

Building Healthier Work Environments

Post-conference workshop. *Health, Work and Wellness Conference 2004*
Workshop leader: Graham S. Lowe, Ph.D., The Graham Lowe Group Inc.

Overview: This workshop will provide participants with a firm grasp of effective strategies for building and sustaining healthy work environments. Our starting point is the recognition that achieving the goal of a truly healthy work environment requires transformational change in workplace cultures and systems. Changes must occur at many levels, including values, behaviours and operating strategy. This hands-on workshop uses a new ‘action model’, based on organizational change principles, to guide participants through the process of designing and implementing a healthy work environment plan that fits their organization.

Objectives: This workshop will provide participants with...

- A deeper appreciation of how building a healthy work environment is an exercise in organizational transformation and the implications of this for planning and implementation;
- An understanding of the ingredients of a healthy work environment and how these support not only employee health and wellness, but also contribute to organizational performance;
- Practical lessons from examples of effective and ineffective change strategies;
- Guiding principles for designing and implementing a successful healthy workplace change process, based on the concepts of participation and learning;
- Tools for assessing the current ‘health’ of your organization, identifying major risks and opportunities in the short-term, medium-term and long-term;
- Practical ideas for leveraging current work environment strengths and successes in your organization as a springboard to future action;
- A checklist of common healthy work environment barriers and enablers, and ways to turn barriers into enablers;
- An understanding of the potential for union-management collaboration on a healthy workplace agenda;
- Practical ideas for communications, using language that fits your organizational context;
- A menu of tools for monitoring and evaluating progress; and
- An opportunity for shared learning, through discussions of the practical challenges participants face making their own work environments healthier.

Workshop process: This workshop will provide opportunities for shared learning. In addition to the expert knowledge provided by the workshop leader, participants will be actively involved in discussing and analyzing their own experiences and challenges.



Resources: The main resource for this workshop will be Dr. Lowe's report for Health Canada, Healthy Workplace Strategies: Creating Change and Achieving Results. It is available free at <http://www.grahamlowe.ca/documents/93/> and is recommended as pre-reading. Participants also will be provided with handouts of the workshop PowerPoint presentation and tools.

Workshop Leader: Dr. Graham S. Lowe is president of The Graham Lowe Group Inc, a consulting firm specializing in creating healthy and productive work environments, and a professor at the University of Alberta. An international expert on workplace change, he has run many workshops on work environment issues.