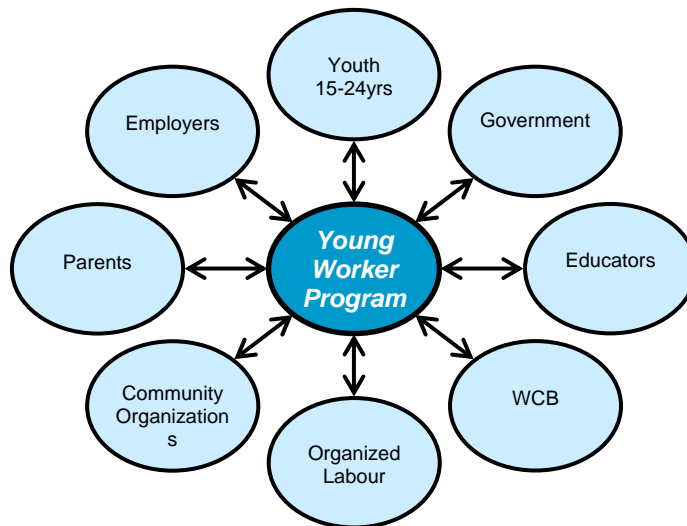


Keeping Young Workers Safe: It's Up To All Of Us
A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO YOUNG WORKER SAFETY

The WCB of BC is mobilizing community ownership of young worker safety.



PHASE 1: GETTING READY – RESEARCH TO UNDERSTAND THE WHAT, WHY AND HOW OF YW INJURIES

The WCB knew that before we could effectively communicate with and engage community partners, we needed to better understand the nature of young worker injuries.

Based on a trend showing higher injury rates for young workers than for workers as a whole, we began to examine claims data to answer questions such as: “What is at the core of young worker injuries? What subsectors, what types of injuries and what sources of injury are involved?”

The data revealed new information to help us target our injury prevention efforts and stakeholder communications more strategically.

<http://youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Statistics.asp>

For example, we focused province-wide on the three subsectors with the highest yw injury rates – retail, restaurant and supermarket – and on male young workers, whose injury rate is substantially higher than females.

But we also needed qualitative insights into questions such as: “What are the differences in attitudes and behaviours between young women and young men in terms of workplace health and safety? Where do young people go when they have a health and safety question? What are other stakeholders’ attitudes and beliefs about young workers? What are some possible solutions?”

For answers to these questions we turned to surveys, focus group research and consultations with stakeholders.

The cumulative result of this research was a collage of insights into how young workers and stakeholders viewed health and safety issues, the training youth were (and were not) receiving, attitudes about risk-taking, and the motivators/resources that might support each stakeholder group in facilitating safer workplaces for youth.

Key WCB-BC Young Worker Research Studies

<http://youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/WCBIinitiatives-YWRResearch.asp>

PHASE 2: A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Armed with solid data and new knowledge to share with and motivate community stakeholders, the WCB next developed a strategy for *who* to approach. What organizations dealing with youth and/or safety issues might be the most effective, capable, and willing to help champion young worker safety?

We found that the facts about young worker injuries consistently surprised and concerned target community stakeholders. They felt action was required and agreed in principle that young worker safety was a shared responsibility. However, many needed a small nudge as to how they might contribute. The WCB asked: "How do you think **you** could help?" and "What support do you need from the WCB and others to help you put your ideas into action?" This was the critical step in shifting from general concern to shared ownership of the issue.

The WCB has established a number of partnerships with young worker stakeholders.

http://youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/PDFs/YoungWorker/community_partners_strategy.pdf

PHASE 3: LISTENING AND BUILDING CAPACITY

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood." - Steven Covey

This is the WCB's guiding principle in our interactions with young worker stakeholders. We recognize that if we are to achieve real and meaningful stakeholder ownership, we must **let go** of our agenda - even our most cherished ideas. If stakeholders disagree with us, they won't support an idea - and certainly can't own it.

The WCB's role is to provide information and knowledge to our stakeholders, to listen deeply and carefully to what they have to say, and to support them in implementing initiatives.

We contribute suggestions, experience, and resources; test ideas; and determine what funding and support we can offer. But we trust that community stakeholders, empowered with knowledge and tools, know their audiences best, and can make a major contribution to raising awareness and improving workplace health and safety for youth.

IN PRACTICE: SOME EXAMPLES

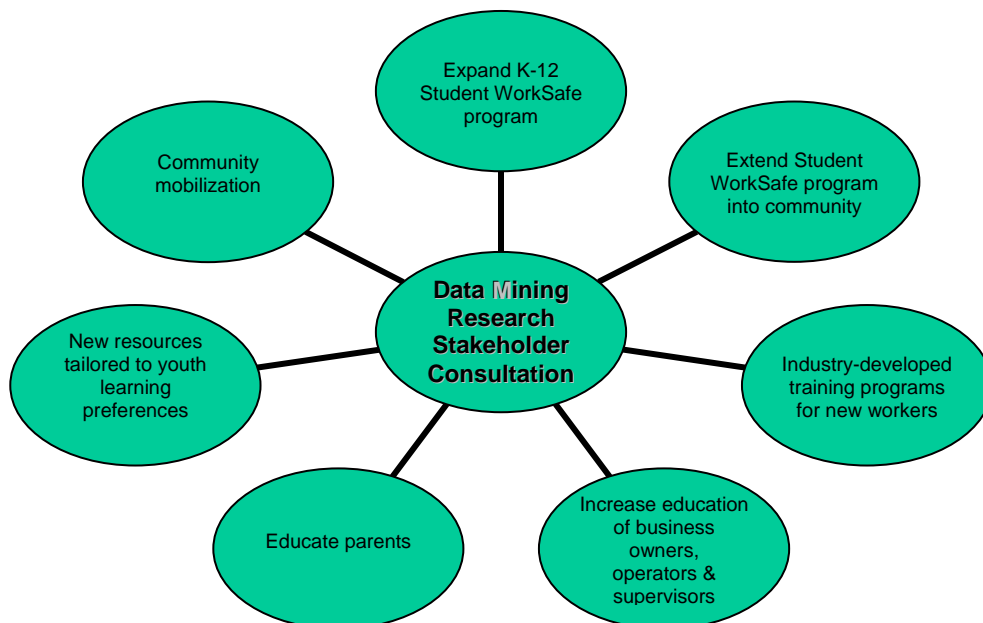
Here are a few examples of how the community-based approach to young worker safety is working.

Formation of a Young Worker Stakeholder Advisory Committee

This committee, formed in 2004, is working with the WCB in designing and implementing young worker injury prevention initiatives through community partnerships. The group is made up of 25 young worker stakeholders including youth, employers, parents, labour, educators, industry, government, and the WCB.

The Committee prioritized and selected three of the seven initiatives to focus on from the WCB's 2004 - 2007 young worker strategy.

WCB Young Worker Strategy 2004-2007



For 2004-2007, the **top three** priorities for the YW Stakeholder Advisory Committee are to:

1. Extend *Student WorkSafe* into the community
2. Increase education of business owners, operators, and supervisors
3. Educate parents and guardians

The Committee has formed subcommittees for these three areas, who are creating action plans for 2005.

Strategy #1: Extend Student WorkSafe into the community

The first step in implementing this strategy was a focus group to engage and listen to community stakeholders' views and suggestions about a *Student WorkSafe* course outside of a school setting. Representatives of 13 community and youth organizations said unanimously that they would use the *Student WorkSafe* resource if it were adapted for use in community settings.

http://youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/PDFs/YoungWorker/Community_WorkSafe_for_Youth.pdf

The WCB is collaborating with community stakeholders to develop a resource that will meet their needs – and the needs of students who leave school early and who have not taken *Student WorkSafe* as part of Planning 10. (*See strategy 4 below*)

Strategy #2: Increase awareness of business owners, operators and supervisors

We've produced a video – *The Supervisor* – a documentary drama that examines supervisors' responsibilities for workplace health and safety. The Business Subcommittee is working on their action plan to increase employer awareness of young worker issues. <http://youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Resources-YoungWorkers.asp#supervisor>

Strategy #3: Informed parents

The WCB has established a partnership with the BCCPAC (British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils) to reach parents of young workers.

BCCPAC representatives assisted the WCB in developing and testing:

- *Is Your Child Safe at Work?* – a brochure to provide parents with useful tips on keeping young workers safe on the job
- *Young Worker Safety – Important facts and tips for parents* – a slide show that can be downloaded for presentation at meetings or workshops

<http://youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Resources-Parents.asp>

The slide show has been distributed via targeted and customized e-news to all secondary school Parent Advisory Committees (PACs), to faith groups, and community groups around the province. The Parent Education Subcommittee's goal is to have every PAC present the slide show to parents in their respective communities in 2005.

Strategy #4: Expand K-12 Student WorkSafe Program

The WCB has recently revised *Student WorkSafe* (our in-school health and safety education program) for Grades 10-12 into a single resource to support occupational health and safety learning outcomes in a new Ministry of Education course called Planning 10, required for graduation. This will assure that every high school graduate has received foundation training in workplace health and safety.

<http://youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Resources-Educators.asp>

We are also working on embedding health and safety education in the curricula of other secondary school subjects - in drama, science and technology classes, for example. This cross-curricular approach will support and strengthen the core health and safety education in Planning 10.

Strategy #5: Industry-developed training programs for new workers (not just youth)

The WCB is developing a strategy and action plan for assisting industry associations and apprenticeship programs to develop sector-specific health and safety training courses. Our role will be to:

- Continue to serve as a research clearinghouse for young/new worker programs
- Produce instructional design guidelines based on research findings
- Establish core competency standards
- Promote a youth-friendly instructional approach and materials

Strategy #6: Develop new resources tailored to youth learning preferences

The WCB and our partners have or are developing a variety of health and safety resources designed to engage youth, using youth language, style, and preferred ways of learning.

- We've launched "Be a Survivor"- a youth-friendly magazine for young workers. It is being distributed through youth newspapers, Take Our Kids to Work Day packages (given to every Grade 9 student, their parents, and educators), and the Planning 10 course (as part of *Student WorkSafe*)
http://youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/PDFs/Youngworker/2004_campaign/survivor.pdf
- We've distributed our award-winning *Lost Youth* video to more than 3,500 secondary schools, Parent Advisory Councils, employers, labour organizations, and other stakeholders. We've also customized the video for other jurisdictions, including a recent version in Spanish for use in Texas and California schools.
<http://youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Resources-Employers.asp>
- In 2005 the WCB will launch a new, interactive educational resource to meet the needs of grade 12 Work Experience students and teachers, and

for those taking the secondary school apprenticeship program. It will engage youth by using a multi-media format and student self-assessment tools.

Strategy #7: Mobilize the community

This strategy is overarching and includes:

- Ongoing research to understand injury patterns and behaviours/ motivations of youth and stakeholders
- Additional partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders
- Awareness and outreach activities

One of the most exciting new programs is a Young Worker Community Forum pilot project. A local District Parent Advisory Council has formed a committee of community stakeholders – parents, employers, youth and youth organizations, educators, organized labour, and the WCB – to plan and host a community forum on young worker safety. The objective of the forum is to raise awareness of the dangerous myths about workplace health and safety, and encourage community ownership. The committee is rallying sponsors, high-profile guest speakers, the media, community leaders, and volunteers to promote and energize this community-driven event.

The WCB is supporting the organizing committee by providing information and a step-by-step Tool Kit and on what to do before, during, and after a Young Worker Community Forum. The forum is scheduled for May 2005, and the final Tool Kit will be launched at the 2005 BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils conference. Already several other communities have expressed interest in hosting forums.

These are just a few of the many young worker initiatives of the WCB and our partners. For more information log onto our web site
www.youngworker.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Home.asp

SUMMARY: THE WHOLE IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

The WCB's community based approach to young worker safety is yielding inspiring results. The year-by-year rate of young worker injuries is steadily declining. Over the past decade, young worker injury rate in B.C. was reduced by over 40 percent (from 5.9 in 1994 to 3.4 in 2003). Momentum and synergy are building as community stakeholders and the WCB expand existing partnerships and create new shared initiatives. The evidence is clear: although it begins with a leap of faith, community-based ownership is a crucial foundation for achieving the vision of safe workplaces for all young workers.