

The Healthy Workplace...

Making it Work!

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Thank you to the participating workplaces for sharing their workplace practices with us. They are

- Canada Revenue Agency: Winnipeg Tax Services Office
- Interlake Regional Health Authority
- Manitoba Hydro
- Seven Oaks General Hospital
- Women's Health Clinic

Many thanks to Doug Smith for writing the original copy of the case studies included in the publication.

Thank you also to the members of the Workplace Stress Initiative for helping to develop the process for the project and for reviewing the draft document.

This project would not have been possible without the generous allocation of time and resources provided by the Occupational Health Centre.

Finally, a special thanks to Brenda Hasiuk of the Manitoba Government and General Employees Union for her time and expertise in the design and layout of this document.

Introduction

Workplace Stress Initiative members include:

- Canadian Union of Public Employees
- Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union of Canada
- Community Unemployed Help Centre
- Family Centre of Winnipeg
- Injured & Disabled Workers' Centre
- International Association of Machinist & Aerospace Workers
- Manitoba Quality Network (QNET)
- Manitoba Government and General Employees Union
- Manitoba Federation of Labour
- MFL Occupational Health Centre
- Resource Conservation Manitoba
- United Food and Commercial Workers Local 832
- The Wellness Institute of
- Seven Oaks Hospital
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
- Women's Health Clinic

The Healthy Workplace Practices Project is the work of the Workplace Stress Initiative, a group of organizations in Manitoba who are concerned about stressful working conditions.

As part of the Healthy Workplace Practices Project, workplaces in Manitoba were invited to submit examples of how their workplace demonstrates healthy workplace practices that promote employee health and well-being and reduce workplace stress. Areas of focus included

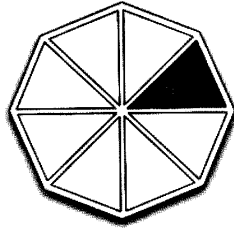
- Defining employees duties and responsibilities
- Work-life balance
- Respectful workplace initiatives
- Conflict resolution practices
- Workload management
- Continuous learning
- Employee recognition
- Employee participation and decision-making

Participating workplaces submitted practices in the area they believed their workplace had the most experience and success. You will note that some workplaces submitted practices in more than one area. For example, one workplace submitted their practices for both Employee Recognition and Employee Participation and Decision-making. Some areas of focus such as Workload Management had no submissions. Other areas such as Work-life Balance have a submission from more than one workplace.

The Healthy Workplace Practices Project does not certify that the participating workplaces are healthy in every area, but identifies and commends their practice in the specific areas of focus described in the ensuing case studies. We did not conduct an independent audit of the practices highlighted, but in an effort to ensure credibility, we always interviewed a variety of people in each workplace. Both management and union or worker representatives were interviewed in all of the workplaces.

The goal of this document is to provide ideas and tools for workers and employers to use to create healthier environments and work toward a healthy and stress-free workplace. The hope is that the strategies used in these case studies can be adapted to other workplaces and the challenges shared will be of help in the process.

We commend and thank the employers, unions, and workers who took the time to share their journeys with us. It was an honour and a privilege for us to be invited into your offices, workplaces, and boardrooms to learn about the many healthy practices that are not only possible, but implemented and embraced by both management and workers.



Work-Life Balance

Manitoba Hydro

Manitoba Hydro has over 5,600 employees across Manitoba. They work in the corporation head offices, at its generating stations, call centre, and district offices. All its non-management employees belong to one of four separate unions.

The Crown Corporation has long been a leader in offering its employees a range of work week options, but in the past four years it has expanded the range of measures that help employees maintain a healthy work-life balance. Many of these initiatives were developed through collective bargaining and represent creative ways the union and the employer found to improve work-life balance without increasing costs.

Flextime or flexible hours are offered to approximately 2,000 people who work at the corporation head office. There, the key requirement is that the core hours of 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. be covered and the required number of hours are worked each day. (This means that employees can start as early as 7:00 a.m. or work as late as 6:00 p.m. if they are also on a nine-day work cycle.)

Because of the nature of the services that Manitoba Hydro provides, not all of its work-life balance programming can be offered to all its employees. For example, flextime is not as available for call-centre workers, power-plant workers, and construction workers. However, all employees can work a nine-day work cycle where they put in 10 days of work hours in nine days, allowing them an extra day off every two weeks. In some cases in the field, they may work 10-hour days and take one extra day off every week if all employees involved are agreeable. Part-time or job-sharing work arrangements are also available to those whose family situations require it. When one call-centre employee came back from a maternity leave she realized that

she wanted to be home when her children left for school and when they returned. Because the company did not wish to lose a good employee, the call centre was able to accommodate her desire to work part-time

Hydro also offers five days of family responsibility leave each year, which is charged against the employee banked sick days. There is also an allowance of two days off with pay for emergency leave (not charged against sick days).

The company also provides top-up of Employment Insurance benefits for workers on maternity leave.

A deferred salary program allows workers to defer a portion of their salary each year and then take a year off at that salary level. For example, a worker could accept 80 per cent of salary for four years and take the fifth year off at the 80 per cent of salary that had been banked.

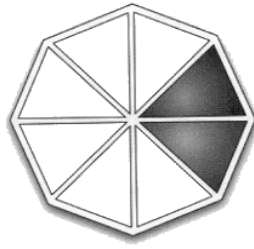
Employees and managers receive training and presentations on creating work-life balance, recognizing mental health problems, and managing stress in the workplace. Workers have access to a psychiatric nurse, an occupational health nurse and a physiotherapist. Through the employee assistance program there is also access to two counsellors.

“These programs help the corporation attract and keep good employees”

According to the manager of the Manitoba Hydro Employee Safety and Health Department, these programs help the corporation attract and keep good employees. He believes the impact of these programs has been positive as employee turnover is low and Manitoba Hydro has little trouble recruiting.

The workers are positive about the impact of the program. They stressed that senior management is committed to the programs and fosters a family-comes-first attitude. As a result, family-related leaves are not hard to get nor are they abused. They spoke of one worker who was on vacation when a family member died, forcing the worker to cut short her holiday. Management let her bank her vacation time and count the time off as a compassionate leave. They said surveys show that there is overall satisfaction with the flexible work schedule. Furthermore, the various work-life balance measures increase morale and productivity, since workers feel better about work and are more willing to make an extra effort.

When asked about challenges involved in initiating and maintaining these policies, the manager said that while good policy is essential, there is never a single correct answer to work-life balance issues and it is not possible to define flexibility in policy. Also Manitoba Hydro, as a Crown corporation, has to be watchful of its public image — it must have a strong business case for improvements in work-life balance and ensure that it is still meeting public expectations.



Work-Life Balance

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA): Winnipeg Tax Services Office (WTSO)

The Winnipeg Tax Services Office of the Canada Revenue Agency has made all of the federal government work-life balance initiatives available and accessible to its entire staff (700 employees in three separate Winnipeg offices). Written policy states that the office “is committed to providing policies and provisions designed to help employees balance their work, personal, and family responsibilities.”

A compressed workweek, where workers can choose to work more hours each day, allowing them to work fewer days a week, is very popular. Some choose to take a full day off every two weeks while others prefer one afternoon off every week. Flextime is available to all staff. This is when the start and end time of the work day can vary as long as core hours are covered and the number of hours worked meets the required amount.

Teleworking is becoming more common, allowing employees to work at alternate locations, either at home or the client’s office should their work take them there on a daily basis. Furthermore, part-time work and job sharing arrangements are available and widely used.

A Deferred Salary Leave or Leave With Income Averaging (LIA) is a program where workers may defer a portion of their salary each year to fund a leave. They can take five weeks to three months off each year with their reduced salary averaged over the entire year. This leave does not affect the employee’s pension and is often used in the last few years of work prior to retirement. The availability of a LIA has encouraged some staff to postpone their retirement date since it reduces the amount of time required to work in the year. Holidays are still accrued in any month where the employee earns at least 10 days pay.

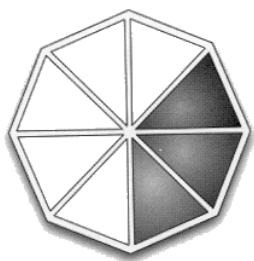
Care and Nurturing and Long Term Care of a Parent Leaves or Leave for Family Related Needs (depending on the bargaining unit), are unpaid leaves of a minimum of three weeks at a time to a maximum of five years in an employee career. Maternity Leave is topped up to 93 per cent of wages and a Marriage Leave of five paid days is available to newlyweds. CRA offers paid leave for certain family-related responsibilities up to five days, which is not taken from their sick leave.

“83 per cent of employees said they could balance their personal, family, and work needs”

Staff members make use of all of these initiatives. According to a recent survey 61 per cent work a compressed workweek, 35 per cent work a flexible work schedule, 7 per cent telework, and 7 per cent take leave with income averaging. The survey also indicates that these measures have a positive impact on how people feel about their work: 92 per cent said they were satisfied with their current work arrangement and 83 per cent said they could balance their personal, family, and work needs. This compares with 68 per cent for the overall federal government.

According to the Director of the WTSO, the initiatives were adopted with the support of a workplace Wellness Committee, which had recommended a number of health-related initiatives and good union-management relations made the implementation possible.

Making it easier for employees to take unpaid leaves not only helps balance the budget but, particularly in the summer, he said CRA is able to offer summer employment to students who are looking for work. Managing the workforce can be a challenge he says, with employees working different schedules and often not even in the same building as the managers. Due to operational requirements, in some work areas such as Client Services, it is more challenging to organize flex time and leaves. However, it is still offered and used, but with some boundaries on the flexibility. Employees say that work arrangements are still dependent on the manager but work-life balance is actively promoted from the top down so is seldom a problem. It is one thing to have policies in place to address work-life balance, one staff member says, but if the staff are not allowed to take advantage of them, they are not helpful. CRA, from the director to managers to workers, has embraced all the initiatives the Federal Government has developed and made them easily accessible to all staff.



Employee Participation and Decision-Making

Women's Health Clinic

From its inception, the Women's Health Clinic has been committed to a philosophy that respects the right of women to make informed decisions and facilitates the empowerment of women. Its organizational structure and processes have evolved in an effort to reflect these principles for both clients and employees. Management is required by policy to manage in a participatory way.

Every employee participates in a committee that plans programs and develops or gives input into policies and plans of the agency. Decision-making in these areas occurs in small groups or teams. Input is sought from across the agency and decision-making is often a back and forth process between the team responsible for an area and the rest of the agency.

Two employees are members of the organization's Board of Directors. Staff meetings are held on a monthly basis with all employees to raise issues for the employee board members to take to the Board of Directors.

According to both managers and staff, it is important to have clarity about who is the decision-maker for each issue and to try to move decision-making closer to the front-line staff. To participate, employees need to be clear about their role, where the information goes, who makes the decision and the parameters of the decision. Conflict can occur if people have different expectations about their role in a decision. The Steering Committee, which is comprised of the Executive Director and the Coordinators of the various teams, circulate their recommendations under headings that explain if the recommendation is for discussion, for information, or for decision.

Employees need time to review information and then to discuss it in committees or meetings before giving input or making decisions. This time must be allocated in addition to an employee's regular job duties.

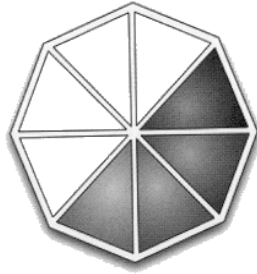
"employees feel empowered... The level of staff commitment to the organization is very high"

Staff and managers also noted that while committees try to reach consensus and then get input from across the organization, it is important to remember that consensus will not necessarily be achieved across the organization. Nor will all employees have the same verbal skills and assertiveness needed to participate. When new employees join the workplace, they may need skill building in participation. As an organization committed to diversity, an ongoing challenge is to be inclusive of employees who speak other languages and make sure their voices and opinions are heard.

As a result of the commitment to employee participation, employees have a sense of being able to create change and feel empowered. They feel positive about their jobs when compared with previous jobs. The level of staff commitment to the organization is very high. This was shown during the accreditation process the agency went through recently. As a result, the organization has good staff retention and recruitment of new employees is never difficult.

The organization also benefits from employees making suggestions and stating concerns. It results in better and more creative decisions that take into account many factors. Changes in services can be made quickly and be responsive to changing needs. As one employee said, "no one here ever says '**we've always done it this way.**' If they do, someone else will always say, '**well, how can we change it?**'"

Despite the need to allocate time for discussion and reflection, the staff and management said the participatory process does not mean that the organization is less efficient. They cited examples of work being done very quickly and emphasized that people were prepared to make extra efforts because they were committed to the organization. At the same time, staff spoke of times when decisions could be delayed as a result of the process and the stress created by the need to not only do one's job but also participate and make an informed contribution in regard to the operation of the clinic. However, the solutions that arise from staff participation are often more effective than they would be if they were developed in isolation.



Employee Participation and Decision-Making

Seven Oaks General Hospital and the Interlake Regional Health Authority identified the establishment of their Workplace Wellness programs as an example of Employee Participation and Decision-Making.

Seven Oaks General Hospital

The Seven Oaks General Hospital Workplace Wellness program takes a staff-driven, grassroots approach to workplace wellness. A 14-to-18 member volunteer team represents seven different work areas. The membership of each team reflects the job classification, age, and gender make-up of the work area the team represents. The teams meet on a monthly basis on work time and resources are available to ensure that departments can replace team members while they are at meetings.

With the assistance of a Wellness Coordinator, the teams plan, implement, and evaluate a two-year wellness plan, complete with vision statement, goals, and objectives. The teams are responsible for keeping the program on track, communicating with the rest of the staff in their work areas, selecting and delivering workplace interventions, and providing feedback on the program.

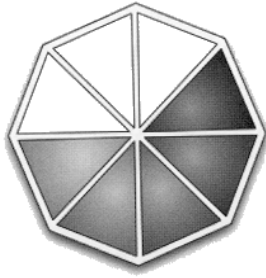
Surveys and newsletters promote staff input and provide information about the Wellness Program. In addition, a workplace wellness update is a standing agenda item for all staff meetings in the facility. The minutes of the Wellness Committees are kept in binders that are available to staff members and information is also posted on a Workplace Wellness bulletin board.

The Wellness Program work grew out of the hospital's outpatient and community development initiative. As staff developed that initiative, they realized that before Seven Oaks could promote the health of their community members they had to experience health promotion themselves. A new chief executive officer was strongly committed to employee health and wellness and staff participation.

"It also has a payback including low turnover, lower injury rates and reduced lost time injuries"

A staff representative on the Wellness Committee said the program has improved communications, ensuring that problems are identified and quickly addressed. In her experience one-on-one discussions are more effective in assessing the program than surveys, which are often not filled out or returned. She said keeping information fresh and up-to-date, maintaining the bulletin boards, and replacing departing committee members quickly, to ensure staff participation, can be a challenge.

According to the Human Resources Services Manager of Special Projects, staff participation in the decision making around the program empowers workers, helps them understand that management cares, and increases their concern for their own health. It also has a payback for the institution including low vacancy rates due to low turnover, lower injury rates and reduced lost time injuries to name a few. She said that the hospital learned that wellness programming is an ongoing process that requires buy-in and commitment from senior and middle management if it is to succeed. Among the key challenges, she said, has been getting people to believe that the employer has both an interest and a responsibility for their workers' health.



Employee Participation and Decision-Making

Interlake Regional Health Authority (IRHA)

The Interlake Regional Health Authority has 1,700 employees working in hospitals and community health offices throughout Manitoba's Interlake. In 2000 the IRHA made the promotion of a work environment conducive to employee and volunteer growth, participation, health, well-being and satisfaction a strategic priority. In 2001 the IRHA and the Heart and Stroke Foundation partnered for a 15-month project to initiate a pilot Workplace Wellness Program in four locations. It has since been expanded to 12 worksites. From the outset, employees have participated in a needs assessment survey and focus group discussions.

The program has a regional steering group with members from 12 sites and leadership teams at different work locations. The regional steering group is made up of representatives from local worksites, representatives from Human Resources Staff Education, Health Promotion, and senior management. It meets five times a year to plan from a regional perspective. The local leadership teams from each site coordinate their own initiatives and develop their own action plan. The worksite leadership teams, which ideally have representatives from all areas and programs in each worksite, identify local wellness needs and develop workplace wellness plans.

Although the Workplace Wellness project does not directly require workers to be involved in decision making in non-Workplace Wellness initiatives, there is a desire that an indirect effect will take place.

According to an Operations Manager, Support Services, the program provides additional opportunities for workers to be involved in planning and decision-making. This often involves informal workplace meetings that allow workers to participate in

decision-making. For example, in housecleaning, workers and managers jointly audited the way the job was done and the products used. In another case, managers and cooks reviewed procedures, menus, and sought feedback from other employees.

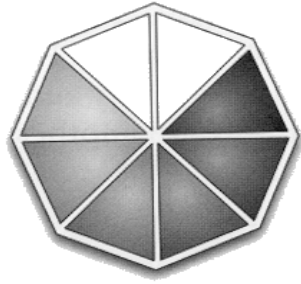
The program has been great for morale, a claim he backs up by pointing out that there is little staff turnover. He added that participatory decision-making has fostered a team approach. The Wellness Plan also calls for staff surveys and focus groups to continue to monitor the program effectiveness.

The worker co-chair of a site Workplace Health and Safety committee says the program provides workers with a sense of ownership, and because management makes it clear it is willing to listen to workers, it fosters a sense of community and trust.

This sense of empowerment has led to greater participation by workers in decision-making and has broken down barriers between disciplines. She said there were a number of examples of situations where registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and housekeeping staff all worked together to solve a problem. When a new palliative care program was being developed, staff members became very active in planning and obtaining needed information. At the same time conflicts have been fewer and have been easier to resolve. For instance, there has only been one grievance in recent years.

“conflicts have been fewer and have been easier to resolve”

Both management and workers said involving employees in the decision making process is demanding and requires time both in the planning and follow-up stages. It is not possible without good working relationships and open communications. It is a slow process for all involved, requiring give and take and a willingness to be open and responsive to new ideas and change. However, the benefits are well worth the efforts.



Reward and Recognition Program

Seven Oaks General Hospital

The Rewards and Recognition Program was established in 1996 to honour staff members who provide exceptional service to the Seven Oaks General Hospital (SOGH) Community. It marks the extraordinary achievements and contributions of the many staff who extend their efforts beyond the day-to-day performance of duties by sharing their gifts of compassion, patience, kindness, and professionalism with patients and colleagues alike. Everyone, including staff members, patients, families, volunteers, and community members, are welcome to take part in saying thank you to an individual or team whose efforts, contributions, or achievements are outstanding. There is a Reward and Recognition Committee that includes the Chief Executive Office and representatives from most departments.

Employees can be recognized through the Annual Reward and Recognition Awards as well as the Let's Make a Difference Thank-You Card program.

Let's Make a Difference Cards

Thank-you cards, designed by SOGH staff members, are located throughout the Hospital for everyone to use to thank staff for outstanding work.

Recognition may be given to staff for

- Making a difference in someone's day
- Demonstrating helpful, patient and courteous care
- Putting forth extra effort in their daily work
- Working together in a collegial manner
- Providing leadership as a member of the health care team

“Each month approximately 100 thank-you cards are received by staff members”

Each month approximately 100 thank-you cards are received by staff members. At the end of the month five names are drawn from the thanked recipients, and they are presented with a mug filled with teas, coffees, candy, vouchers and various other prizes. The Committee has received considerable positive feedback about the program and many Thank-You Cards are displayed in work areas.

Annual Awards

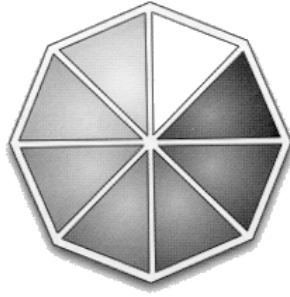
The Annual Awards Program recognizes and honours excellence in service by SOGH employees and medical staff. All Seven Oaks staff members/teams have an opportunity to nominate or be nominated for the following awards:

- Consistent, Excellence Performance Quality Leadership
- Customer Service Stewardship
- Esprit De Corp Wellness
- Innovation Special Awards

As a part of its mandate, the Committee reviews the nominations to determine if the nominees meet the award criteria.

Award recipients are acknowledged at the Annual Long Service, Retiree, Reward and Recognition Dinner. The award presentation and pictures of the award recipients are published in the Hospital Newsletter.

One of the keys to this successful Reward and Recognition Program is the representation on the Committee from all disciplines/services from across the Hospital/Wellness Institute—a committee that works well together. As well, the Committee is supported in its initiatives by the SOGH Chief Executive Office and Senior management Team.



Conflict Resolution

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA): Winnipeg Tax Services Office (WTSO)

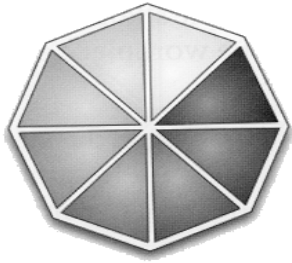
**“the process gets issues
out in the open and
results in a better, more
respectful relationship”**

The Winnipeg Tax Services Office Alternate Dispute Resolution system (ADR) was put in place as part of a national pilot program in 2000. There is an ADR Advisor and an ADR Support Network with over 30 volunteer members throughout the workplace. The network members have been trained to provide ADR-related coaching and support to co-workers. The ADR Advisor role is to promote prevention strategies and approaches to resolve conflict with personal and work-related issues. All workers in this 700-member workforce get one day of ADR training, while two days of training are provided for managers, team leaders, and members of the support network. Employees can request additional ADR training at any time.

According to the WTSO Director, the ADR program was initially a hard sell to managers, who worried about losing authority. He also said the union was initially resistant to the concept. However, opening up the workplace culture and encouraging workers to resolve issues themselves has yielded positive results and in his opinion, even improved client services and increased the level of employee professionalism. Workers can still file grievances but both workers and managers agree that ADR has reduced the number of formal workplace grievances. The system is valued because it resolves issues quickly rather than allowing them to fester. He said that employees preferred to deal with these issues within their own work environment rather than involving other levels of the organization.

While it was hard to measure the success of such a program, he felt that the office was a happier, better performing workplace as a result of these measures. Furthermore, he believes that it improved people's family lives. He said the employer intends to survey the workplace every two years to evaluate the program.

The ADR Advisor agreed that the process gets issues out in the open and results in a better, more respectful relationship. In general, the program reduces conflict and creates a more positive workplace culture.



Respectful Workplace

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA): Winnipeg Tax Services Office (WTSO)

The Winnipeg Tax Services Office of CRA promotes a respectful work environment by preventing harassment, resolving issues promptly and cooperatively, and providing a policy and procedure to follow should an issue of disrespect or harassment occur.

“The Expected Standard of Ethics and Conduct,” a document which can be found by all employees on CRA’s intranet, states

Carrying out our mission requires us to interact daily with thousands of Canadians from every walk of life. Effective interaction among colleagues and co-workers is also a critical factor in fulfilling our mission. We strive to ensure that our behavior toward clients and colleagues alike is guided by four key values:

Integrity, Professionalism, Respect, and Cooperation.

These core values are guiding principles for evaluation and promotion. Staff are asked to provide examples in writing, of how the core values have been integrated into their work. The core values are promoted at new staff orientation and compulsory on-the-job training sessions on Harassment and Diversity in the Workplace. They are also an integral part of any management training. The Managers’ Charter states that in demonstrating leadership all managers will strive to act according to the corporate values of Integrity, Professionalism, Respect, and Cooperation. One employee points out “It is so much easier to be respectful when I feel respected. Respect is modeled by the leaders in the organization.”

Policies, procedures and programs are in place to encourage respect in the workplace. One policy states “Preventing and promptly resolving harassment is essential to achieving a respectful work environment.” The Alternate Dispute Resolution Program is one way the WTSO has created a respectful workplace by resolving issues before feelings become escalated. All 700 staff are trained in basic conflict resolution skills. “It has become second nature now to use these skills. It took a while for the process to become a natural way of doing business, but it has created a respectful culture that has permeated the workplace,” says one staff member.

“It has become second nature now to use these conflict resolution skills”

A zero-tolerance level of harassment is promoted in the work environment and their policy states that all are responsible for contributing to a harassment free workplace. “Every employee must be treated with respect and dignity. Harassment of another employee or lack of action by a responsible authority constitutes a disciplinary action.”

CRA has developed a Diversity in the Workplace course which is compulsory for all staff to attend. The course has received very positive evaluations from staff and has been so successful it is now being offered to other organizations. This program offers staff a chance to discuss what respect means to them and what a respectful workplace encompasses.

Staff are invited and encouraged to be involved in several committees that have been organized to promote a respectful work environment. The Employment Equity Advisory Committee oversees the Committee for Awareness of Native Employees, People with Disabilities, Visible Minorities, and Women’s Advisory Committees.

Celebrations and promotion of a respectful work environment occur during special events such as: Aboriginal Awareness/Solidarity Day, Ethnic Food Exchanges, Multiculturalism Day, monthly Elder sessions, and numerous other learning events.

Staff and managers alike can show their respect for a colleague’s work by nominating them for one of the many awards available through the Rewards and Recognition Program. One staff member shared how honoured he felt to be recognized by his colleagues.

Communication of the core CRA values (Respect, Integrity, Professionalism, & Cooperation) to front-line staff was initially challenging. But now that knowledge of and adherence to these values are being used in performance evaluations and as requirements in written applications for job openings, they have become very well known. The Managers' Charter ensures that all managers are familiar with and practice the core values in their day-to-day activities.

Many CRA employees deal with external clients who are sometimes extremely disrespectful to the employee. While CRA cannot control the external environment, steps have been taken to assist employees in dealing with this lack of respect. Training is offered in how to diffuse tense situations, and clear policies and procedures are in place for employees to follow should they feel disrespected. An Employee Assistance Program is also available to staff to help them cope with any negative impact on interpersonal behaviour or health.

The CRA strives to promote and maintain a respectful work environment on a continuous basis.

“a culture that incorporates the health and well-being of employees into the vision of the organization”

Summary

A healthy workplace has a culture that incorporates the health and well-being of employees into the vision of the organization and is reflected at every level. Each workplace must develop its own programs based on the specific needs of its employees. However, the case studies in this document provide examples of some of the key practices that healthy workplaces must embrace if they are to protect the health and well-being of employees and reduce workplace stress.

Work-life balance

Healthy workplaces create supportive environments for employees who are striving to better integrate their work and personal responsibilities. By implementing programs and initiatives based on employees' needs, organizations can strengthen employee commitment and loyalty.

This is born out by our case studies in which programs such as flexible hours, leave for family needs and deferred salary programs help the organization attract and keep good employees and help employees balance their personal, family and work needs.

It can be a challenge to find the best program for a particular workplace, since not all programs will fit every workplace, and to make programs accessible for every employee. As with other new initiatives, it helps to have a good business case for improvements in work-life balance and to have senior management actively promote them.

Employee participation and decision-making

Healthy workplaces give employees opportunities to participate in a meaningful way in decisions and actions that affect their jobs.

This type of participation can be achieved by a committee, department or program or can be spread throughout the organization. One of our case studies is an organization that is based on participatory management in which employees participate in every organizational decision. The other two case studies illustrate workplaces that have incorporated high levels of employee participation in workplace wellness programs. The processes used in these programs can serve as models that both workplaces can use throughout their organizations.

Ensuring employees participate in decisions can be a challenge. Barriers to participation include lack of information, time constraints, lack of experience in decision-making, and inadequate communication skills. Our case studies demonstrate that these barriers can be dealt with by providing up-to-date information and role clarity around decisions that are needed. The time needed for participation must be allocated and training should be provided to employees so they can participate effectively.

Reward and Recognition

Healthy workplaces recognize and reward employees for their contributions at work. When people are not recognized for their efforts, they feel devalued.

It is important to be fairly compensated financially, but meaningful rewards are not just financial. Our case study in this area is an organization that gives out annual awards to honour employees who have achieved excellence in service. A thank-you card program also develops a positive culture that helps employees recognize each other's efforts.

Our case study stressed the importance of the credibility of the reward and recognition program. Recipients of awards should be seen as deserving recognition and senior management must support the program.

Conflict Resolution

Healthy workplaces provide training and mechanisms to resolve conflict as soon as possible so employees can continue to work productively and cooperatively.

Our case study highlights an Alternative Dispute Resolution Program with a network of members in the workplace who provide coaching and support to employees to help them resolve conflict. Informal conflict resolution helps resolve conflict quickly, before it escalates, and creates a more positive working environment.

Managers and unions may initially be resistant to new forms of conflict resolution in the workplace, but a reduction in formal grievances benefits everyone when the conflict is resolved quickly with the direct involvement of the concerned parties.

Respectful Workplace

A respectful workplace supports the physical, psychological and social well-being of all employees.

Our case study illustrates the importance of establishing respect as a core value of the organization. Training on respectful workplaces is provided to all employees. Employee evaluation and promotion procedures also assess the degree to which core values are integrated into the employee's work. In this way, the organization supports and encourages respectful behaviour.

Employees in many organizations deal with members of the public who may not be aware of or appreciate the organization's values and practices. Dealing with disrespectful behaviour is always a challenge. Workplaces should provide employees with training on how to diffuse tension and have clear policies and procedures to follow in the event of disrespect. Workplaces can post their policy where the public can see it to be reminded that respect is expected and disrespect is not tolerated.

Making it Work for You — Steps to a healthier workplace

You can start taking steps to build a healthy workplace. The following process can be used as a guide to help you begin.

Step 1 — Gain commitment

Changes to the workplace cannot be made without the agreement of management. It is important that you obtain the commitment, support and participation of management to ensure follow-up to the recommendations that arise in this process. It is also important to get the involvement and support of workers and unions in the process. Large organizations may benefit from forming a committee with representation from management, employees and unions to plan and lead this work.

Step 2 — Identify Needs

Group discussions or surveys with everyone in the organization will provide you with the information you need. In small organizations, you may only need to hold discussions with employees. Large organizations may need to develop a formal survey.

The information you collect should be summarized and analyzed to determine overall needs as well as needs in particular departments or specific jobs. You may want to review related workplace statistics such as absenteeism or number of people who use particular programs. Priorities for your workplace can be set after everyone has expressed their individual needs.

Step 3 — Design and Implement Strategy

How to Build a Health Workplace

Step 1 Gain Commitment

- obtain commitment from management and workers
- form a committee with management and worker representatives to oversee work

Step 2 Identify Needs

- hold group discussions or survey all employees
- review workplace statistic
- summarize & analyze information
- set priorities

Step 3 Design & Implement Strategy

- learn from others
- identify proposed strategy
- outline responsibilities & timelines
- communicate plans to employees

Step 4 Evaluate the Strategy

- conduct short-term and long-term evaluations
- continue or modify strategy and return to Step 1

In small organizations, ideas for change may be identified through the informal discussions in Step 1. In large organizations, the committee is responsible to develop recommendations for change. It may help to learn about how other workplaces have tackled similar needs or get expert advice at this stage. Responsibilities, timelines and follow-up plans should be outlined. You may need a combination of strategies to adequately meet the needs of employees.

Plans for change should be communicated to employees. You may want to seek further input on proposed changes prior to implementation.

Successful organizational change requires adequate time to put into place. It is important not to rush to solve a problem without ensuring the appropriate policies and procedures are put into place. It is equally important that the agreed timelines are adhered to closely to maintain momentum and credibility.

Step 4 — Evaluate the Strategy

You must evaluate the strategy to determine if it is resulting in the desired effect. All actions need evaluation and redirection periodically. Evaluations may be formal or informal. You should use available figures and statistics for the evaluation, such as the number of employees who use the new program or practice. It is also important to determine improvements in working conditions and employee satisfaction.

A short-term evaluation can be done at an early stage, a few months after the implementation of the change, to provide an indication of the effectiveness of the change and possible need for redirection. A long-term evaluation can be conducted on an annual basis to determine if the change produces lasting effects.

Organizational change should be seen as a continuous process that uses evaluation results to improve or modify the strategy. You should then return to Step 1 and proceed to assess changes in the needs of employees.

**“Healthy workplaces
benefit everyone”**

Conclusion

A healthy workplace protects and promotes the health and well being of its employees. Healthy workplaces benefit everyone. Individual employees will experience less stress, be healthier and have better balance in their lives. Healthy workplaces usually experience less employee turnover and have more productive employees. Our families and communities also benefit from workers who have the time and energy to invest in their personal and community lives.

The healthy workplace practices in this document are examples of what some workplaces are already doing in Manitoba. We hope that these examples will provide lessons to other workplaces and be a source of inspiration for those who want to make healthy changes in the practices of their own workplace.

If you have a healthy workplace practice you would like to share with others, we invite you to complete the form in the final pages of this document and return it to us. The Healthy Workplace Practices project will continue to document and promote the experiences of Manitoba workplaces that are leaders in healthy workplace practices.

Resource List

The following is a list of resources that you can use as a starting point to learn more about some of the many issues that contribute to a healthy workplace.

Workplace stress — general information

Occupational Health Centre

Website.

See fact sheet on “Stress at Work” and the “Workplace Stress Initiative” under Special Projects.

<http://www.mflohc.mb.ca>

Mental Health at Work....From Defining to Solving the Problem

Publication & website.

A prevention kit that will allow workers and organizations to better deal with this problem.

Booklet 1. “Scope of the Problem: How Workplace Stress is Shown.”
Defines the concept of occupational stress and describes the extent of the problem and its consequences for individuals and organizations.

Booklet 2. “What Causes the Problem: The Sources of Workplace Stress.”

Presents the main sources of occupational stress. Describes the personal factors that predispose certain individuals to such problems and proposes various methods to reduce the negative impacts of stress.

Booklet 3. “Solving the Problem: Preventing Stress in the Workplace.”
Describes the three possible levels of prevention. Presents strategic processes for prevention and practical tools to facilitate action.

Series published by the Chair in Occupational Health and Safety Management at Université Laval, Quebec. ISBN 2-9807808-3-9

<http://cgsst.fsa.ulaval.ca/chaire/eng/monographies.asp>

Stress ...at work

Publication & website prepared by a NIOSH working group.

Highlights knowledge about causes of stress at work and outlines steps that can be taken to prevent job stress.

Call #US1 NIOSH 99-101 MWMFL

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/pdfs/stress.pdf>

An Example of a Stress Policy

Publication & website.

An example of a stress policy that can be modified and adapted for use in the workplace prepared by Health and Safety Executive, the enforcing authority who support Great Britain's Health and Safety Commission.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/pdfs/examplepolicy.pdf>

Twelve Case Studies on Innovative Workplace Health Initiatives

Publication & website prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre.

Presents initiatives that affected the workplace physical environment; health practices; and social environment and personal resources.

[http://www.clbc.ca/files/Reports/summary of key conclusions-final-e.pdf](http://www.clbc.ca/files/Reports/summary%20of%20key%20conclusions-final-e.pdf)

Preventing Stress, Improving Productivity

Publication.

This book examines eleven case studies from eleven European Union Member States. Presents interventions, comparisons, evaluations and some final conclusions.

Edited by Michiel Kompier and Gary Cooper. London & New York: Routledge, 1999. ISBN 0-415-16556-3.

Prevention of psychosocial risks and stress at work in practice

Publication & website.

Presents 20 examples of good practices in prevention of psychosocial risk and stress from 13 EU Member States and includes small and medium size enterprises, large companies, and intermediary organizations operating in very different sectors.

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. ISBN 92-9191-012-0.

http://agency.osha.eu.int/publications/reports/104/stress_en.pdf

Managing Workplace Stress

Publication.

This book is a best-practice blueprint that puts forward workable solutions for managing stress. Provides an effective framework on which to build appropriate interventions. Provides information on how to design, administer and interpret workplace stress surveys.

Stephen Williams & Lesley Cooper. West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Son. ISBN 0-470-84287-3

Employee participation and decision-making

The Workplace Council

Website.

Promotes leadership practices in the workplace that empower individuals and teams. Contains a best practice section with various examples.

<http://www.workplacecouncil.com/home.html>

Work-life balance

Occupational Health Centre

Website.

Resources in Workplace Stress Initiative section under "Special Projects."

<http://www.mflohc.mb.ca>

Take Back Your Time: Fighting Overwork and Time Poverty in America

Publication & website.

The official handbook of the national movement with well-known writers and experts who explore the effects of overwork, over-scheduling, time pressure and stress on our health, relationships, children and more. Proposes personal, corporate, and legislative solutions.

Edited by John de Graaf. ISBN 1-57675-245-3.

<http://www.timeday.org>

Work-Life Balance in Canadian Workplaces

Website.

This website was created to help organizations design and implement supportive programs and policies that facilitate work-life balance. Has examples of best practices that enhance work-life balance.

Human Resources and Skill Development Canada.

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca>

A Study Concerning Federal Labour Standards: Balancing Work, Family and Learning in Canada's Federally Regulated Workplaces

Publication & website.

Canada Labour Code. The study focused on non-standard work, balancing of work, family and learning. Examines particular needs of smaller non-union workplaces.

SPR Associates for Human Resources Development Canada. SP-AH116-01-00E.

<http://www11.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/edd-pdf/scfls.pdf>

Work and Family Provisions in Canadian Collective Agreements

Publication & website from the Labour Program at Human Resources Development Canada.

The study examined to what degree provisions related to balancing of workload and family responsibilities have been considered in the context of collective bargaining.

http://sdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/pdf/workfamily_en.pdf

Voices of Canadians: Seeking Work-Life Balance

Publication & website.

A compilation of the comments of Canadian workers regarding how they feel about the stress they are facing in their daily lives as they seek to balance work and family

Linda Duxbury, Christopher Higgins. Human Resources Development Canada Labour Program. ISBN 0-662-67059-0.

<http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/lp/spila/wlb/pdf/voices.pdf>

Work and Family

Publication & website from the Australian Government.

Covers the importance of workplace flexibility in promoting balance between work and family. Acknowledges the workplace relation reforms provide a legislated minima from which workers will negotiate with their employers to secure flexible and family friendly entitlements over and above the standards.

<http://www.workplace.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/83731176-45FE-4D2E-B3DA2B412ATD86F8/0/WorkandFamilyissuepaper.pdf>

Defining employees' duties and responsibilities

HR Council for the Voluntary/Non-profit Sector

Website. (Check Toolkit then go to Staffing and "Job descriptions.")

This site has a template for job descriptions and a sample job analysis questionnaire encouraging input from workers in the job description.

www.hrcouncil.ca

Management Assistance Program (MAP) for Non-Profits

Website. (Go to job descriptions.)

This website offers many resources on job design and writing job descriptions. Very useful in conjunction with human resource personnel.

www.managementhelp.org/staffing/staffing.htm

Respectful workplace initiatives

Mediation Services

A community resource in Winnipeg that offers **training** and mediation for conflict resolution.

<http://www.mediationserviceswpg.ca>

Respect in the Workplace

Video & facilitator's guide.

Written by Barbara Dixon. Call # HD 4903.5.R37 1997

Building a Respectful Workplace

Fact sheet from the Occupational Health Centre.

<http://www.mflohc.mb.ca>

A Guide to the Development of a Workplace Violence Prevention Program

Publication & website. Health Care Health and Safety Association of Ontario.

A series of four booklets written for employers, front-line care givers, support workers, health care, community and social-agency professionals, and workplace health and safety committees. Helps you develop and implement a workplace violence prevention program to specifically meet the needs of your organization.

Booklet 1: Implementing an Effective Violence Prevention Program in Your Organization.

Booklet 2: Developing Crisis Prevention and Communication Strategies.

Booklet 3: Developing Human Resources Strategies for Managing Workplace Violence.

<http://www.osach.ca/products/resrcdoc.html#rvioe351>

Workload management

Managing Workplace Stress

Publication.

This book examines the increase in work related stress. It highlights the everyday stressors likely to impact managers and employees, such as managing increased workloads. **Offers useful and practical strategies.**

Susan Cartwright, Cary L. Cooper. SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California. ISBN 0-7619-0193-0

Karoshi!

Publication & website by Public Service Alliance of Canada, Issues — Hot Topics for Collective Bargaining.

Reduce stress, workload and work time and improve work-life balance before it's too late. This research and discussion paper provides some background on the situation in Canada. It outlines the issues such as workload and presents some proposals for addressing the stressful situation.

http://www.psac-afpc.org/documents/No.5_karoshi-e.pdf

Continuous learning

Canadian Training Solutions for Workplace Learning

Website from Industry Canada.

This site has been developed for employers who want to learn more about training, understand the benefits of training and learn what you can do to become a leading edge learning organization.

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/incts-scf.nsf/en/Home>

RCMP Learning

Publication & website.

Life-long learning is a priority for the RCMP. The RCMP CAPRA model was designed to assist personnel to anticipate and prevent problems and to solve problems when they arrive. It also serves as a framework for a continuous learning organization.

<http://www.rcmp-learning.org>

Conflict resolution practices

Mediation Services

A community resource in Winnipeg offering conflict resolution training and mediation for conflict resolution.

<http://mediationserviceswpg.ca>

Conflict Resolution Network Canada

This organization develops, promotes and extends the use of conflict resolution and restorative justice processes such as negotiation, mediation, consensus-building and peacemaking circles. Check the online bookstore for over 300 titles, covering a wide range of conflict resolution topics.

<http://www.crnetwork.ca/bookstore/index.asp>

Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR)

A U.S. professional organization dedicated to enhancing the practice and public understanding of conflict resolution. Review the ACR Sales Catalogue to access the books, videos, reports, and other products available for purchase.

<http://www.acrnet.org/library/catalogue.htm#acrbooks>

Employee Recognition

Employee recognition

Publication & website from the Chair in Occupational Health and Safety Management at Université Laval, Quebec.

Provides tangible tools to implement employee recognition.

<http://cgsst.fsa.ulaval.ca/reconnaissance/eng/default.asp>

BRAVO! A guide to implementing a culture of recognition

Publication from the COSO Sub-committee on Pride and Recognition, Minister of Public Works and Government Services, 2001.

This guide provides a seven-step model to building a culture of recognition and methods for implementing pride and recognition as part of the Government of Canada's renewal of the public service.

http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/hr-rh/ar-pr/resources_e.asp

Recognition

Publication & website from Innovative and Quality Services Group, Financial and Information Management Branch, Treasury Board Secretariat 1995.

Includes a definition, organizational goals, success factors for a recognition program and examples of departments and agencies with experience in implementing recognition programs and activities.

http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/oepubs/TB_O/5QG2-2E.asp#dept

National Association for Employee Recognition (NAER)

Information, research, education, best practices, and a forum for networking, and benchmarking to foster the use, effectiveness, and enthusiasm for recognition.

<http://www.recognition.org/index.asp?cid=180&tid=587>

Invitation to Participate in The Healthy Workplace Practices Project

The Workplace Stress Initiative continues to invite workplaces that demonstrate healthy practices in promoting the health and well-being of employees to participate in documenting and promoting their experience.

Areas of focus include:

- employee participation and decision-making
- workload management
- defining employees' duties & responsibilities
- continuous learning
- work-life balance
- conflict resolution practices
- respectful workplace initiatives
- employee recognition

Interested workplaces should be willing to give the project access to interview key personnel, share information on their practices, and provide the project with access to related workplace policies and statistics.

Who are we?

The Workplace Stress Initiative brings together organizations concerned about the impact of workplace stress on the health of working Manitobans and our communities. We actively build partnerships between local health care organizations, employers, labour unions and social service agencies.

Why participate?

Selected healthy workplace practices will be written up and promoted online, in publications, and at events and conferences throughout the province and nationally.

How can you participate?

If you want to promote your organization's healthy workplace practice, complete the attached questionnaire and return it to:

Workplace Stress Initiative
Occupational Health Centre
102-275 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4M6
fax: 204-956-0848

For more information contact Diane Gagnon at 926-7904

or Maureen Grace at 926-7902.

Healthy Workplace Practices in Manitoba

Name of Workplace: _____
Contact Name: _____
Address: _____
City/Town: _____ Postal Code: _____
Telephone: _____ Fax: _____
Email: _____
Type of Industry: _____

In which area of focus does your workplace demonstrate best practices?

Please check (✓):

- employee participation & decision making
- workload management
- defining employees' duties & responsibilities
- continuous learning
- work-life balance
- conflict resolution
- respectful workplace initiatives
- employee recognition

In the space provided, please give a short summary of why you believe your workplace is an example of a best practice:

Please return to: Occupational Health Centre
102-275 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4M6
Fax: 204-956-0848