



Reduce harmful work stressors

Improve job quality and health

Work Stress Solutions

Increasing social support

Support is one of the fundamental health protective benefits of employment. The right support from supervisors and coworkers can buffer the effects of other stressors, and includes treating employees with respect and caring about them as people. It includes providing appropriate feedback, resources and help. Positive social interaction at work can limit feelings of isolation or loneliness. Lack of support or hostile relationships between coworkers or with supervisors is a source of stress that can lead to poor mental (burnout) and physical health.

I. Workplace Policies & Practices

These recommendations and resources have the possibility of increasing social support for employees. Support includes emotional or psychological factors as well as organizational resources and information.

- **ORGANIZE JOB ROLES** to allow employees to participate in work teams when possible; this is also helpful when trying to manage work-life conflicts, including illness, caretaking and vacation (recovery time).
- **TRAIN MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS** on [effective, respectful leadership](#), on how to manage work teams, provide employees with input and support one-on-one, and effective communication strategies.
- **REDUCE BURNOUT** by training supervisors on providing support. This is a great example of a [free, online training program from CDC-NIOSH](#) to reduce burnout among public health workers by improving support.

- **FORM LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES** (where they don't already exist) in workforces that include unionized workers, to allow effective feedback from employees and management on all issues pertaining to worker health, safety, and work stress. This is an important resource of support that workers should not be afraid to use.
- **SPONSOR SOCIAL EVENTS** to foster teamwork and positive relationships within the organization and with the community, being mindful of workloads that may increase because of these events and create greater stress.
- **ENSURE MEAL BREAK AREAS** are clean, furnished, and well-equipped, so employees can socialize at break times.
- **ORGANIZE PEER SUPPORT GROUPS** (such as healthy lifestyle, elder caregivers, illness/injury prevention) for employees in the workplace and help employees to connect with support groups in the community.

¹ Adapted from the [Job Stress Intervention Guide](#), TWH Center for Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace, 2015

II. Healthy Work Strategies Case Studies and Resources

- [Reducing work stress \(and increasing supervisor support\) among hospital workers](#)
- [Changing workplace policies and procedures among white collar workers \(improvements in coworker support\)](#)
- [Improving team communication and work-family balance SHIP \(includes improvements in social support\)](#)
- [Supervisor training on Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors \(FSSB\) \(includes increases in support\)](#)
- [Job redesign at a sweets manufacturing company in England](#)
- [Workplace policies and programs to reduce job stress among K-12 education staff \(U.S.\)](#)
- [Action research intervention with urban bus drivers in Copenhagen, Denmark](#)