

Key Findings from Independent External Review of the Real You Program 2011-2014

R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (Malatest) was contracted to conduct the evaluation of the Real You Wellness Program on behalf of the Ottawa Police Service (OPS). This is the first formal evaluation of this program and covers the period 2011-2014 (corresponding to the first three phases the program was implemented after a brief pilot test in 2007).

The key findings with respect to program objectives were:

- The majority of stakeholders interviewed believed that the Real You Program aligns with long-term OPS health and wellness objectives and was consistent with the commitment of the OPS to the health and wellbeing of its members;
- However, a small minority expressed the view that the responsibility for employees' health rests should rest with employees rather than their employer, and some senior management held the view that the program represents a big investment in the health of a relatively small proportion of members and they would prefer health and wellness programs that would benefit a bigger proportion of the membership;
- Although there were many limitations in the data available for this evaluation, in general, an analysis of the available health data and survey responses for program participants suggests that the program has helped most participants improve their health and wellness and adopt a healthy lifestyle, at least in the short-term:
 - Approximately 70% of program participants reported that the program medical team identified previously undiagnosed health conditions (which ranged in severity from vitamin deficiencies to cancer);
 - By the end of the program, Real You program participants as a group experienced statistically significant improvements in body composition, including weight loss, body mass index, percentage of body fat, and waist-hip ratio;
 - By the end of the program, Real You program participants as a group had significantly reduced levels of bad cholesterol;
 - By the end of the program, Real You program participants as a group had statistically significant improvements in the number of push-ups and partial curl-ups they could perform;
 - Approximately 4 in 5 Real You participants reported that they had experienced positive health changes;
 - Approximately 4 in 5 Real You participants reported that they had improved their eating habits and nutrition;
 - Approximately 4 in 5 Real You participants reported that they had made physical activity part of their daily life;
 - Approximately 3 in 5 Real You participants reported improvements in posture and balance, sleep, energy levels, mood, stress levels;
 - A smaller percentage of Real You participants reported other health benefits such as reduction in blood pressure, pain, alcohol consumption, or smoking.

Although it was not possible to use objective data to compare Real You program participants to OPS members as a whole in terms of levels of engagement, productivity, or workplace conflict, survey responses suggest the program may have had a positive impact on some organizational outcomes:

- Approximately 3 in 5 Real You participants reported increased engagement, productivity, and reduced absenteeism; and
- About half of Real You participants reported a reduction in workplace conflict; However, past program participants that were interviewed suggested that their levels of engagement and productivity were already high prior to participation in the program and were not impacted by participation.