

Health Circles:

Trust workers' participation

WHP works!

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WHO – Ottawa Charta / EU – Luxembourg declaration

- Declaration of ‚healthy company policy‘
- Creation of ‚healthy‘ environments
- Support for ‚community action‘
- Empowering of workers
- (Re)orientation of health services

Health Promotion: Majority of OHS in Austria offer campaigns and courses*

How to deal with

- Work situations causing back pain (training);
- Stress (courses);
- Smoking habits (courses);
- Alcohol and drugs (counseling).

*analysis of OHS homepages by G Elsigan for Austrian Public Health Fund.

WHP Process (vs: Product)

- **Collection of Data**
- **Company Health Report**
- **Health Circles**
- **HC report to Company/Project steering team**
- **Decision on Measures**
- **Action; Evaluation**

Health Circles

as integral part of an HP project

- Working group (4-8 workers)
- Volunteers; paid working time
- Same level, no bosses nor experts
- 4-6 meetings / 2 hours each
- External facilitator
- Report to project steering group

Systematic obstacles for (Austrian) medical doctors to trust the circle model

- **Product versus process**
- **Tendency not to trust ,patients‘ and to know better anyway**
- **Difficulties to apply ,system‘ concept to social systems, thus difficulties to intervene on system level**

Positive Results of HP

- Method to improve existing health and safety system
- Mobilizing factor
- Focus: work as a system
- Group process boosts creativity in problem solving

What to teach and how?

- Thinking behind WHO / Lux concepts
- Understand why certain sectors of national health system are supporting WHP
- project process and tested tools
- Insight into health circle logic (for complex problems a group provides better solutions)

What to teach and how II

- Approved WHP process and tools;
- Important extras: how to approach middle management, shop stewards; hints for composition of circles ...
- Useful /supportive institutions (A: FGOe; Insurance system and their role-s)

What to teach and how III

- Discuss roles for OH Physician and other specialists
- Discuss expert/lay problem (participation cannot devalue expert knowledge)
- Discuss company cases
- Evidence: figures? Qualitative issues?

What to teach and how IV

Obstacles:

- **Authoritarian company structure**
- **Want to be modern without consequences**
- **want to censor issues**
- **Afraid of ‚revolution‘ through circle work**

Positive Results of HP

- Method to improve existing health and safety system
- Mobilizing factor: gets people interested
- Focus: all elements of work system (hardware, procedures, behaviour)
- Group process and diversity boosts creativity in problem solving

**Thank you
and good Luck!**