A Safe and Welcoming Environment for All

Practicum in Human Services
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Human Services Career Pathways
Evaluating the Work Environment
Evaluating the Work Environment

Why should we evaluate the workplace environment?

What work environment factors should be assessed?

Who is responsible for assessing the work environment?
If a hazard is determined to be a risk (based on likelihood of occurrence and severity of consequences), it is advisable to provide time, money and personnel resources to help prevent or minimize the risks.
Environmental Hazards

The following environmental hazards may require consideration in a workplace:

• Lighting
• Noise
• Radiation
• Ventilation, air quality and thermal comfort
• Vibration
Controlling the Risks

The risk associated with each hazard can be controlled by implementing the following hierarchy of controls:

• Administration adjustments
• Eliminating hazardous equipment
• Isolating hazards
• Providing protective gear
• Redesigning the workplace
• Substituting materials
Functional Work Environment

The four main categories of physical characteristics that need to be considered in the work environment are:

• Arm reach, which has a bearing on storage of materials

• Clearance such as headroom, legroom, elbow-room, access

• Posture, which has a bearing on the location of materials/equipment, heights of working surfaces

• Strength
Components of the computer workstation may include:

• a chair
• a desk
• anti-glare screen
• document holder
• printer
• other equipment essential to working with computers
Arrangement of Equipment

Basic guidelines to follow in the design of the work area to enable the efficient management of tasks include:

• Frequency of use
• Function
• Importance
• Optimal positioning
• Sequence of use
• Work/rest schedules
Ergonomics

For each task, the following should be considered:

• frequency and flow of work
• materials and equipment required
• the priority of different tasks
Workplace Ergonomics
Emotionally Safe Work Environment

Ideally, an individual’s work environment is one in which the employee is comfortable and one that fosters high levels of creativity and productivity.
Discrimination

• Age
• Disability
• Equal pay/compensation
• Genetic information
• Harassment
• National origin

• Pregnancy
• Race/color
• Religion
• Retaliation
• Sex
• Sexual harassment
Diversity

Workplace diversity refers to the variety of differences between people in an organization.
Non-threatening Environment

Employees have the right to feel safe and work in a non-threatening environment.
Sexual Harassment

It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person’s sex.
Safety at the Workplace

It is the responsibility of both the employer and employee to impose and comply with safety precautions. Workplace safety can include:

• Chemical safety
• Construction safety
• Electrical safety
• Eye safety
• Fall injury prevention
Procedures Necessary to Provide Emergency Aid

Prepare for emergencies by:

• Accounting for all employees
• Brainstorming the worse-case scenarios
• Establishing an emergency action plan
• Establishing evacuation routes and exits
• Providing medical assistance
• Training all employees
• Ways to alert employees
NIOSH YOUTH @Work Video

(click on image)
Are You a Teen Worker?
Safety is NOT a Priority
Review

• Why should we evaluate the workplace environment?
• What work environment factors should be assessed?
• Who is responsible for assessing the work environment?
• What are ergonomics?
• Describe a non-threatening work environment.
Resources and References

Images:
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Websites:
• Are You a Teen Worker?
  This guide gives the facts an individual needs to stay safe and healthy at work.
  can (and can’t) do, and it teaches you about your rights and responsibilities as a young worker.
• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
  http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/ppe/
• The Place for Ergonomics
  A resource for office ergonomic solutions
  http://www.ergoweb.com
• United States Department of Labor
  Health and safety topics.
  https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/identifyprobs.html
• U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
  Types of discrimination.
  http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/index.cfm
Resources and References

**YouTube™:**
- NIOSH YOUTH @Work Video
  Teen Workers: Real Jobs, Real Risks
  http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/talkingsafety/video.html
- Safety is NOT a Priority
  Safety Training Video – Preventing Workplace Accidents and Injuries.
  https://youtu.be/fcv18xCL3Z8
- Workplace Ergonomics
  Ergonomic basics that apply to virtually any workplace.
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QeDUCXfzl6U&feature=youtu.be