

**PROMOTING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT,
SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING:**

**PLANS FOR PHASE II OF THE
WASHINGTON WORK, STRESS & HEALTH PROJECT**



IMPROVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING

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IMPROVING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING

WHO ARE WE?

Our Research Team includes interdisciplinary researchers from the Washington Department of Labor & Industries, Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention Program (SHARP),¹ Oregon Health & Science University, Portland State University, and University of Washington. Funding for the research is provided by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), both of which belong to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

WHAT ARE OUR OVERARCHING GOALS?

- Conduct innovative research on supervisor support for workplace safety promotion and employee work-nonwork effectiveness that benefits the hospital, as well as the health, safety, and well-being of health care workers and ultimately, patient safety.
- Identify **modifiable** workplace-specific policies and practices that are linked to employee effectiveness, health, safety, and well-being outcomes and patient safety.
- Enhance organizational health by improving worker engagement and retention, and reducing costs related to workplace aggression and injury by implementing a supervisor support training program to prevent patient aggression and coworker disruptive behavior, and promote employee work-nonwork effectiveness.



¹ SHARP research was created in 1990 to conduct research to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses and is located within the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. SHARP's research activities are independent of both WISHA (Washington State's OSHA Plan) and worker's compensation claims management. Under state law, all SHARP research-related information, data and results are confidential and are shared in summary report format with the hospital where the research is conducted. Scientific papers report only aggregated data results from several hospitals.

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WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Our work to date has involved studies designed to carefully document the effects of supervisor support for workplace safety promotion and support for employee work-nonwork effectiveness. We found promising results for the retention, engagement, safety and well-being of health care workers.

We used prior research evidence to design a supervisor training and pilot it with health care supervisors. Our next step in this process is to form a research partnership with hospital organizations that have an interest in collaborating.

We are seeking one or two healthcare systems that are:



- Interested in ways of improving employees' effectiveness in preventing patient aggression, reducing coworker disruptive behavior at work, and improving employees' ability to effectively balance work and life.
- Willing to experiment with a supervisor training intervention, which our pilot study has shown to be promising.
- Interested in careful assessment of both business outcomes and employee outcomes, including retention, engagement, safety, and well-being of employees, as well as patient quality of care measures.

The hospital organizations/systems that join our research program will benefit from a partnership that includes planning an initiative to improve employee well-being and effectiveness. We will extend our pilot work in three areas where we have found outcomes that are beneficial to the hospital, employees and patients.

Our mutual objectives are to:

- Increase employees' ability to safely manage aggression in their workplace.
- Improve supervisor support for team professionalism and safety that directly impacts patient safety and patient quality of care outcomes.
- Improve supervisor support for employee work-nonwork effectiveness.

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WHAT ARE THE DETAILS OF THIS INITIATIVE?

Our workplace initiative will involve both employees and supervisors. It will be delivered through supervisor computer- or web-based training and follow-up coaching sessions. This supervisor training initiative was developed in collaboration with the Washington State psychiatric hospitals SHARP, OHSU, PSU, and UW interdisciplinary research team. We now seek to adapt the training content for healthcare supervisors and healthcare staff in acute care hospitals.

Supervisor training will include:

- An overview of the health and business reasons for efforts to increase employees' aggression prevention strategies and to reduce employees' work-nonwork conflict.
- Specific supervisor behavioral examples that demonstrate support for employees' effectiveness in preventing aggression and managing their work and nonwork lives.
- Other tools and strategies for supporting employees, such as discussing professional and respectful behavior at work and managing scheduling conflicts in a fair and transparent manner.



Employees will meet in their work groups (e.g., units of a hospital) to:

- Evaluate how current work processes and the current culture may be altered to promote effectiveness on two issues: promoting workplace safety related to aggression and improving employees' ability to manage work-nonwork issues.
- Participate in sessions directed at developing new work strategies for safety promotion and work-nonwork effectiveness, and for creating a mutually supportive environment to achieve the results that are key for the business.

Possible strategies include new coordination routines to increase team situational awareness, team support for respectful work interactions, team-coordinated scheduling systems, routines for requesting an experienced float, or on-call employee, shifts in technology to allow more work to be done, etc. The focus of each supervisor might vary, but the supervisors would all be led through a curriculum of structured discussions with their peers including skill development practice and approaches to working with their employees individually and as a team.

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MORE DETAILS ON THIS PROPOSAL

The proposal combines the focus of supervisor support for team safety promotion and for work-nonwork effectiveness; both of these processes have been pilot tested and proven effective by our Research Team.



PASS: Prevent Aggression and Support Safety in work and life is a team transformation approach spotlighting and rewarding **safety promotion and work-nonwork effectiveness** - customized at the work-group level.

The training proposal would be customized in consultation with the employer-partner so that it targets the key needs of that workforce.

We are particularly interested in translating some of the key concepts in team safety promotion and work-nonwork effectiveness to be applicable to an acute care hospital environment.

The healthcare system-partner identifies 4 or 6 work sites (ideally 20-30 departments within each work site) to participate in the study.

Each employee decides whether he or she wants to complete a particular survey or well-being sleep assessment, but the organization facilitates the study in the targeted 4 or 6 work sites.

Half of the organization's work site departments will implement the initiative during the study period; the other half will serve as comparison work site departments that may or may not adopt the initiative later on. (departments will be chosen randomly for participation so that we can maintain the scientific integrity of the research study).



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WHAT IS THE PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE FROM PHASE I?

Our Phase 1 study was conducted in psychiatric settings using a sample of 417 care providers. The study assessed the links between family supportive supervisor behaviors and employee outcomes.



Phase 1 Research demonstrated:

- Increased **Employee Engagement** in the following ways:
 - Improved violence prevention climate
 - Increased coworker and management level support
 - Increased job satisfaction
 - Increased patient quality of care

- Increased **Employee Safety and Retention** in the following ways:
 - Decreased coworker disruptive behavior
 - Decreased employee intentions to quit

- Increased **Employee Well-Being** in the following ways:
 - Higher levels of mental health
 - Improved sleep quality
 - Decreased stress-related physical symptoms
 - Decreased burnout



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WHAT IS OUR PRELIMINARY TIMELINE?

January 2016 – August 2017:

- Grant application to secure the federal funding.
- Finalize the partnerships with employers.
- Begin to customize initiative for workforce in consultation with employer-partners.

September 2017 – August 2018:



- Complete customization of initiative for workforce in consultation with employer-partners.
- Implement training intervention and study protocol (work aggression, safety, and work and family well-being survey, health assessment) in one pilot work site and make any necessary adjustments.
- Roll out training intervention in remaining work sites/departments.
- Conduct baseline surveys and sleep assessments in all of these sites.

September 2018 – August 2020:

- Collect follow-up longitudinal data at 6, and 12 months after completion of the training intervention activities.

The Research Team will be studying these longitudinal data over several years; however, we will prepare a report of the baseline results for each employer-partner, as well as share updates with employers as the follow-up data are collected.

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WHAT CAN WE OFFER YOUR ORGANIZATION?



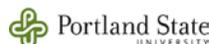
- An organizational diagnosis of current employee issues.
- Detailed information on the demographics of your workforce and how those demographics relate to worker outcomes such as workplace aggression prevalence, job satisfaction, retention, engagement, workplace supports, and worker safety and well-being.
- Technical reports on the status of your organizational culture.
- Sleep activity feedback for employees who participate in the study and request feedback (which will be delivered directly and confidentially to the employee).
- An assessment of employee retention, engagement, safety and well-being as well as patient safety outcomes resulting from our customized initiative.
- Managerial tools to assist supervisors with managing their employees in this new environment.
- ROI indicators such as reduced worker's compensation claim costs, engagement, and retention.

WHAT DO WE NEED FROM YOUR ORGANIZATION?

- Top Management buy-in is essential for the project's success.
- Involvement of supervisors through face-to-face, participatory sessions as well as computer- or web-based training.
- Ability to work with employees and supervisors on company time.
- A non-binding letter of support to include in our grant application indicating that you are interested and willing to enter into the project as a partner. See sample letters of support in Appendix A.

This project will be funded by the CDC and NIOSH and would not require any other resources from you.

We are identifying interested hospital organization partners between now and January of the 2016 calendar year with a start date of the project planned for September 2017.



Appendix A

Sample Letter of Support

[worksite letterhead]

DATE

Nanette Yragui
Occupational Health Research Psychologist
Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, SHARP Research
Olympia, WA 98501

Dear Dr. Yragui,

I am writing to provide strong support from {company name} for the grant proposal (PAR-13-129) being submitted by Dr. Nanette Yragui on “Evaluating a Supervisor Support Intervention to Promote Employee Aggression Prevention and Work-Nonwork Effectiveness.”

We at the {company name} are very excited about the possibility of collaborating on the project and understand that it involves a multi-phase approach of conducting focus groups, collecting survey data, and conducting training in the area of developing effective supervisory supportive behaviors for aiding workers in managing workplace aggression and work and nonwork balance. We also understand that the process involves working with groups or teams of workers and their supervisor to determine ways of customizing concepts related to a healthcare workforce. We understand that this is a long-term project that will last several years and that there may be opportunities for further collaborations with the research team organizations. We agree to work with the SHARP Research Team to implement the initiative in a number of units within the company and to give employees paid work release to participate in the surveys and data collections. We are open to and excited about this possibility and about working directly with the SHARP Research Team. Thus, we provide our strong support for moving forward with the proposal and believe that we would be an ideal company with whom to collaborate.

I wish you success in the application process and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

{name}
{title}

[worksite letterhead]

DATE

Nanette Yragui
Occupational Health Research Psychologist
Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, SHARP Research
Olympia, WA 98501

Dear Dr. Yragui:

I am pleased to submit this letter in support of your application to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health for the project, “Evaluating a Supervisor Support Intervention to Promote Employee Aggression Prevention and Work-Nonwork Effectiveness,” and I look forward to our potential future collaboration.

{Company name} is very supportive of efforts to improve the health of its workforce by helping employees successfully meet the demands of work and family. Participation in your research project would be a way for us to understand the impact of workplace aggression and work-nonwork policies on employees and thus, we are happy to support your efforts. As part of our participation, we agree to interviews with management and paid work release for employees to participate in the survey and data collections. We agree to work with the SHARP Research Team to implement the initiative in a number of units within the company. In addition, we understand that employees will be given a small incentive as a thank you for participating in the research.

I wish you success in the application process and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

{name}

{title}

Appendix B

Research Team Member Bios

Nanette Yragui

Occupational Health Research Psychologist, SHARP Research

Dr. Nanette Yragui, Occupational Health Research Psychologist at the Washington Department of Labor & Industries, conducts research on workplace aggression prevention in healthcare and other settings. In her work as a behavioral scientist she focuses her research on workplace aggression, work-nonwork effectiveness, employee stress and health, and social support. In addition, she develops positive interventions to address these issues. The specific focus of her research is the manner in which organizations influence employee perceptions and behaviors, particularly in terms of physical and psychological aggression, work-nonwork, and work and health behaviors. She examines the benefit of positive organizational cultures as well as the social support benefit of positive interpersonal relationships at work. In addition, Dr. Yragui investigates how negative interpersonal interactions are an important workplace stressor that can lead to poor work and well-being outcomes. To address these associations, she employs organizational research methods and applies a participatory action research approach to develop interventions. Dr. Yragui in collaboration with Dr. Hammer has recently completed an intervention project funded by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. The phase 1 project in Washington hospitals produced a supervisor intervention targeting three aspects of supervisor support; 1) support for team patient aggression prevention; 2) support for team disruptive behavior prevention; and 3) support for employee work-nonwork effectiveness.

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Leslie Hammer

Senior Scientist, Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)
Associate Director, Oregon Healthy Workforce Center

Dr. Leslie Hammer is a Senior Scientist in the Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences at OHSU. She is the Associate Director of the Oregon Healthy Workforce Center. Dr. Hammer is the founding President of the Society for Occupational Health Psychology and the Director of the Occupational Health Psychology graduate training program at Portland State University that is funded through a training program grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Currently Dr. Hammer is implementing interventions to increase supervisor support in construction workers and enhance employment retention for veterans reintegrating into the workforce, each using a randomized trial design, funded by NIOSH and the Department of Defense. Her research focuses on ways in which organizations can help reduce work and family stress and improve positive spillover among employees by facilitating both formal and informal workplace supports, such as Family Supportive Supervisor Behavior (FSSB) training. She has published results of such interventions with grocery workers, health care workers (specifically nursing aide workers), construction workers, information technology workers. Dr. Hammer is a Fellow of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology and the American Psychological Association. She has increased supervisor support and improved self-reported and objective health outcomes such as decreased blood pressure in interventions with industries such as grocery, healthcare, construction, and information technology. In 2013 she was the recipient of the Portland State University's Branford Price Millar Award for Excellence in Research Scholarship. Dr. Hammer is on the editorial boards of five leading occupational health and business journals, including the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* (past Associate Editor). She has published over 50 scientific articles and impactful books such as *Working Couples Caring for Children and Aging Couples: Effects on Work and Well-Being*. Her national leadership as an occupational health scholar is recognized by her current invited service on the NIOSH scientific study section.

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Susan McCurry

Research Professor, University of Washington (UW)

Dr. Susan McCurry is a Research Professor in the Department of Psychosocial and Community Health with 20 years of experience conducting and evaluating evidence-based treatments for sleep in older adults. She is the Principal Investigator (PI) on a recently completed National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded study with the national MsFLASH research network testing telephone-delivered cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia for menopausal women with insomnia and vasomotor symptoms. Dr. McCurry is also PI on a NIH study testing the effectiveness of group behavioral and physical activity interventions to improve sleep and reduce pain in older adults with insomnia and severe chronic pain, and was a pioneer developer of randomized controlled trials for improving sleep in community-dwelling persons with dementia and their family caregivers. She has authored over 100 professional publications and book chapters, plus two books designed to help family caregivers and health care professionals provide more effective and compassionate care. She has extensive experience working with sleep study participants, overseeing sleep screening and outcome assessment protocols including use of wrist sleep actigraphy, developing rigorous treatment fidelity procedures, and overseeing all aspects of data administration and analysis for larger randomized clinical trials.

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Ryan Olson

Scientist, Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)

Dr. Ryan Olson is a scientist specializing in safety and health interventions for workers in dangerous occupations at the Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences at OHSU with secondary appointments in departments in Public Health and Preventive Medicine. He is the project Principal Investigator for two ongoing randomized trials of workplace interventions with truck drivers and home care workers, and also contributes as a co-investigator on additional occupational health intervention projects. He has a strong track record designing effective interventions for challenging populations. His SHIFT program for truck drivers produced clinically significant weight loss among over 450 drivers recruited from 22 terminals at 5 companies. His COMPASS program for home care workers involves social support group tactics which produced improvements in workers' community of practice, as well as simultaneous improvements in safety and health targets. This work is part of the Oregon Healthy Workforce Center, which is one of four NIOSH Centers of Excellence in Total Worker Health™. Dr. Olson is a member of the editorial board for the Journal of Organizational Behavior Management and a charter member of the Society of Occupational Health Psychology.

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Liu-Qin Yang

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology (PSU)

Dr. Liu-Qin Yang is an assistant professor of psychology in the Department of Psychology at Portland State University. To date, she has published 28 peer-reviewed research articles, among which many appear in high-impact journals in the fields of psychology, management, international business, and nursing, such as the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, the *Academy of Management Review*, the *Journal of International Business Studies*, and the *International Journal of Nursing Studies*. She serves on the editorial board of 3 respected journals including *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* and *Applied Psychology: An International Review*. Her expertise includes occupational health psychology and quantitative methodologies (surveys, measurement, research designs and statistics). She and her PSU research team mainly study the health, safety, and performance implications of workplace relationships such as workplace aggression and team-member relationships, as well as effective ways of promoting positive relationships and engagement, and managing stress resulting from negative relationships. Here in the Northwest, Dr. Yang leads a multi-year, multi-site study to address ways of preventing workplace aggression experienced by nurses in healthcare settings, through taking into account actions and practices by nurses themselves, their coworkers, their immediate supervisors, as well as the influence of organizational policies and culture. Dr. Yang's research team is working to prevent acts of aggression and improve workplace conditions for registered nurses and other healthcare workers.

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