

A settings approach: Healthy@Work—a model of a health promoting workplace

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Aims: To reduce the risk of staff for developing a preventable chronic condition by increasing fruit and vegetable intake, increasing participation in physical activity, reducing smoking and reducing the harmful consumption of alcohol.

Methods: The Healthy@Work program is a multi-strategy workplace health promotion project. The NT Health Promotion Framework was used as a guide to creating supportive policies and physical environments within the workplace and establishing a culture that encourages healthy lifestyles. Upon implementation in 2012 the program sought to bring about positive changes in individual healthy lifestyle behaviours.

Relevance: Healthy@Work was implemented across an organisation which includes staff based in urban, rural and remote locations across the Northern Territory. A Health Promoting Workplace integrates policies, systems and practices conducive to health at all levels of the organisation. The workplace is an important setting to be health promoting as the workplace environment can influence the physical, mental, social and economic wellbeing of its employees. This paper aims to share the successes and challenges of implementing a Health Promoting Workplace using the Healthy@Work model.

Results: Endorsement from the Chief Executive demonstrating the commitment of the organisation to provide a workplace that supports good health and wellbeing for all staff. Increased access to health information, resources, health risk self-assessment tools, health promoting workplace related policies and a workplace health and wellbeing online forum staff via staff intranet page. Increased staff engagement and ownership over the development and implementation of workplace specific health and wellbeing activities. Healthy Lifestyle Sponsorship Fund program initiative participants reported improvements to fitness, nutrition, team cohesion and energy levels. System level integration of a health and wellbeing focus into the Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy and reporting procedures. Increased capacity to plan, implement and evaluate workplace health and wellbeing programs through the provision of Champion training and Network Catch-Ups. Annual Staff Health Survey conducted in 2013, one year after baseline data collection indicated modest improvements to some healthy lifestyle behaviours amongst staff surveyed.

Conclusions: Healthy@Work as a Health Promoting Workplace model has succeeded in increasing awareness, engagement and capacity amongst staff with regard to healthy lifestyle behaviours in the workplace. Furthermore, a sustainable Health Promoting Workplace model has been developed which in the long term could contribute to decreasing the risk profile of staff for developing a preventable chronic condition.