

Building the Business Case for Occupational Health and Safety Disability Management Initiatives

Post-conference Workshop
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Faculty:
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Organisations regularly face challenging resource allocation decisions to remain competitive and profitable. With sometimes competing demands on scarce funds, managers need to allocate resources wisely across all activities of an organisation. Consequently, complete information on the costs and consequences of occupational health and safety (OHS) and disability management (DM) initiatives can be critical to the decision-making process. Yet far too often, organisations do not have the skill set to evaluate the cost and consequences of such initiatives. Further, both peer-reviewed and grey literature on promising OHS and DM initiatives often lack a comprehensive consideration of the costs and consequences of alternatives. Thus, essential information needed for decision-making is often not readily available.

In this workshop, I will guide how to prepare a business case for OHS and DM initiatives, including an economic evaluation. It targets workplace stakeholders—managers, labour representatives, OHS practitioners—and researchers new to economics. The workshop is designed to help participants develop the skill set needed to respond to organisations' need for information on the business case for OHS and DM initiatives. After completing this workshop, participants will better understand the role of evidence-informed decision-making, how to package evidence in a business case, and how to economically evaluate OHS and DM initiatives. The workshop is not intended to be sector-specific or organisation-size-specific. Consideration will be given to small- and medium-sized businesses, as we have found that the greatest need for skills in business case development is within such organisations.

Workshop Objectives

1. To increase awareness of the need to consider the cost and consequences of OHS and DM initiatives systematically, comprehensively, and on an ongoing basis.
2. To advance knowledge about sound economic evaluation methods for OHS and DM initiatives.
3. To increase the comfort level and ability to apply economic evaluation methods in workplaces; and
4. To stimulate dialogue and discussion, in workshop breakout sessions, about overcoming barriers to undertaking and developing economic evaluations and business cases in OHS and DM.

About Our Speaker:

Emile Tompa

Dr Emile Tompa is a senior scientist at the Institute for Work & Health. He holds appointments as an associate professor in the Department of Economics at McMaster University in Canada and as an assistant professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto. He also has an appointment at Canada's Pacific Coast University, where he is the area lead for research and sits on the curriculum and ethics committees. Tompa is the executive director of the Inclusive Design for Employment Access (IDEA) social innovation laboratory, a knowledge-to-practice initiative focused on building employer capacity for equity, diversity inclusion and accessibility. IDEA was recently funded for six years by the Canadian New Frontiers in Research Fund under the Transformation Stream.

Tompa is a labour and health economist with an MBA from the University of British Columbia, an MA in economics from the University of Toronto, and a PhD in economics from McMaster University. Tompa's research interests include the consequences of occupational health and safety system design on the health and well-being of individuals and populations, the economic evaluation of workplace initiatives for improving the health and well-being of workers, the economic burden of occupational injury and illness, and the analysis of disability policy systems. He recently chaired a Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Group technical committee that developed a Work Disability Management System Standard (CSA Z1011). He is currently on an Accessibility Standards Canada technical committee developing a standard on inclusive employment.