

Health and Wellness Promotion in Rural Blue Collar Industries...Creating a Supportive Environment for Change

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Presentation Overview

1. Introduction
2. Physical & Psychosocial Environmental Factors
3. Gaining Support & Implementing a Health Program
4. Mine Site Case Studies
5. Barriers to Change
6. Guidelines for Your Organisation

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Introduction

Over representation of life-style related health problems within blue-collar industries

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Leading Causes of Death

Disease	Percentage of all deaths
Circulatory system (Heart disease and stroke)	39.6%
Cancer Total	28.4%
■ Digestive (29.4%)	
■ Lung (21.4%)	
■ Prostate (13.5%)	
■ Respiratory system (9%)	
External factors	7%
■ Suicide (28.6%)	
■ Motor vehicle accidents (23.4%)	

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Losing Years of our Lives

Item	Age Reduction
Tobacco smoker	12.1 years
Inactive	6 years
Alcohol in excess	6.6 years
High blood pressure	5.1 years
Obesity	4.3 years
High cholesterol	3.2 years
Lack of fruit and vegetables	3 years

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Reasons for Investing in Health & Wellness Promotion:

- ☐ Aging workforce
- ☐ Sedentary staff
- ☐ Low morale (eg due to merger)
- ☐ High staff turnover
- ☐ High level of sick or stress leave
- ☐ Workforce just aren't healthy
- ☐ Because we care

How many of these are familiar to you?

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Pivotal Role of Workplace Health Promotion

- ❑ Reducing major health risks
- ❑ Reducing employee absenteeism
- ❑ Improving retention of highly skilled staff
- ❑ Increasing productivity
- ❑ Enhancing morale
- ❑ Improve team work
- ❑ Improve staff – management relations

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Workplace Health Promotion and OH & S

In the context of OH & S health is often seen from the level of prevention of workplace injury and illness – not from the platform of enhancing health and wellbeing.

This is highlighted by the way that workplace OH & S programs are prioritised, with safety & rehabilitation issues addressed first.

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Worksite Health Programs

Research shows worksite health programs work but it is important to acknowledge that greater health improvements are possible within a supportive environment

'Two-pronged approach'

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Physical Environment

- ❑ Worksite's ergonomic capabilities & systems
- ❑ Catering facilities
- ❑ Access to health care professionals
- ❑ Health & Fitness access & services
 - Gymnasiums
 - Organised sport
 - Incidental activity

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Psychosocial Environment

Social and Psychological factors include;

- ❑ Supportive Management Network
- ❑ Encouragement & Acknowledgement of Employee's Ideas & Issues
- ❑ Sense of Appreciation → Pay Reviews, Incentive Schemes & Employee Benefits

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Implementation of a Workplace Health Initiative

Utilise both physical and psychosocial environmental factors to;

- ❑ Gain support
- ❑ Increase engagement
- ❑ Effectively communicate
- ❑ Achieve long term sustainable change

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Gain Support

- ❑ Recognise & Utilise Workplace Culture
- ❑ Offer a range of health promotion activities/programs
- ❑ Use a service with a good reputation that is familiar to participants
- ❑ Back up fliers & advertisements with personal contact

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Increase Engagement

- ❑ Use positive images of men in program materials
- ❑ Presenters with extensive blue collar experience
- ❑ Using premises that are easily accessible
- ❑ Provide services outside normal working hours

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Effectively Communicate

Three key factors when effectively communicating with men;

- ❑ Relevance
- ❑ Faith Building
- ❑ Honest/direct

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Achieve Long Term Change

By recognising and positively enhancing the many physical & psychosocial factors within the working & living environment, an organisation has its best chance at creating long term sustainable change through workplace health initiatives

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Through Our Experience

- ❑ 28 Mining Sites throughout Australia

- ❑ Mine Site Case Studies

- ❑ Central QLD
- ❑ Rural SA
- ❑ Rural NSW



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Case Study 1

Central QLD

- ❑ Camp style accommodation
- ❑ Shortened version of Working Bodies Program
- ❑ Employees actively sort improvements to their physical environment
- ❑ Outstanding response for continued health evaluation and promotion
- ❑ Desire for continued education & nutritional feedback on catering

Demonstrated male blue collar workers not only care about their health but will actively seek changes to their physical environment to support changes

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Case Study 2

Rural SA

- ❑ Camp style accommodation – fly in fly out
- ❑ Working Bodies Program (Phase 1 & 2)
- ❑ Organisational culture already supportive
- ❑ Exposed to physical environmental changes - same time as program
- ❑ Participants reported via a site survey that the physical changes were motivating & constant reminders of the information taught
- ❑ They felt their company was supportive of their health & therefore it was easier to make changes and stay on track

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Case Study 3

Rural NSW

- ❑ Camp style accommodation – contractors
Permanent accommodation in town – permanent employees
- ❑ 12 week programs based on WBP sessions
- ❑ Different physical & psychosocial environments impacted on health outcomes

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Case Study 3

Rural NSW

Permanent	Contractors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supportive management• Encouragement of activity on site and off site – walk and run challenges, team sports, bike rides• Promotional newsletter article• Centrally displayed health notice boards and posters• Newsletters and emails delivered regularly to staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimal support• Environmental changes not implemented as suggested• No signs of encouragement for activity• Exposure to supportive materials minimised – health notice board displayed in remote location• Promotional and supplementary program materials inconsistently delivered

- ☐ Program outcomes were reflective of environmental conditions

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Barriers to Change

- ☐ Fresh food availability
- ☐ Poor quality of food
- ☐ Greater expense of food compared to cities
- ☐ Limited healthy choices within camp setting
- ☐ Fatigue
- ☐ Shiftwork and long working hours
- ☐ Lack of exercise & sporting facilities
- ☐ Reduced opportunities for incidental activity and lack of time to participate in physical activity

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Barriers to Change

- ❑ Barriers vary between people, companies, industries and locations
- ❑ Assess their effect on individual employee populations

Address the key barriers along with supporting the physical and psychosocial factors to create a working environment that enables sustainable changes to employee health promoted by workplace health initiatives

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Guidelines for Your Organisation

1. Management support and involvement

- Participate and make lifestyle changes
- Support marketing and promotional activities
- Understand the program outline and expectations beforehand

Without management support the program is likely to gain little exposure and in turn low participation

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Guidelines for Your Organisation

2. Employee involvement in the decision making process

- More likely to participate if ownership
- Survey employees
- Systematically record feedback
- Run pilot programs or focus groups

Involving the employees is particularly important in the developmental stage of the program

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Guidelines for Your Organisation

3. Ensure program is relevant to your organisation's needs

- Quantitative analysis of health indicators
 - Health assessments
 - Previous health assessment programs
 - Pre employment data
- Qualitative Feedback
 - Employee surveys

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Guidelines for Your Organisation

4. Consider opportunities for employees to be active at work

- Increase incidental activity
- 'Workplace health champion'
- Control room or office workouts with seated or standing exercises
- Lunchtime activities
- Walking tracks

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Guidelines for Your Organisation

5. Consider the facilities for employees to be active in the community

- Access to basics in weights and cardio equipment is helpful
- Gymnasium on site or within camp
- Company and community support for a local gym
- Local team sports or team competitions

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Guidelines for Your Organisation

6. Ensure a good range of healthy food choices at work and in camp accommodation

- Organisations typically provide limited healthy food choices
- High energy and low nutrient foods tend to dominate the menu
- Important to provide a range of healthy foods for vending machines, board room lunches, staff meetings, canteens and dining halls
- Increasingly important when employees have to consume all or most of their meals on site
- A Dietitian can assess the nutrient value of menus and provide an array of healthy eating solutions

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Guidelines for Your Organisation

7. Consider promotional materials to encourage healthy food choice

- Health notice boards, placemats, table decorations, posters
- Teach diners about portion sizes, nutritional balance, types of foods
- Tags or signs near dishes to assist in choosing healthy meals

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Guidelines for Your Organisation

8. Assist the community to access healthier food

- Consider subsidising rent to allow healthy takeaways or cafes to flourish
- Encourage shops to stock pre-packaged healthy meals and lunches that the staff can order from the workplace for delivery
- Work together with transport operators and local health professionals to encourage regular fresh food delivery

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Summary

Through our professional experience and the supporting literature it is clear that workplace health promotion is an effective tool for improving employee health and reducing the overall cost to the organisation

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Summary

Programs that provide the best success stories are constructed around organisations specific health needs, address apparent barriers to change, are relevant to the participant and provide regular follow-up & measurement of health indicators

This success is then optimised by conducting the program within a supportive environment

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