

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Exploring Self-efficacy as a Factor in Planned Behavior Change for Workplace-based Health Promotion Initiatives

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DATE: July 2016

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The prevalence of obesity and chronic disease in the United States is on the rise, leading to increasing morbidity and mortality attributable to poor lifestyle choices that equate to inadequate nutrition and lack of physical activity. Individuals often lack confidence in their ability to engage in health behaviors such as making healthy food choices and physical activity. Employers nationwide are adopting workplace wellness programs to improve employee health and address the rising cost of medical coverage. In-depth participant interviews and direct observation were used to examine relationships between self-reported self-efficacy and anticipated behavior change outcomes and to explore current health promotion practices designed to build self-efficacy and enhance health promotion initiatives in the workplace. Case studies developed from individual participant interviews revealed changes in self-efficacy during the program and how a person's values, strengths, and interests shaped their program experience. Significant contributors to participant perceived self-efficacy identified in this study recommend a tailored value based approach to behavior change that provides knowledge, accountability, experience, social support, and self-exploration in order to empower program participants to take charge of their health and improve their wellbeing.