (separate from our grant) and offered a three-week meal prep challenge that encouraged staff to post pictures of their prepped meals to earn raffle tickets.

## **3. What is your role in promoting wellness at your institution?**

My role really is to help those around me improve their physical and mental health. I do this in a variety of ways, including being a WA, teaching fitness classes for the UCLFF program and providing nutrition coaching for those who want it.

As an example of things I have done for my team, I purchased "Love Bomb Kindness Cards" to randomly hand out to the whole team to help them feel valued and appreciated. I take any opportunity to help my staff and other employees eat healthier and/or exercise more.

## **4. How do you balance incorporating wellness with being 'another time commitment'?**

I tend to put the wellbeing of others ahead of myself or other commitments. It's my opinion that when the folks working around you are content and feel that they are valuable and that their work is appreciated, they are more committed to their work. They take more pride in doing their job to the best of their ability. They also tend to work better together, and ultimately these things lead to better patient care, which is what we are all here to provide.

**5. In what ways do you think your wellness activities can promote wellbeing or prevent burnout?**

I feel that our activities help our staff to bond with each other and feel like they are cared for. And to be honest, any time our staff receive free things, or gifts from supervisors or the health system, they are immediately happier.

Specifically related to our meal prep challenge, I already see my team spending more time being thoughtful about what they are putting in their bodies. They are actively posting pictures their meals, and some are including pictures with their families, which is amazing!

**6. What resources would you suggest others seek out within their institutions to promote overall wellbeing?**

The Staff and Faculty Health and Wellbeing intranet page is a fantastic launching place.

**7. Any advice for preceptors? or How do you model wellbeing for your learners?**

Preceptors!!! Never ever forget that there are ALWAYS eyeballs on you watching what you do! The more you make your own health and wellness a priority the more your learners will learn from you! What does this mean?? It means eating healthy, reducing unnecessary waste, being environmentally aware, get active, and balance, balance, balance!!! Balance your work and your home life, balance the time you spend here at work (don't work through your lunch!!), balance your needs with theirs.