



**Healthy Workplace
Participatory Program**
A toolkit for advancing *Total Worker Health*®

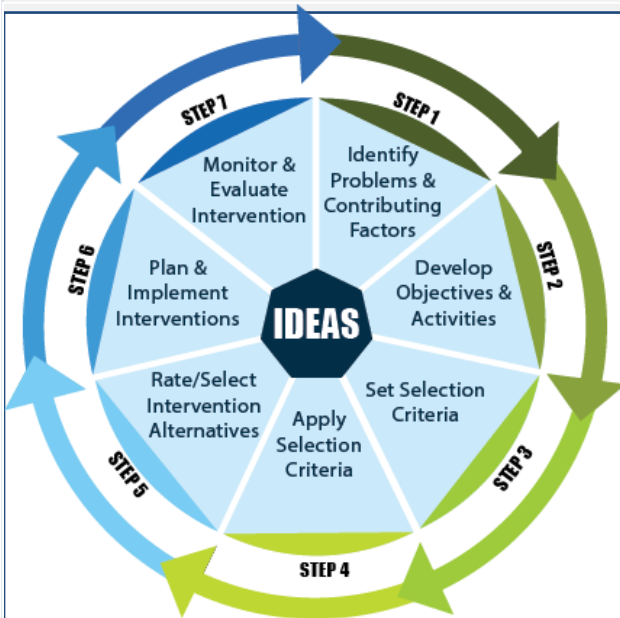
HWPP Case Study: Teacher Well-being during COVID-19

Population: K-12 Educators Workers
Problem: COVID-19 Prevention

Overview

In 2020, research personnel from the Center for the Promotion of Health in the New England Workplace (CPH-NEW) piloted a virtual delivery of the [Healthy Workplace Participatory Program \(HWPP\)](#) with public K-12 educators in New England. Our goals were to **1)** adapt Design Team meeting procedures for a virtual environment, and **2)** generate useful action planning for educators as they prepared to re-open schools.

The HWPP is a participatory, *Total Worker Health*® program designed to engage front-line workers in identifying and addressing root causes of health, safety, and wellbeing concerns. [The IDEAS Tool](#) (see graphic below) is a 7-step process that guides a participatory process of health and safety problem solving. For this study, the IDEAS Tool was streamlined, and the Design Team focused on steps 1-3.



1. Form a multi-school educator Design Team
2. Understand root causes of concerns and brainstorming solutions
3. Create a plan for action

Safe Re-opening of Schools

As schools around the country began to discuss options for in-person learning in the fall of 2020, front-line educators grew increasingly concerned about how to keep themselves, and their students safe as the COVID-19 pandemic raged on.

Understanding the problem

The [Design Team](#) is a group of front-line K-12 educators, from multiple school districts in Massachusetts and Connecticut. The Design team represented five school districts and they met for nine hours over the course of a three-week period.

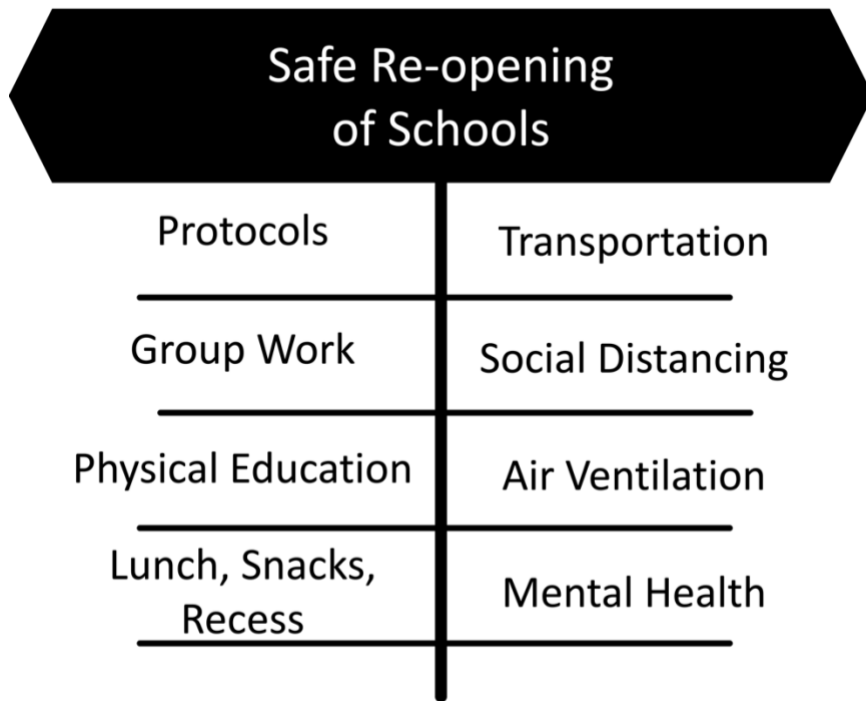
The group began by comparing health, safety, and well-being perceptions from prior to the pandemic to during the pandemic.

Prior to the pandemic most participants reported higher organizational support for employee health, safety, and well-being, citing examples such as schedule flexibility, collaboration with the administration, and set work hours.

They report reduced organizational support since the beginning of the pandemic. Examples included less flexibility, work hours not respected due to requirements for attending meetings late into the evening, and pressure to take on extra responsibilities to make up for the staffing shortages.

Root Causes Analysis:

COVID-19 Concerns for Safe Re-opening of Schools & Proposed Solutions



Proposed Intervention Activities

- Plexiglass group worktable
- Education on how to share when you aren't allowed to share (for kindergartners)
- Increase outside activities
- Structured breaks for teachers
- Team building activities
- Hire bathroom monitor to ensure social distancing and proper handwashing
- Improved cleaning protocols
- Hire more custodial staff

Creating Solutions for Action

The [Design Team](#) collected the re-opening plans from each of their school districts to compare their design work, to the district's plan. After identifying the similarities and areas for improvement, the team explored ways to engage their districts in implementing some of the interventions they brainstormed.

Similarities

- School provided PPE and school supplies for students
- Installing touchless faucets and soap dispensers
- School providing access to Yeti Mindfulness App

Areas to improve District Plan

- New protocols for drills
- Provide for outside time for recess and teaching activities
- Develop a ventilation plan for all districts, especially those with older buildings

