Total Worker Health:
A Policy Umbrella for the Workforce

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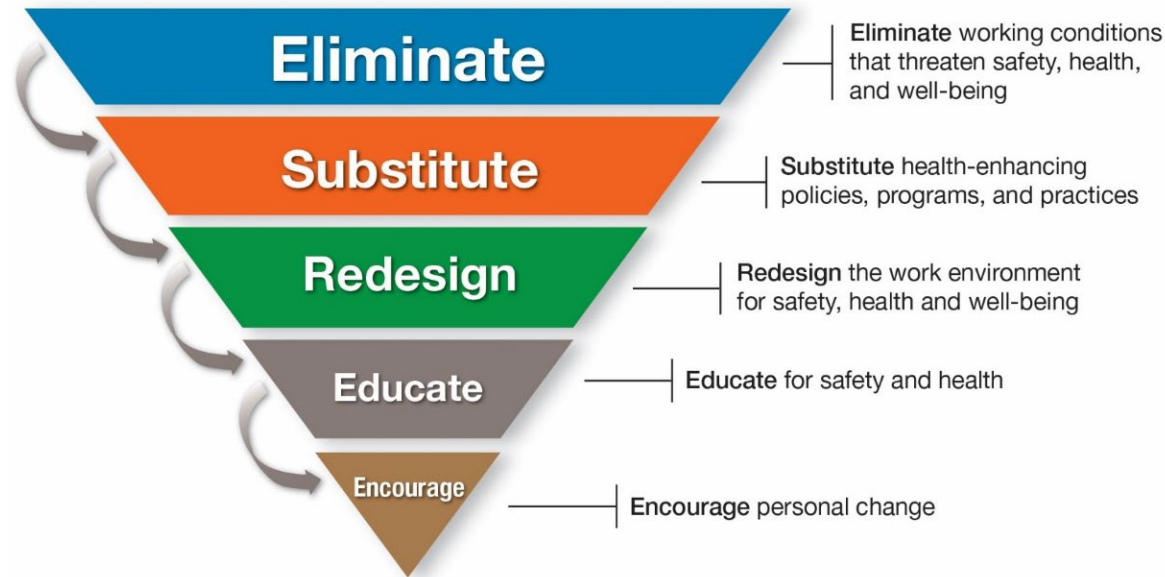**Roundtable on Population Health Improvement**
Exploring Labor/Employment Policy and Population Health: A Workshop Series

June 9, 2025

Total Worker Health®

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**

Eliminate working conditions that threaten safety, health, and well-being

Substitute health-enhancing policies, programs, and practices

Redesign the work environment for safety, health and well-being

Educate for safety and health

Encourage personal change

https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/php/hierarchy/index.html

Issues Relevant to *Total Worker Health*®

Prevention and Control of Hazards and Exposures
- Biological Agents
- Chemicals
- Ergonomic Factors
- Physical Agents
- Psychosocial Factors
- Risk Assessment and Management

Built Environment Supports
- Accessible and Affordable Health Enhancing Options
- Clean and Equipped Breakrooms, Restrooms, and Lactation Facilities
- Healthy Workspace Design and Environment
- Inclusive and Universal Design
- Safe and Secure Facilities

Community Supports
- Access to Safe Green Spaces and Pathways
- Healthy Community Design
- Safe and Clean Environment (Air and Water Quality, Noise Levels, Tobacco-Free)
- Safe, Healthy, and Affordable Housing Options
- Transportation and Commuting Assistance

Compensation and Benefits
- Adequate Wages and Prevention of Wage Theft
- Affordable, Comprehensive, and Confidential Healthcare Services
- Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Programs
- Continual Learning, Training, and (Re-)Skilling Opportunities
- Disability Insurance (Short- and Long-Term)
- Employee Assistance and Substance Use Disorder Programs
- Equitable Pay, Performance Appraisals, and Promotions
- Minimum Guaranteed Hours
- Paid Time Off (Sick, Vacation, Caregiving, Parental)
- Prevention of Healthcare Cost Shifting to Workers
- Retirement Planning and Benefits
- Work-Life Programs
- Workers' Compensation Benefits

Healthy Leadership
- Collaborative and Participatory Environment
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Responsible Business Decision-Making
- Supportive Managers, Supervisors, and Executives
- Training
- Worker Recognition, Appreciation, and Respect

Organization of Work
- Adequate Breaks
- Comprehensive Resources
- Fatigue, Burnout, Loneliness, and Stress Prevention
- Job Quality and Quantity
- Meaningful and Engaging Work
- Safe Staffing
- Work Intensification Prevention
- Work-Life Fit

Policies
- Elimination of Bullying, Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination
- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Family and Medical Leave
- Human and Natural Resource Sustainability
- Information Privacy
- Judicious Monitoring of Workers and Biomonitoring Practices
- Optimizing Function and Return-to-Work
- Prevention of Stressful Job Monitoring Practices
- Reasonable Accommodations
- Transparent Reporting Practices
- Whistleblower Protection
- Worker Well-Being Centered
- Workplace Supported Recovery Programs

Technology
- Artificial Intelligence
- Robotics
- Sensors

Work Arrangements
- Contracting and Subcontracting
- Free-Lance
- Global and Multinational
- Multi-Employer
- Non-Standard
- Organizational Restructuring, Downsizing, and Mergers
- Precarious and Contingent
- Small- and Medium-Sized Employers
- Temporary
- Unemployment and Underemployment
- Virtual

Workforce Demographics
- Diversity and Inclusivity
- Multigenerational
- Productive Aging across Lifecourse
- Vulnerable Workers
- Workers with Disabilities

https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/105981

CDC NIOSH

Updated January 2020

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Work-Related Psychosocial Hazards

COMMENTARY

AMERICAN JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL MEDICINE WILEY

An urgent call to address work-related psychosocial hazards and improve worker well-being

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Abstract

Work-related psychosocial hazards are on the verge of surpassing many other occupational hazards in their contribution to ill-health, injury, disability, direct and indirect costs, and impact on business and national productivity. The risks associated with exposure to psychosocial hazards at work are compounded by the increasing background prevalence of mental health disorders in the working-age population. The extensive and cumulative impacts of these exposures represent an alarming public health problem that merits immediate, increased attention. In this paper, we review the linkage between work-related psychosocial hazards and adverse effects, their economic burden, and interventions to prevent and control these hazards. We identify six crucial societal actions: (1) increase awareness of this critical issue through a comprehensive public campaign; (2) increase etiologic, intervention, and implementation research; (3) initiate or augment surveillance efforts; (4) increase translation of research findings into guidance for employers and workers; (5) increase the number and diversity of professionals skilled in preventing and addressing psychosocial hazards; and (6) develop a national regulatory or consensus standard to prevent and control work-related psychosocial hazards.

https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2024/04/10/workplace-psychosocial-hazards/

Employment Risks to Health

- **Job stress** impacts individuals, companies, and the economy (Hammer, 2021)
    - Job stress is associated with cardiovascular disease
    - Frequent comorbidity with obesity, diabetes, smoking and drinking behaviors, and physical inactivity
- **Shift-work, long work hours, and work schedules** can contribute to work-related fatigue (NIOSH Healthy Work Design)
- **Injured workers** more likely than non-injured workers to suffer from depression. Increased likelihood of a family member hospitalization after a worker is injured at work. (Asfaw, 2012)
- TWH approaches address root causes of stress through **management policies** and providing more autonomy, not by focusing on individual-level changes (Kirby, 2024)

https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2021/10/13/supportive-leaders
https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/research-programs/portfolio/hwd.html
https://journals.lww.com/joem/fulltext/2012/09000/incidence_and_cost_of_depression_after.4.aspx
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ajim.22110
https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2024/04/15/workplace-mental-health-resources/

Employment Policy:
Effects on Workers and Families

- **Precarious work arrangements** increase likelihood of reporting more days of poor physical and mental health and more days with activity limitations due to health problems (Bhattacharya, 2021)
- **Wages** needed for food, shelter, and healthcare. Low wages have negative impacts on self-esteem and job satisfaction (Leigh and De Vogli, 2016)
- **Taking time off** and changing one's schedule decrease job stress and increase job satisfaction (Pana-Cryan, 2024)
- **Schedule flexibility** helps workers address personal and family needs, including childcare, eldercare, schooling, and healthcare (Ray and Pana-Cryan, 2022)

https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2023/05/02/fow-economic-security/
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27158950/
https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2024/05/14/work-arrangements-fow/
https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2022/03/11/work-flexibility/

Employee Benefits:
Impact on Chronic Disease & Population Health

- Paid sick leave can improve the health of workers' children (Asfaw, 2017) Parent workplace injury is associated with emotional and behavioral problems in children (Asfaw, 2021)
- Independent workers and temporary/contract workers less likely to have health insurance than workers in a standard work arrangement (Luckhaupt, 2017)
- Higher levels of job precarity increases likelihood of self-reported poor/fair mental health (Lundstrom, 2024)

https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28169438/
https://journals.lww.com/joem/fulltext/2021/09000/association_of_parent_workplace_injury_with.5.aspx
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/mm6632a9.htm
https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091743524002457?via%3Dihub

Impact Wellbeing: Healthcare Workers

Impact Wellbeing Guide

Impact Wellbeing™ Guide
A step-by-step systems approach to improving healthcare worker wellbeing.

AUG. 5, 2024

For hospital leaders

Impact Wellbeing™: Communication Best Practices for Hospital Leaders
Discover tips and best practices for hospital leaders to effectively communicate with their staff.

AUG. 5, 2024

https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/healthcare/impactwellbeing/index.html

NIOSH Worker Well-Being Questionnaire: (WellBQ)

- Free for public use
- Create benchmarks for occupations, industries, workforces
- Examine changes over time
- Assess the impact of interventions
- Compare results between groups
- Link to organizational data (scorecards, management systems, healthcare costs, turnover, etc.)
- Accumulate and share data through the HERO Worker Well-Being Clearinghouse

https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/wellbq/default.html

What's Ahead?

Strategic Focus Area	Underlying Strategic Issues
Data Security	The OSH workforce no longer meets worker needs due to worker fear of being monitored and data privacy issues (H2) Increased data security demands pose greater challenges to OSH research and surveillance activities (H2) Data security and privacy are an essential and unaddressed element of worker protection policies (H3)
Mental health	Significant increase in resources devoted towards the development of guidance for workplace psychosocial health and well-being policies (H1) New OSH competencies and a related discipline are needed to address significant worker mental health burden (H3)
Partnerships	OSH researchers lose the ability to access surveillance data and work sites due to changes in OSH policies and regulations (H2) Partner and key interest group connections must be built and maintained as virtual staff become more geographically dispersed (H2)
Research	Research into exposures to novel hazards and mental health requires reorganization and reeducation to incorporate expertise in new technologies (H1) Declining public and Congressional support limits mandated scope (H2) OSH community must continue to address traditional hazards as new OSH issues emerge at a rapid pace and require attention (H2) OSH research is driven by new OSHQ metrics and the needs of priority populations and key interest groups, requiring a new approach to the OSH research portfolio (H3)
Virtual Work	Federal human resources policies for remote work are not in line with private industry (H1)

Upcoming Events

Work, Stress, and Health 2025 Conference

Seattle, WA, July 8-11, 2025

Convened by the Society for Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP)

4th International Symposium to Advance *Total Worker Health*®

Oct 21-24, 2025, Bethesda MD, 20892

Convened by the Society for Total Worker Health

Thank You!