



HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

# WORKPLACE HEALTH

To better meet the needs of our workplace partners we will now be including an additional newsletter "Employee Health and Wellness." We hope that you find the new newsletter informative and we encourage you to share it with your employees.

## Protecting Your Workplace from the Negative Effects of Workplace Bullying

With incidents of workplace bullying and "mobbing" on the rise, workplace bullying is receiving more media attention. Canadian studies are showing that one in six employees has been bullied and one in five employees has seen a co-worker bullied.

Experts define workplace bullying as repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee, or group of employees, that creates a risk to health and safety. It is behaviour that offends, humiliates, intimidates or undermines a person. Bullying usually occurs over a period of time. It is a repeated pattern of behaviour that can be made up of different types of incidents.

In 2008, Canadian researchers Herscovis and Julian Barling, of Queen's University presented the findings that bullied employees were more likely than other employees who had experienced workplace violence, such as sexual harassment, to quit their jobs, report physical and mental health problems, and to be dissatisfied with their jobs. Some of the rationale for these findings stemmed from the fact that organizations provide greater support for victims of other forms of workplace violence. Herscovis explains, "Workplace bullying... doesn't have any policy attention; there's no legal resource you can take, so really you're stuck and there's no coping

mechanism that you can try to use to overcome the situation."

Unlike sexual or racial harassment, workplace bullying isn't necessarily illegal. By law, every all workers have the right to be safe and free from risk of injury when they are at work. Although all workplaces in Ontario require a formal workplace policy to be established concerning workplace violence, there is currently no occupational health and safety legislation in Ontario to deal specifically with bullying in the workplace. Currently, bullying typically falls under the harassment or code of conduct sections. Workplace bullies create a tremendous liability for the employer, producing both direct and indirect costs – in healthcare, increased workloads, stunted creativity, staff turnover; reduced productivity, absenteeism and creating a negative overall work environment.

As many workplaces become aware of the consequences of bullying, they are creating policies and procedures to work towards preventing and managing workplace bullying before it becomes a larger issue.

### Steps employers can take to prevent workplace bullying:

- Identify bullying as unacceptable in your employee handbook.
- Establish a method of conduct and thorough investigation if bullying

occurs.

- Maintain discretion and confidentiality at all times.
- Develop a detailed workplace violence-prevention program.
- Encourage a respectful workplace.
- Have a reporting system.
- Educate people on bullying through workshops and written communications.
- Treat all complaints seriously and never ignore potential problems.
- Try to work out situations before they get out of control.
- Train supervisors and managers in how to deal with bullying complaints.

*Continued on page 2*



**Julia Hartley**  
Health Promoter  
Workplace Health Program  
519.426.6170 Ext. 3236  
julia.hartley@hnhu.org

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Celebrate Canada's Healthy Workplace Month	2
Mental Health Report with a Focus on Suicide	3
Cost of Mental Health in the Workplace	3
Events	4
Workplace Health Interest Survey	4

Continued from page 1

- Do not delay resolution. Mary Ann Baynton, the director of Mental Health Works, an initiative of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario, stresses that the person effected by bullying is not the only person harmed; the workplace also pays a price in a loss of loyalty and performance from the bullied or mobbed employee. Some research has demonstrated that the victims of workplace bullying and mobbing waste up to 52% of their time at work in defending themselves and networking for support, thinking about the situation and being de-motivated and stressed. She says, "Although few organizations recognize the problem, it's imperative to every business's bottom line to protect their employees from mobbing." (Mary Ann Baynton, director of Mental Health Works)

For more information on workplace bullying and harassment, please visit:

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
  - o Violence in the Workplace: Awareness
  - o This free e-course promotes the awareness of the issue and is a precursor to other workplace violence e-courses such as: "Recognize the Risk and Take Action" and "Establish a Prevention Program."
  - o [www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca)
- Mental Health Works
  - o [www.mentalhealthworks.ca](http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca)
- Canadian Institute on Workplace Violence
  - o [www.workplaceviolence.ca](http://www.workplaceviolence.ca)

## Celebrate Canada's Healthy Workplace Month

# Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy Work – Feeling Great About Life!



This year, Canada's Healthy Workplace Month will take place from Oct. 5 – Nov. 1, 2009 to help increase awareness about the importance of workplace health to personal and organizational performance.

Each week, workplaces will be challenged to participate in an activity based on the National Quality Institutes ([www.nqi.ca](http://www.nqi.ca)) Healthy Workplace elements.

### The weekly challenge themes are:

#### **Week 1: Feeling Great at Work (Oct. 5 – 11)**

Incorporating healthy living into your working hours.

#### **Week 2: Feeling Great with Family and Friends (Oct. 12 – 18)**

Emphasizing the importance of maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

#### **Week 3: Feeling Great at Play (Oct. 19 – 25)**

Having fun, in a group or on your own.

#### **Week 4: Feeling Great Giving Back (Oct. 26 – Nov. 1)**

Supporting corporate responsibility and volunteerism.

Workplaces throughout Canada are encouraged to register at [www.healthyworkplacemonth.ca](http://www.healthyworkplacemonth.ca) to participate in the weekly challenges. The Canadian Healthy Workplace Council will announce winners for each week.

If your organization is new to workplace wellness, this month could be a great opportunity to get started with some workplace initiatives. If your organization has already started a workplace wellness initiative, then this month could be the ideal time to expand on your program and celebrate what you have accomplished.

For more information or to find out more about how your workplace can get involved, contact: Julia Hartley, Workplace Health Promoter, 519-426-6170 Ext. 3236 or email: [julia.hartley@hnnhu.org](mailto:julia.hartley@hnnhu.org).



## *New Report Shows Higher Than Average Suicide Rates in Haldimand and Norfolk Counties*

The Haldimand and Norfolk Mental Health Report with a Focus on Suicide has recently been published to help create awareness in our community about suicide prevention. This report showed that over a five-year period there were 50 suicidal deaths and 557 emergency department visits for suicidal attempts.

“Suicide prevention is everyone’s business; it affects all members of the community,” says Health Unit Public Health Nurse Marilyn Antkiw, a member of the Suicide Prevention Network of Haldimand and Norfolk. “The Suicide Prevention Network of Haldimand-Norfolk promotes the development of suicide-safer communities through education, awareness, training and other prevention initiatives.”

The report provides an overview of suicide mortality, emergency room visits, suicidal thoughts, risk factors contributing to suicide and suicidal behaviours, mental health resource access, suicide prevention program, services and resources for suicide, and a case study. One of the recommendations in the report is to promote suicide awareness within the community in order to work towards building a suicide-safer community.

To view and print the report please visit [www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org) and click on “Reports and More”, “Reports”, “Mental Health Report with a Focus on Suicide 2009.”

Currently there are a number of programs and services available in our community:

**Suicide TALK**

Suicide TALK is a three-hour presentation that explores the issues in suicide prevention. TALK stands for Tell, Ask, Listen and Keep safe. It is designed to help make our communities aware that something can be done to help prevent suicide.

**ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)**

The ASIST program is an intensive two-day interactive and practice-dominated course designed to help caregivers recognize risk and learn how to intervene to prevent the immediate risk of suicide.

**Suicide Bereavement Support Group**

A support group for people who have lost friends and relatives to suicide has formed in

Haldimand-Norfolk.

If your workplace would like more information on the programs and services outlined above, please contact Julia Hartley, Workplace Health Promoter; [julia.hartley@hnhu.org](mailto:julia.hartley@hnhu.org), 519-426-6170 Ext. 3236.

**Cost of Mental Health in the Workplace**

- Costs of lost productivity due to mental illness in Canadian businesses equal \$11.1 billion per year.
- Mental health problems cost Canadian businesses \$33 billion per year, if non-clinical diagnoses are included (e.g., burnout, sub clinical depression, etc.).
- The leading cause of short-term and long-term disability in 2005 was mental health issues, including stress.



UPCOMING EVENTS

September:

- Sept. 13 – Terry Fox Run (Simcoe)
- Sept. 27 – Trail Day, launch of new Norfolk Sunrise Trail (1 p.m. Simcoe)

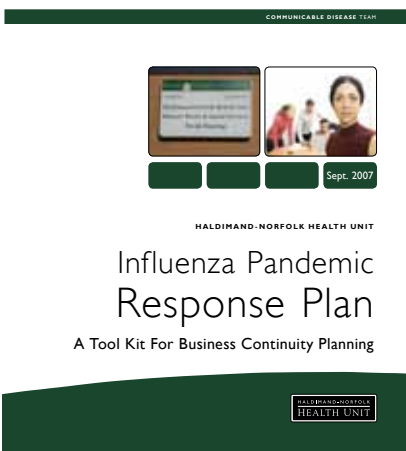
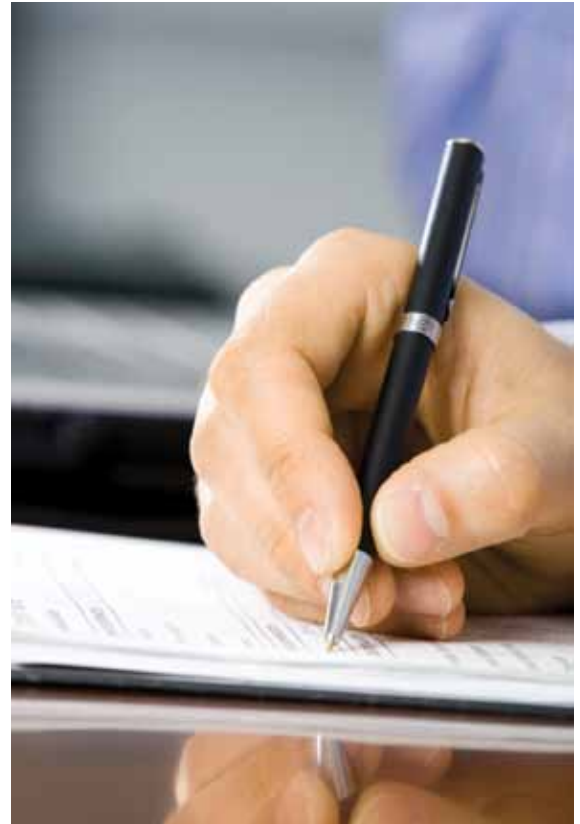
October:

- Oct. 4 – Run for the Cure (Simcoe)
- Oct. 4 to 10 – Mental Illness Awareness Week
- Oct. 5 to Nov. 1 – Canada’s Healthy Workplace Month
- Oct. 6 – Step Up to a Healthier You – Delhi Stroke Prevention classes start
- Oct. 8 - Step Up to a Healthier You – Caledonia Stroke Prevention classes start
- Oct. 10 – Suicide Prevention Day
- Oct. 14 - Prenatal Health Fair (Simcoe)
- Oct. 21 – Workplace Networking Breakfast (Greens at Renton)
  - o Issues & Solutions: Managing Mental Health in the Workplace

# Workplace Health Interest Survey – NEW!

The Workplace Interest Survey is a new tool the Health Unit has created for employers to use to gather more information about the types of workplace health activities and initiatives their employees would like to see. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to fill out and asks employees about their interest in receiving information on lifestyle behaviours, occupational health and safety topics, family health, healthy environments, chronic conditions, stress management and social support.

Please contact Julia Hartley, Workplace Health Promoter, if you are interested in receiving more information on our new Workplace Health Interest Survey.



## Influenza Pandemic Response Plan: A Tool Kit For Business Continuity Planning

Response plans are necessary to ensure business continuity is maintained during a pandemic. To help businesses, this Tool Kit for Business Continuing Planning has been prepared to make the planning process easier and to provide a consistent approach for all those involved.

To order your free copy today, contact Kris Lutzi, Senior Public Health Inspector, 519-426-6170 Ext. 3261, kris.lutzi@hnhu.org. To download a copy, visit: [www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org), then click H1N1 Flu INFO, then At Work, then Plan & Prepare.