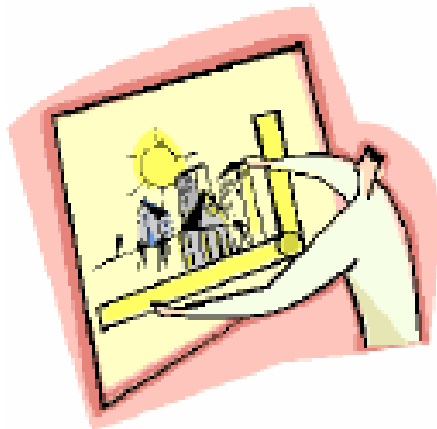


***How to Get Started:  
Your Guide to Building a Healthy  
Workplace***



***Revised July 2006***

## ***How to Use This Guide...***

This guide is for anyone interested in developing a healthy workplace. The guide contains suggestions and useful resources for getting started. To use this guide, you have a few options. If you want to read it like a book, you can scroll down the pages. If you are looking for information from a specific section, you can easily navigate through this document using the hyperlinks (click the bookmarks tab on the left of your screen for the hyperlinks).

Please note that:

- ❑ The guide is not an exhaustive collection of resources available.
- ❑ The information in this guide was revised in July 2006. Changes may occur following these revisions.
- ❑ Healthy Living Hamilton is funded in part by the Government of Ontario. The views expressed in these materials are the views of Healthy Living Hamilton and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Ontario. Healthy Living Hamilton does not necessarily endorse the information or services in the website links.

## ***Why the Guide Was Created...***

As a committee of Healthy Living Hamilton, the goal of the Workplace Workgroup is to train, educate, orient, mentor, and guide members to help them build and support workplace health and wellness in their own organizations.

A meeting of key stakeholders in workplace health held in Hamilton in March 2002 revealed the need for resources to help them along their journey to building a healthy workplace. The Workplace Workgroup committed to developing and distributing the guide. To date approximately 2,000 copies of the CD have been distributed.

The following people were instrumental in developing the original guide:

- Lisa Beaudoin, City of Hamilton Public Health Services (primary writer)
- Heather Champ, City of Hamilton Employee Health & Wellness Services
- Jan Chappel, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety
- Norma Gibson-MacDonald, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety
- Judi Goldsworthy, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
- Leah Lews, Medisys (Canada Post)

# *Glossary of Terms*

**Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion (CHWP):** Comprehensive workplace health promotion is an approach to protecting and enhancing the health of employees that relies and builds upon the efforts of employers to create a supportive management culture and upon the efforts of employees to care for their own well-being. CHWP is not a particular program or model. It is a philosophy, theory and practice of health promotion that is intended and designed to be incorporated into the Business Plan of organizations whose governors, owners and managers care about the well-being of their employees<sup>1</sup>.

**Business Case:** The business case is the proposal you make to management, human resources, employees and unions to get commitment and participation to move forward with comprehensive workplace health promotion. The business case includes evidence that supports the benefits of doing comprehensive workplace health promotion and the costs of doing nothing.

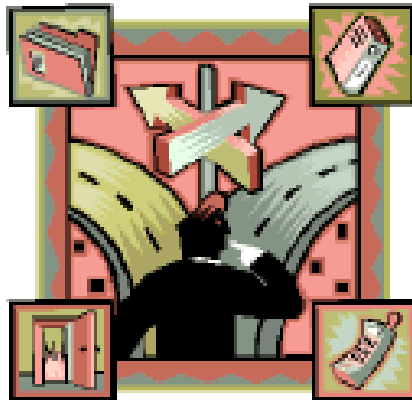
**Buy-in:** The term "buy-in" refers to obtaining support for comprehensive workplace health promotion. Obtaining buy-in is an ongoing endeavour that utilizes different strategies. Buy-in is required from key stakeholders in your workplace such as management, human resources, employees and unions.

**Employee Assistance Programs (EAP):** Employee Assistance Programs, or EAPs, are a benefit provided by employers to their employees and family members with the aim of improving employee health and organizational well-being while reducing costs associated with absenteeism, disability claims, workplace accidents or low productivity. EAP services typically include short-term counselling assistance provided by professionals, telephone and web-based information and support services, and wellness and training programs that focus upon prevention and health promotion. In addition, EAPs can offer specialized services such as on-site trauma response, management consultation, mediation/alternative dispute resolution, and outplacement services<sup>36</sup>.

**Needs Assessment (also referred to as situational assessment or gap analysis):** A needs assessment is a process used to identify the gap between what exists and what is desired. This may also be called a gap analysis or situational assessment. The needs assessment process should reveal the actual needs, current practices and preferences of employees.

**Return On Investment (ROI):** Return On Investment refers to the income generated from investing in comprehensive workplace health promotion.

# *Chapter 1: Where Do I Begin?*



## Where Do I Begin?

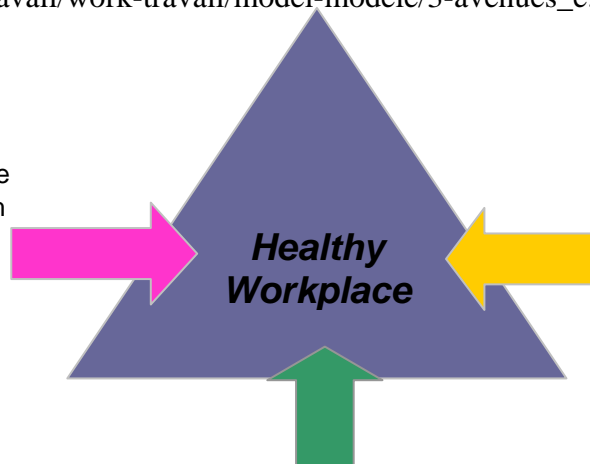
The purpose of this guide is to help you get started on your journey of building a healthy workplace. Where you begin depends on where you want to go. If optimizing the [health](http://www.who.int/about/definition/en/) of employees and productivity of the organization are your anticipated outcomes of a healthy workplace, than comprehensive workplace health promotion is for you. Comprehensive workplace health promotion is hard to define, but the concept is described below:

*Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion (CHWP) is an approach to protecting and enhancing the health of employees that relies and builds upon the efforts of employers to create a supportive management culture and upon the efforts of employees to care for their own well-being. CHWP is not a particular program or model. It is a philosophy, theory and practice of health promotion that is intended and designed to be incorporated into the Business Plan of organizations whose governors, owners and managers care about the well-being of their employees<sup>1</sup>.*

## Influencing Employee Health through Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion

Comprehensive workplace health promotion emphasizes that by focusing on employees' health practices, the social environment and employee's personal resources, and the physical environment in which they work can [influence employee health](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/model-modele/3-avenues_e.html) <sup>2</sup>.

**Health Practices** are behaviours that affect health such as smoking, unhealthy eating, physical inactivity, and substance abuse.



**Physical Environment** can impact employee health through air quality, noise, and other workplace conditions.

**Social Environment and Personal Resources** are known to influence mental and physical health. The social environment is the culture of a workplace as experienced by its employees. The culture is made up of patterns of human relationships and communications that are strongly influenced by managerial decisions about the organization and design of work. Personal resources are the ways in which employees cope with stress and their sense of control over their work.

All three influences should be addressed in order to develop and sustain a healthy workplace.

## ***Why Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion?***

There are approximately 298,000 people living in Hamilton who also work in Hamilton<sup>3</sup>. Hamilton's community is diverse. Immigration will be an important contributor to the growth of the City as its population growth is decreasing<sup>4</sup>. Manufacturing, retail, health and social services sectors dominate the economic landscape of Hamilton, with small businesses as the majority<sup>5</sup>.

The physical health status of Hamilton residents is not encouraging. According to 2002 Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RFSS) data, 38.8% of Hamiltonians aged 18 years and older have a Body Mass Index (BMI) in the overweight range, and 18% have a BMI in the obese range<sup>6</sup>. Approximately 19% of Hamiltonians smoke daily<sup>7</sup>. Unfortunately, surveys show that only 30% of Hamiltonians over the age of 12 are considered physically active<sup>8</sup>.

If Hamiltonians are anything like their Canadian counterparts, their mental health status is not encouraging either. The World Health Organization has declared job stress a worldwide epidemic. Canadians are increasingly pressed for time, largely due to greater work demands<sup>9</sup>. As employees, Hamiltonians may find themselves in less satisfying jobs<sup>10</sup> due to high demands and not enough recognition or control over their work<sup>10</sup>. The boundary between their job and their personal life becomes blurred with the advances in technology that make them available 24 hours a day<sup>10</sup>. Add balancing their roles as parent, spouse, eldercare giver to their role of employee, and one begins to understand why there is an increase in work-life conflict in Canada<sup>10</sup>.

The current physical and mental health status of Hamiltonians means that regardless of size or sector, Hamilton workplaces are facing imminent challenges. Absenteeism rates<sup>11</sup> and health costs are spiralling upwards<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, it is estimated that depression will rank second only to heart disease as the leading cause of disability by the year 2020<sup>13</sup> and disability represents 4% to 12% of payroll costs in Canada<sup>14</sup>. Meanwhile, retention and recruitment issues will become paramount as the number of workers leaving the labour force every year will be larger than the number of new young workers entering for the first time<sup>4</sup>.

Hamilton workplaces can abate the negative impact of these challenges by promoting a healthy workplace through comprehensive workplace health promotion.

## ***Does Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion Really Work?***

The evidence that comprehensive workplace health promotion programs are cost-effective and improve employee health is growing<sup>15</sup>. In a recent Canadian study, participants were able to reduce their cardiovascular risk factors by the end of a wellness program. Return On Investment (ROI) calculations for comprehensive workplace wellness programs ranged from \$1.64 to \$3.98 (for every dollar spent)<sup>16</sup>. Outside of the research literature, Canadian companies offering wellness programming have been measuring outcomes using human resource data and other means. Data from Canadian companies such as BC Hydro and Canada Life have demonstrated ROI's of \$3 and \$7 respectively for each dollar invested<sup>17</sup>. Benefits such as increased employee satisfaction and retention as well as decreased absenteeism and injuries have been demonstrated

in Canadian companies such as Amex, Celestica, Dofasco, MDS Nordion, NCR, and Telus BC<sup>18</sup>. Other reported benefits of comprehensive workplace health promotion programs include reduced health or insurance costs<sup>19</sup> and improved employee health and wellness<sup>18</sup>.

The potential for improved health status and return-on-investment are not the only benefits of comprehensive workplace health promotion. Management at Chevron, an energy company in the United States, concur that workplace health promotion has added value to the company by helping them achieve their business goals<sup>20</sup>. For more information on the benefits of comprehensive workplace health promotion, check out the links to Canadian examples listed below.

### Canadian Examples

[Canadian Case Studies](http://www.clbc.ca/Research_and_Reports/Case_Studies.asp) ([http://www.clbc.ca/Research\\_and\\_Reports/Case\\_Studies.asp](http://www.clbc.ca/Research_and_Reports/Case_Studies.asp))

This link gives you access to case studies of 12 Canadian companies on innovative workplace health initiatives.

[Summary of Canadian Organizational Outcomes](http://www.ccih.ca/docs/CCIH-Discuss_Workplace.pdf)  
([http://www.ccih.ca/docs/CCIH-Discuss\\_Workplace.pdf](http://www.ccih.ca/docs/CCIH-Discuss_Workplace.pdf))

Appendix C of the Discussion Paper on Workplace Health highlights the outcomes of Canadian companies that have won the [National Quality Institutes Healthy Workplace Award](http://www.ngi.ca/HealthyWorkplace/Recognition.aspx) (<http://www.ngi.ca/HealthyWorkplace/Recognition.aspx>)

## ***How Do I Make Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion Happen In My Workplace?***

As an approach, comprehensive workplace health promotion is open-ended<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, you will want to select a framework that is consistent with the philosophy of comprehensive workplace health promotion and has the best fit for your workplace. Choosing a framework is important. A framework will help you focus and increase your chances of successful workplace health initiatives. Fortunately, there are several healthy workplace models that exist for you to choose from, which are listed below. Common elements in these models include:

- ❑ Obtaining commitment or buy-in from senior management, employees and unions (see Chapter 2)
- ❑ Forming a Health & Wellness Committee (see Chapter 3)
- ❑ Conducting a needs assessment (see Chapter 3)
- ❑ Creating a Health & Wellness Action Plan (see Chapter 3)
- ❑ Implementing programs or activities (see Chapter 3)
- ❑ Evaluating the process and outcomes (see Chapter 3)

Brought to you by the Workplace Workgroup of



## Healthy Workplace Models

The following models help explain how to implement comprehensive workplace health promotion in your own workplace. Unless otherwise specified, these models can be accessed free of charge.

### **National Quality Institute: [Canada's Healthy Workplace Criteria](http://www.nqi.ca/nqistore/product_details.aspx?ID=63)**

([http://www.nqi.ca/nqistore/product\\_details.aspx?ID=63](http://www.nqi.ca/nqistore/product_details.aspx?ID=63))

The criteria address a broad-based approach to health and wellness issues in the workplace. The criteria brings together environmental, physical, mental, safety and social issues into a strategic model that helps organizations set goals and manage their wellness programs.

### **Health Canada: [Corporate Health Model](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/model-modele/index_e.html)**

([http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/model-modele/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/model-modele/index_e.html))

Designed for corporations and large business, this guide provides your organization with an outline of the steps required to develop and implement a comprehensive health program to help employees maintain or improve their health using the Corporate Health Model.

### **Health Canada: [Small Business Health Model](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/small-guide-petite/index_e.html)**

([http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/small-guide-petite/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/small-guide-petite/index_e.html))

The seven steps required to develop and implement a comprehensive health program to help employees maintain or improve their health through the Small Business Health Model are outlined.

### **Health Canada: [Farm Business Health Model](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/farm-agricole/index_e.html)**

([http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/farm-agricole/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/work-travail/farm-agricole/index_e.html))

This approach allows a farm district to get involved one step at a time. Participating groups set the pace and choose the level of involvement they feel comfortable with.

### **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety: [Wellness in the Workplace](http://www.ccohs.ca/products/publications/wellness.html)**

(<http://www.ccohs.ca/products/publications/wellness.html>)

This guide provides practical steps and program suggestions for workplace health and wellness programs. You will be able to create a wellness program or integrate one or more initiatives into your existing framework. Cost \$10 plus shipping and handling. This resource can also be borrowed from the [Workplace Resource Library \(www.doitwell.ca\)](http://www.doitwell.ca).

## Conditions for Success

The healthy workplace models listed above are designed to increase your chances of success in building a healthy workplace. The Health Communication Unit (THCU) at the [Centre for Health Promotion](http://www.utoronto.ca/chp/) (<http://www.utoronto.ca/chp/>), University of Toronto, is one of 22 members of the [Ontario Health Promotion Resource System](http://www.ohprs.ca/) (<http://www.ohprs.ca/>) funded by Health Promotion & Wellness, Public Health Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to increase the capacity of health promotion practitioners to effectively promote health in Ontario communities. THCU outlines 9 conditions for successful workplace health promotion initiatives based on a review of the literature<sup>21</sup>, all of which are built into the models listed above to a certain extent:

1. Senior management commitment and participation is absolutely critical
2. Participatory planning (involve employees in the process)
3. Primary focus is on employees' needs
4. Optimal use of on-site resources
5. Integration (develop an overall workplace health policy aligned with companies' mission, vision, and values)
6. Recognition that a person's health is determined by an interdependent set of factors (programming should address more than one aspect of a person's life e.g. a healthy weights program could take into account healthy eating, physical activity, and body image).
7. Tailoring to the special features of each workplace environment
8. Evaluation
9. Long-term commitment

(For more details on the conditions, [click here](http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/res) (<http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/res>).

According to Pelletier (1991), other conditions for success include<sup>22</sup>:

- Setting program goals and objectives
- Easy access to the program and facilities
- Incentives for participation
- Respect and confidentiality
- Corporate culture that encourages health promotion
- Helping management meet their business needs in a cost effective way.

Regardless of the model you choose, your first step will be to secure commitment from management, employees, and unions. Getting commitment can be challenging, particularly from management. The next chapter is designed to give you strategies on how to get buy-in for comprehensive workplace health promotion.

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- <sup>1</sup> Shain, M., & Suurvali, H. (2001). Investing in Comprehensive Workplace Health Promotion. Retrieved September 9, 2003 from [http://www.nqi.ca/nqistore/product\\_details.aspx?ID=46](http://www.nqi.ca/nqistore/product_details.aspx?ID=46).
- <sup>2</sup> The National Quality Institute and Health Canada. (1998). Canadian Healthy Workplace Criteria. Retrieved September 9, 2003 from [http://www.nqi.ca/nqistore/product\\_details.aspx?ID=63](http://www.nqi.ca/nqistore/product_details.aspx?ID=63).
- <sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada as cited in The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce Newsletter *Working For You* (February 22, 2003).
- <sup>4</sup> HR Matters Hamilton Human Resource Strategy Study (2002). Retrieved May 28, 2003 from <http://www.city.hamilton.on.ca/business/development/pdf/Exec-Summary.pdf>
- <sup>5</sup> Industrial Overview for the Hamilton HRCC Area. Retrieved May 7, 2003 from [http://www.on.hrcc-drhc.gc.ca/english/offices/hamilton/lmi/content/hamindstruct\\_e.shtml](http://www.on.hrcc-drhc.gc.ca/english/offices/hamilton/lmi/content/hamindstruct_e.shtml).
- <sup>6</sup> City of Hamilton, Public Health & Community Services Department: Program Policy and Planning Division. (2002). Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System: Body Mass Index.
- <sup>7</sup> McGuire, H. (e-mail communication June 8, 2006).
- <sup>8</sup> Canadian Community Health Survey, 2003.
- <sup>9</sup> Duxbury & Higgins (2001). *Work-Life Balance in the New Millennium: Where Are We? Where Do We Need to Go?* Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc.
- <sup>10</sup> Shain, M. (2000). Best Advice on Stress Risk Management in the Workplace. Retrieved September 9, 2003 from <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/workplace/publications.htm>.
- <sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada (2002). *Work Absences*. The Daily, Thursday July 4, 2002. Retrieved November 11, 2002 from [www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/020704/d020704h.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/020704/d020704h.htm)
- <sup>12</sup> The Canadian Council on Integrated Healthcare (2002). *A Discussion Paper on Workplace Health*. Retrieved October 2003 from [www.ccih.ca](http://www.ccih.ca).
- <sup>13</sup> Cambridge, Murray & Lopez, 1996 as cited at [www.mentalhealthworks.ca](http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca).
- <sup>14</sup> Wilson, Joffe & Wilkerson, 2002 as cited at [www.mentalhealthworks.ca](http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca).
- <sup>15</sup> Pelletier, K. (1991). A review and analysis of health and cost-effective outcome studies of comprehensive health promotion and disease prevention programs. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 5(4), 311- 313.
- <sup>16</sup> Aventis Pharma Canada Inc. (2001). Workplace wellness programs benefit employers and employees alike - - study shows. Retrieved October 28, 2002, from <http://www.aventis-pharma.ca/G1impact.htm>
- <sup>17</sup> Davie, S. (2000). Making the business case for wellness: Showing the benefits to the bottom line is not an impossible task [Electronic version]. *Benefits Canada*. Retrieved October 28, 2002, from <http://www.benefitscanada.com/Content/2000/11-00/viewpoint2.html>
- <sup>18</sup> Blaney, S., Bonnett, C., Caron, S., Kee, S., May, A., Norton, J., & Yardley, J. (2002). A discussion paper on workplace health, 52- 54. Retrieved October 17, 2002, from [http://www.ccih.ca/e/working\\_papers.htm](http://www.ccih.ca/e/working_papers.htm)
- <sup>19</sup> Health Promotion at Work: Results of the 1992 National Workplace Survey (1994). [Electronic version]. Retrieved October 30, 2002 from <http://www.cflri.ca/cflri/resources/pub.php>
- <sup>20</sup> Whitehead, D. (2001). A corporate perspective on health promotion: Reflections and advice from Chevron.

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<sup>21</sup> The Health Communication Unit (2003). Conditions for successful workplace health promotion initiatives. Retrieved July 2003 from <http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/infoandresources.htm#res>.

<sup>22</sup> Pelletier, K. (Ed.). (1991). A review and analysis of health and cost-effective outcome studies of comprehensive health promotion and disease prevention programs. American Journal of Health Promotion. Vol. 5, No. 4. 311-313.