

Wellness @ Work: Incorporating Health Promotion into the Workplace

March 4, 2014 | Joan Bottorff and Cristina Caperchione: Innovations in Men's Health Promotion: Implications for Workplace Programs

- Where are all the men?
 - Many studies show men involved in health risk behaviours
 - Less utilization of health-related measures—why?
 - To hold on to masculine identities
 - Stats show men die earlier; men have a higher probability of developing cancer than women
- Theories:
 - Gender role socialization
 - If masculinity means taking risks, then they would engage in smoking, for example, to take on risks, putting work ahead of self-care is seen as more feminine (“I’m fine, I can do it myself”), less likely to seek help and health care
 - Obesity has become normalized (social context is important)
 - Health promotion more successful if work along with the normalized views rather than against them
- An innovative approach to smoking cessation
 - Men’s groups – men do a lot of things together (e.g sports), desire to work with other men
 - Smoking becomes a symbol of masculinity e.g., the Marlboro Man
 - Shifting masculinities – new fathers: shift to become more responsible, the “provider”, a good time to introduce behavioural change. They realize that a good father is not a smoking father.
- Intervening with new fathers who smoke:
 - Any time they become a father, there is re-thinking involved.
 - Be a good role model
 - Be healthy
 - Stigma with caring for a baby and smoking
 - Wanted to hear from other men who had stopped
 - Wanted to be known as dads not smokers
 - Big part that needs to be focussed on are fathering, child care, reduced time for smoking—engaged fathers smoked less because they were with children more—exercise
 - Need positive messaging, “no shame, no blame”
 - Held in a fitness centre, comfortable space for men
- Web-based programs: quick meal recipes, Dad success stories; light on text, website has a masculine feel
- Feedback from dads: loved the group sessions, interested in health info, action oriented programs, liked the competitiveness involved
- Another approach was the “Dude’s program”
 - Was used for a group of marginalized men in a place not always exposed to health programs
 - Aboriginal men in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, biweekly, 60-70 men, community driven programs, brotherhood and solidarity in an accessible, non-judgemental setting, open dialogue, able to access health info
- Football Fan in Training (FITT) program
 - Started in Scotland, moved to Australia
 - Delivered in football clubs, ages 55-75, free of charge, encouraged healthier lifestyles, study published in the *Lancet*, average was 5.5 kg lost, 9x more than men not taking part in the program, 12 month program
 - Big factor was the fact that the exercises were held in their favourite football clubs

- Other methods have been used in Australia
 - Shiftworkers have high calorie diets, tend not to change, believe that things will “just work out”
 - Program called POWER (Preventing Obesity Without Eating like a Rabbit)
 - Program focussed on how to fit more exercise and healthy eating without giving anything up
 - Website had a user guide for men
 - Program didn’t outlaw beer, and there were no prescriptive rules; provided information to help men make better choices
 - Program called MANUP, an approach targeting men aged 35-54 in rural areas in Gladstone, Queensland
 - Townships were male dominated
 - Phase I of the study was a lit review: physical activity and healthy eating
 - Phase II involved e-health interventions, mobile phone with internet access/smart phones
 - Phase III was efficacy testing: Men didn’t know about healthy eating and cooking
- Focussed on engaging men, IT strategies, education libraries with quick and easy recipes; apps to get more info, apps to send out messages/challenges/goals, programs for different beer strengths, big challenge to get men to include different coloured veggies, and leafy vegetables
- Tailored programs more effective in reaching out to men, need to use campaign representatives to allow men to feel more relaxed and receptive