Weaving Health, Safety, and Well-being into the Fabric of Your Organization

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Our Shared Goal

Protect & promote worker safety, health & well-being
Today’s Objectives

- Describe **steps** for weaving an integrated approach focused on working conditions into an organizational improvement process
- Provide **examples** of organizational policies and practices to improve employee and employer outcomes
- Explore **resources**
Laying the foundation...
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, RWJ, 2008.
Usual

- Siloed approach
- Focus: downstream outcomes
- Focus: individuals
- Low participation rates

Optimal

- System approach + collaboration
- Address upstream root causes: working conditions
- Population approach
- Engaged employees
Where is your organization now and where does it want to be?
Center Framework: Working conditions as root causes of outcomes

Integrated Policies, Programs, and Practices

Working Conditions
- Physical Environment
- Work Organization
- Psychosocial Factors

Worker health & safety behaviors, knowledge & skills

Worker Outcomes
- Injury
- Illness
- Wellbeing

Enterprise Outcomes
- Productivity & Quality
- Turnover & Absence
- Health Care Costs

Example

- **Policies, Programs, Practices**
- **Working Conditions**
- **Employee & Employer Outcomes**

**Supervisor reviews workload and schedule**

**Job strain**
- High demands
- Long work hours

Reduce hypertension & medical costs
Example

Policies, Programs, Practices → Working Conditions → Employee & Employer Outcomes

Effective mechanical lift plan → Moving heavy objects → Reduce back injuries & medical costs
Integrated approach:

Key Characteristics

1. Leadership commitment
2. Policies, programs & practices focused on positive working conditions
3. Participation
4. Comprehensive & collaborative strategies
5. Adherence
6. Data-driven change

Sorensen, et al. J of Occup Environ Med, 2018
EVIDENCE
### Example working conditions and outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working conditions</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPERVISOR SUPPORT</td>
<td>HARASSMENT AT WORK</td>
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</table>

*Nelson et al. AJPM 2014; Reme et al, J Occup Rehabil 2012; Sabbath et al, AJIM 2013; Sorensen et al 2011; Tveito et al 2014; Buxton et al, JOEM 2012; Dennerlein et al, AJIM 2012; Reme et al (in review).*
Evidence highlights

Those using an integrated approach find it:

- Financial performance
- Workplace safety
- Productivity & worker satisfaction
- Participation
- Behavior change
- Brand reputation
- Absenteeism
- Turnover
- Workers Comp
- Healthcare costs

Contact me for references
Key Take-aways

• To improve outcomes, focus upstream
• Working conditions drive health & safety outcomes
• Improving working conditions optimizes outcomes
• Examples & resources exist that can help you
HOW TO DO IT
An integrated approach...

is a management system approach to worker safety, health, & well-being shaped by employee input & participation

• Starts with providing a safe work environment

• Builds on traditional health protection and promotion efforts
  o Coordination and linkage of separate policies, practices & programs

• Emphasizes policies and practices that create:
  o Organizational changes promoting safety and health
  o Positive working conditions

• Continuum of approaches exist
The Guidelines

• Executive summary
• Leadership & Collaboration
• Planning
• Implementation
• Evaluation & Improvement
• Tools & resources

Includes case examples, tips, checklists

McLellan et al., 2017 available at:
http://centerforworkhealth.sph.harvard.edu/resources/
The Process

Pre-planning phase
- Value Proposition
- Executive commitment
- Build collaboration
For the Value Proposition
Consider...

• What’s important to address in your organization?
• Who do you need to involve?
  – Why should they care?
• What do you need to present?
  – Information
  – Method
LEADERSHIP
Two tales of leadership

A break in support
CFO supported but:
• Did not share vision or build support
• Left the company
• Responsibility went to a newly-hired manager
• With no real authority or organizational support, the initiative stalled

“The way we do business”, CEO
• Commitment to employees
• Vision & leadership
• Expectations
• Well-being culture
• Lower health care costs, engaged employees, improved financials
Leaders who implement integrated approaches

- Set tone & communicate vision
- Allocate resources
- Drive accountability
- Provide supportive environments

BUILD COLLABORATION: Integrated Teams
Integrated team members

People responsible for safety, health and well-being

People from different levels of hierarchy

Employee representatives (e.g. union)

Subcontractor representatives
Experiences forming Integrated Teams:

- Company 1—“No problem, we’re doing it anyway”
- Company 2—“What a great idea, we never thought of doing that”
- Company 3—“Huh? Why would we ever do that?”

**Tip:** Address why the initiative matters to the organization and each team member
THE INTEGRATED PLANNING PROCESS

- Goals
- Objectives
- Working Conditions
- Gathering Info
- Analyzing Info
- Tactics
- Prioritizing
- Action Plan

Integrated Planning
A Thought Exercise for You

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

  Policies, Programs, Practices
  Effective mechanical lift plan

  Working conditions
  Moving heavy items

  Employee & employer outcomes
  Reduce back injuries & costs

• What organizational strategies, such as policies, can improve these working conditions?
• Focus on improving working conditions to improve employee and employer outcomes
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

- **Hospital vision:** Healthiest population possible
- **Goal:** Leadership wanted to slow rising employee health care expenses (10% of annual budget)
- **Initiative vision:** Healthiest workforce possible

**Tip:** Strategically align initiative with organizational goals
Goal + measurable objective

**Premise:** Healthier, safer people and organizations can reduce costs and drive population health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Reduce employee injuries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong></td>
<td>In 12 months, reduce back injuries by 20% on a hospital floor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hospital Working Conditions

Identify working conditions relevant to your objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical environment</th>
<th>Availability of lifts, slippery floors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Organization</td>
<td>Moving patients, inconsistent breaks, shift work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial environment</td>
<td>Supervisor and co-worker support, harassment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Remaining planning steps

Gather essential information: goal, objectives, working conditions

Analyze it

Choose your priorities

Develop tactics & action plan
IMPLEMENTATION
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
Policies & Practices for Implementation: Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

• Teams to facilitate work
• Policies and practices on safely moving patients & preventing staff injuries
• Environmental & organizational supports include
  – Rigorous safety & health program
  – Comprehensive benefits package
• Supervisor support training
Most challenges can be addressed by

1. Adequate preparation
2. Knowing your organization, its people, and why they should care
3. Involving all stakeholders in planning
4. Listening to & addressing concerns
5. Communicating often about what you’re doing
6. Realistic expectations and timelines, long-term view
EVALUATION & IMPROVEMENT
Evaluation & Improvement

- **Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center**
  - Use data about at-risk units/departments through incident reporting
  - Partner with departmental managers on targeted holistic programming & corrective action
  - Conduct follow-up evaluation, monitoring, & programming
The results

85% Employees say their safety and health are supported

18 of 25 At-risk departments reported fewer injuries

3% Decrease in claim costs (2016)
(National inflation was +4%)

Engaged employees reduced personal health risk factors
### Steps for tomorrow

Focus on working conditions & organizational approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience level</th>
<th>Steps to take</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>-Determine pain points</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Get commitment &amp; collaboration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Start small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some experience</td>
<td>-Conduct &amp; evaluate initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Apply lessons to bigger challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasoned</td>
<td>-Scale-up, continue to evaluate &amp; improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Serve as role models &amp; cases for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td>-Use available resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where are you? What will you do?**
Center for Work, Health, & Well-being

http://centerforworkhealth.sph.harvard.edu

@HSPHCenterWork
Workplace Integrated Safety and Health (WISH) Assessment

Sorensen, et al. JOEM, May 2018
Work, Health, and Well-being: Frameworks, Evidence, and Applications

March 2020 • Boston, MA

- Knowledge & skills to improve workplace health & safety
- Ideal for those directly responsible for employee health, safety, & well-being

Learn More: hsp.hme/worker-well-being
NIOSH Total Worker Health®

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/)
Rewards for your efforts

• The participatory process discussed will..
  – address organizational pain points
  – streamline work and reduce duplicative efforts
  – build support & collaboration

• Improving working conditions aids in both
  – reaching organizational goals
  – improving employees’ lives
Conclusions:

• Improving working conditions adds value for employees and the bottom line.
• Align with your business priorities.
• Weave into your ways of getting things done.
• Start with your own root causes – build success in small steps.
• Organizations are on a continuum.
• Resources exist for your journey.
Thank you!...And Questions?

Harvard T.H. Chan Center for Work, Health, and Well-being: A Total Worker Health® Center of Excellence
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Funded in part by grant U19OH008861 from the CDC/NIOSH
Some slides co-developed with HealthPartners, Inc.
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