Pathways to Implementing Total Worker Health: Implications for Small Enterprises

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Our Shared Goal

Protect and promote worker safety, health and wellbeing
Overview

• Introduce a new paradigm
• What’s the value added?
• What’s the evidence?
• Resources for making it work
Standard model for Worksite Health Protection & Promotion

- Supporting healthier behaviors through workplace environments and services offered at work
  - Health screening & services
  - Promoting healthy behaviors
  - Creating a health-promoting environment
- Preventing work-related illness and injury
  - Workplace safety measures
  - Control of workplace hazards
  - Improved ergonomics
  - Health and safety training
- Reducing work-related stress
  - Decreasing job strain
  - Fostering social support among workers
  - Stress management
  - Supporting work-family balance (e.g., through flexible schedules)
- Expanding work-related resources and opportunities
  - Medical care benefits
  - Paid sick and personal leave
  - Child and elder care services
  - Job training & education
  - Adequate wages and salaries

Egerter et al., Commissionhealth.org, RWJH, 2008.
## Where are the gaps? What’s optimal?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Siloed approach</th>
<th>Integrated &amp; coordinated</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low participation rates</td>
<td>Engaged employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attracts the most healthy</td>
<td>Population approach</td>
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<td>Focus on downstream outcomes</td>
<td>Addresses root causes</td>
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Where does your company sit on this continuum?
A new Paradigm: Identifying root causes in working conditions

Physical
- Exposures to safety and health hazards

Organization
- Hours worked
- Workload and pace of work
- Inadequate benefits (Wages, Leave, Flexibility)
- Inconsistent breaks
- Limited access to resources on the job

Psychosocial
- Job stress
- Low supervisor support
- Co-worker social norms
- Culture of health and safety at work
Modifying Working Conditions for Improved Outcomes

Conditions of Work
- Physical Environment
- Organization of Work
- Psychosocial Factors

Worker health & safety behaviors, knowledge and skills

Worker Outcomes
- Injury
- Illness
- Wellbeing

Enterprise Outcomes
- Productivity & Quality
- Turnover & Absence
- Health Care Costs
Key Take-Away Messages

- Working conditions are often root causes of poor health and safety outcomes.
- Improving working conditions can optimize employee and employer outcomes.
- A systems approach can contribute to building a culture of health.
NIOSH Total Worker Health®

Total Worker Health® is defined as policies, programs, and practices that integrate protection from work-related safety and health hazards with promotion of injury and illness prevention efforts to advance worker well-being.

(http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/)
What's the value added?

• **Improve effectiveness** of worksite strategies to improve worker health.
  – Improve outcomes
  – Increase participation
  – Enhance a culture of trust.

• **Manage costs**
  – Reduce absence, turnover

• **Generate revenue**
  – Improve job satisfaction & engagement
  – Improve market performance

• **Promote brand reputation**

http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/business.html

How does this approach contribute to your meeting your goals or business objectives?
WHAT’S THE EVIDENCE?

A little history
Where we are now
WellWorks-2: Study hypothesis

The integration of health protection with health promotion will enhance the intervention impact on behavior change over and above health promotion alone.
Integrated prevention approaches needed
WellWorks-2: Manufacturing

Baseline Assessments in 15 worksites (n=9,019)

• Labor - management participation in program planning
• Management consultation for changes in the work environment
• Group and individual education for workers

Adjusted six-month quit rates at final by intervention and job type (cohort of smokers at baseline: n=880)

Sorensen et al, Cancer Causes and Control, 2002
Recent Findings: Health and safety outcomes share common pathways in working conditions.
Attending to the Conditions of Work: Summary Findings for Healthcare Workers

CONDITIONS OF WORK

Physical Environment
• Job Demands

Organization of Work
• Ergonomic Practices
• Job Flexibility
• Inadequate staffing
• Shift schedule/control

Psychosocial Factors
• Low decision latitude
• Coworker/supervisor support
• Work-family conflict
• Harassment

WORKER OUTCOMES
• Pain
• Work interferences
• Cardiometabolic risk

WORKER PROXIMAL OUTCOMES
• Sleep deficiency
• Fatigue
• Physical Activity
• Psychological distress
• BMI

Examples of Shared Pathways

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Supervisor support</th>
<th>Harassment at work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk of injury</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td>↑</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep deficiency</td>
<td>↓</td>
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<td>Psychological distress</td>
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*Nelson et al 2014; Reme et al 2014; Sabbath et al 2014; Sorensen et al 2011; Tveito et al 2014; Reme et al (in review).*
Recent Research with Small and Medium Size Businesses

• Collaborative Pilot with Health Partners and 3 SMB’s over 1 year
  – Demonstrated feasibility
  – Assessed factors for success through in-depth interviews, focus groups, and process tracking data

• Survey of 114 SMB’s
Factors Contributing to Successful Implementation

• Leadership support
• Openness to change and innovation
• Dedicated resources (e.g., staff, budgets, and committees)
• Existing organizational processes
  – Collaborative organizational cultures
  – Prioritizing employee health and safety
  – Leverage alignment with existing business priorities
• Realistic timelines
• Targeted communications, training, tactical management guidance
How can this approach tie into what you are already doing? Where does this fit in your existing priorities?
RESOURCES FOR MAKING IT WORK
A Simple Example

• What’s your pain point?
• What are the root causes in working conditions?

• What organizational strategies, such as policies, can improve working conditions?
• Focuses on improving working conditions to improve employee and employer outcomes
Strategies for implementing systems level approaches

Implementing an Integrated Approach
Weaving Worker Health, Safety, and Well-being into the Fabric of Your Organization

http://centerforworkhealth.sph.harvard.edu/
Conclusions: Considerations for Small Businesses

• Improving working conditions adds value for employees and the bottom line.
• Align with your business priorities and ways of getting things done.
• Start with your own root causes – build success in small steps.
• Consider a systems approach to build a sustainable culture of health.
Thank you!

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• http://centerforworkhealth.sph.harvard.edu/
• @HSPHCenterWork
Key Characteristics

1. Leadership commitment
2. Policies, programs & practices focused on positive working conditions
3. Participation from stakeholders at all organizational levels
4. Comprehensive & collaborative strategies
5. Adherence to regulations & ethical norms
6. Data-driven change