The Centre for Work, Organisation and Wellbeing invite you to a seminar:

“Occupational stress interventions in the high-risk industries: Achievable and successful”

by Associate Professor Paula Brough

When: Tuesday 4th October, 2011 - 11:30am to 1:00pm
Where: Room 2.02, Building N54 (Bray Centre), Nathan campus
Food: Lunch will be served upon arrival; please RSVP by Wednesday 28th September

Abstract: The adoption of quasi-experimental research designs within 'real world' industries is commonly cited as being preferable, but too difficult to achieve; thereby justifying the adoption of descriptive cross-sectional research. I discuss and demonstrate that longitudinal research which includes control and experimental groups is in fact possible within two high-risk of stress industries: policing and corrections. I describe the design and results of two investigations each seeking to improve the occupational health of targeted samples of these employees. The advantages of a more considered research design for both the researcher and the partner organisations are discussed.

Study 1 consists of a matched sample of 195 correctional officers who completed three self-report surveys over a three year period. Approximately half of these respondents had received an occupational health training intervention. Study 2 consists of a matched sample of approximately 500 police officers who completed two self-report surveys over a one year period. Approximately 100 of these respondents had received an occupational health intervention consisting of an organisational psychology component (supervisor training) and a physical health component (health promotion coaching program). The two investigations measured similar variables within each survey: job demands, job control, work engagement, support, job satisfaction, psychological strain, turnover intentions and work performance. The results for both studies demonstrate significant improvements over time for job satisfaction, psychological strain and work engagement, for the experimental groups in comparison with their respective control groups. This research demonstrates that longitudinal, quasi-experimental investigations are both achievable and successful among high-risk workers. The research also demonstrates the successful components of two occupational health interventions aimed at reducing stress and increasing well-being for police and correctional officers. The changes to working practices adopted by the two organisations in response to this research are discussed.

Speaker: Associate Professor Paula Brough is an organizational psychologist at the School of Psychology at Griffith University and Director of the Social & Organizational Psychology Research Unit. Paula’s research focuses on the evaluation and enhancement of occupational psychological health, with specific interests in occupational stress, coping and work-life balance. Her research has focused on two main categories: (1) reducing experiences of occupational stress within the high-risk industries and, (2) enhancing individual health and organisational performance. Paula has worked with UK, NZ and Australian police services for the past 15 years focusing specifically on police stress, and also with other high-risk groups (ambulance, fire, corrections and customs services). Paula has published over 50 academic works based on her research, is the Chief Investigator on several local, national and international research grants, and supervises both post-graduate and post-doctoral organisational psychology researchers. Paula holds memberships of journal editorial boards, serves as an academic reviewer for competitive research grants, psychology journals and conferences, and regularly presents her work to both academic and industry audiences.

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