Developing and implementing Total Worker Health™ approaches in small- to medium-sized businesses

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Many companies implementing Total Worker Health™ (TWH) approaches are large organizations.

A need to develop & implement TWH approaches in small- to medium-sized businesses (SMBs) (<750 employees)

SMBs often use vendors to provide programs

Few vendor products use TWH approaches

Important to create, test, & disseminate TWH products for vendors to use
SafeWell Implementation Study Aim

• Dissemination & implementation study
  • R2P—scaling up of TWH approaches
• Develop an implementation package using TWH approaches for a vendor research collaborator to pilot in 3 SMBs manufacturing facilities
• Job Contexts: stationary/sedentary, movement/lifting of heavy items
Conceptual Framework for the SafeWell Intervention: Detailed Plan

**Intervention Targets**

**Physical Work Environment**
- Ergo/safety hazards
- Environmental supports for PA
- Technology (e.g., for safe lifting, sit-to-stand)

**Work Organization & Policies**
- Safety, ergonomics & wellness leadership
- Organizational culture (participation, participatory approaches, communications)
- Safety, ergonomics & wellness practices

**Psychosocial Factors**
- Supervisor and co-worker support

**Planning and decision-making processes**
- Integrated health and safety teams/champion
- Assessment with feedback

**Individual Factors**
- Perceptions of safety and wellness environment
- Skills and trial opportunities for behavior change
- Motivation for change
- Engagement/activation/participation
- Family and home safety

**Manufacturing workers**

**Worker Health Behaviors**
- Physical activity (levels of moderate to rigorous, levels of strength)

**Safety**
- Ergonomic/safety exposures

**Organization/Management**

**Organizational Outcomes**
- Collaboration & Linkages
- Leadership support and commitment

**Economic/Employer Systems Outcomes**
- Excess health/back productivity loss
- Reported injuries
- Productivity
- Presenteeism

**Individual-level Outcomes**
- Prevalence back pain
- Psychological distress
- General health and chronic health conditions
- Job Satisfaction
- Perceived wellness and safety climates
- Work limitations

**Integrated Intervention**
- Management
- Manufacturing workers

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Operationalizing the framework: An example initiative

- None of the sites had this initiative before SafeWell began
- Shows model adaptation through dissemination
Planning & decision-making processes

- Based on assessment feedback report, worksite committees institute “Move more and safely” initiative
- Action plan developed

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Physical Work Environment

• Using technology (sit-to-stand & moving devices) address ergonomic & physical hazards
• On-site fitness center

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Work organization & policies

- Back pain/injury from sedentary & lifting tasks recognized. Leadership committed resources
- Integrated committee discusses & communicates implementation
- Consider Continuous Improvement processes
  - Engage managers & employees
- Link ergonomics to stretch breaks
- Policies to reduce hazardous exposure to stationary jobs
  - Rotate employee tasks

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Psychosocial factors

- Supervisors encouraged to support safe worker movement through training & communications
  - Training re: devices
- Supervisors communicate support for employee health & safety
- Workers feel supported by company
  - They communicate to co-workers

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Individual factors

- Linked safety & wellness messages
- Group sessions on improving back strain
- Back health coaching available
- Fitness coaching available
- Posters linking safety at work & home
Lessons learned re: vendor implementation of TWH in manufacturing SMBs

• Leadership & capacity vary among the companies. Key contextual considerations:
  • Management & staff alignment with TWH vision
  • Existence of dedicated staff & committees
  • Extent of organizational change
  • Horizontal vs. vertical decision-making

• Use continuous improvement processes to leverage integration of safety & health

• On-going communication/training important for both vendor & site personnel
Lessons learned re: vendor implementation of TWH in manufacturing SMBs (cont.)

- Adaptability/scalability potential a key consideration for vendors
- May need to adapt existing products/channels of delivery
Implications

• Embed TWH approaches into existing context & processes (e.g. continuous improvement)
• Vendors engage in applying conceptual model and are a key dissemination channel for SMBs
• Ensure that programs are adaptable and scalable.
• Define the “tipping point” for companies to adopt TWH approaches
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Session Conclusions

• Conceptual model provides consistent framework to guide adapting the intervention across settings
• Specifying intervention pathways provides focus for intervention priorities
  • Highlights the importance of the work context and job characteristics
• Multi-level targets emphasizes the central role of work organization and environment
• Attending to modifying factors guides the adaptation process