

MOVING YOUNG WORKER/SUPERVISOR RESEARCH TO PREVENTION

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Objective

To identify issues that both young workers and supervisors/managers are faced with in managing safety in the workplace.

Study Design

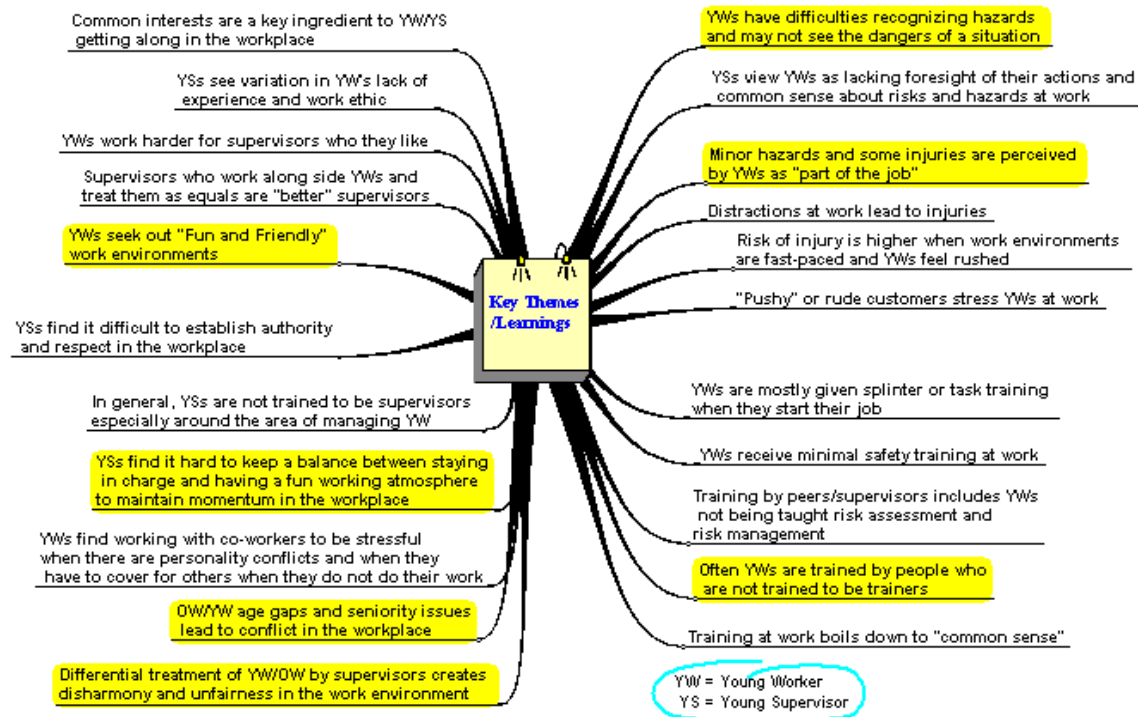
The current 2-phase action research project focused on young workers and young supervisors between the ages of 15-24 years, and their supervisors/managers, from a large range of service sector settings in Ontario. In the Research Phase, 14 in-depth case studies and 150 individual interviews provided data for the Transfer Phase into the service sector. Case studies used a multidimensional evaluation model (BRIO, Volpe, 2002) and involved site visits, participant observations, formal and informal semi-structured interviews, as well as a review of relevant business materials (occupational health and safety manuals, training materials, and injury reports). A recursive process was used for interviewing (Bigelow, Tesson, & Lewko, 1996) with conceptual components developed from case study materials. Individual interviews were between 40 minutes and 1.5 hours and explored the young worker or young supervisor perspective of various work settings, issues and relationships. Both case studies and individual interviews were content analyzed in order to identify commonalities and variations in how young workers/supervisors view work, risk, safety and the supervisory process.

Research Phase Results

Case studies were moved through a series of translation exercises, yielding a number of discrete outputs in the form of vignettes, scenarios and training cases. Each of these became an input to the transfer process, in addition to the original case material.

Interview content (with case study verification) provided the raw data for extraction of themes. Figure 1 presents 20 main themes that emerged from analyses. The data revealed a number of interesting points around areas such as risk/hazard perception, training and supervisory dynamics. Similar to the case study results, themes became a main source of results for transformation, first in Research Transfer Meetings and then on to action groups.

Figure 1: Key Young Worker and Young Supervisor Themes



Transfer Phase Results

The transfer process was approached at two levels: moving specific findings into the field; capturing the transfer process itself. Our knowledge transfer process emerged through continuous dialogue that integrated research and business languages and tools. Figure 2 presents the knowledge transfer process and the movement of research findings into the field. It underscores the critical dynamic relationship between the research team and field personnel who are the preventers. Figure 3 presents examples of actual transfer.

Figure 2: Knowledge Transfer Process to Field Application

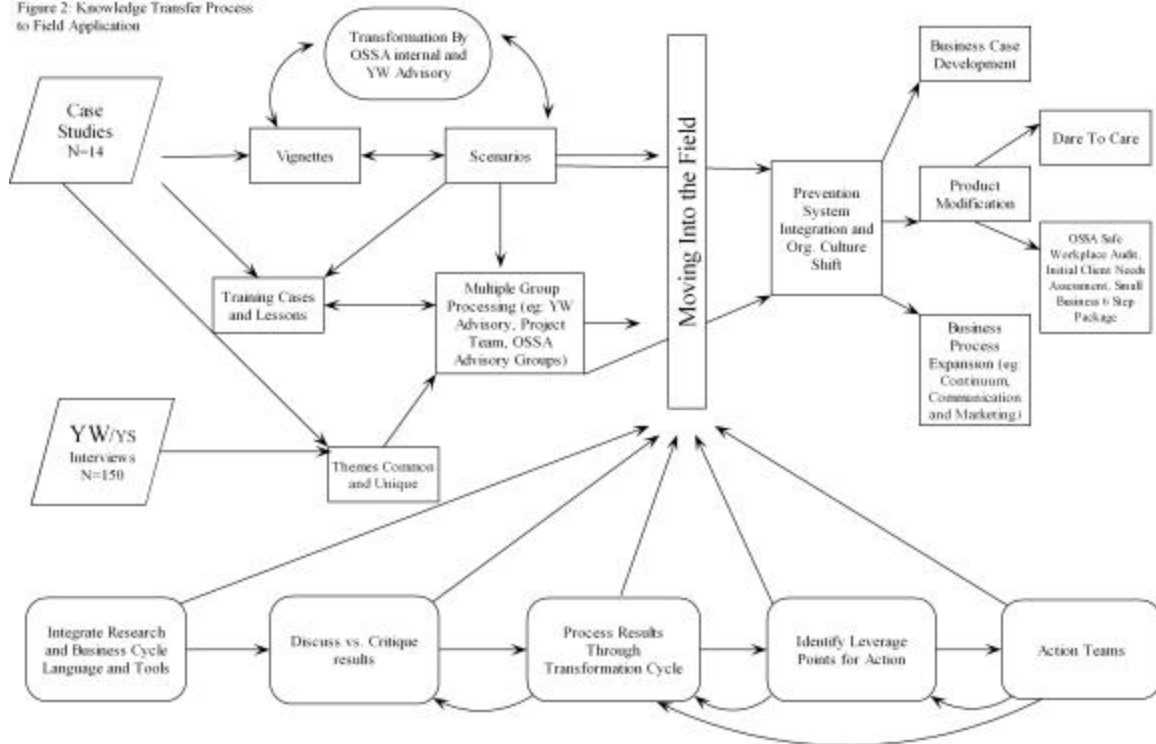


Figure 3: Example of Transfer into Practice

