Managing Healthy Organizations

Worksite Health Promotion and the New Self-Management Paradigm

During the past two decades, corporate management has come to take an active role in health promotion programming for employees, offering health education, screenings, therapy, and even leisure initiatives. However, little attention has been given to how contemporary worksite health programs in fact blur the traditional distinction between work and private life. This has resulted in that little research on the other side of the work-health nexus: how employers factor health considerations into workforce management and productivity control. With the advancement of "work-site health promotion" in contemporary organizations, Holmqvist and Maravelias argue that this narrow focus, and the typical uncritical standpoint towards initiatives which are taken in the name of employees' health, is inadequate. At a more fundamental level, the advancement of work-site health promotion may be a sign of a new or altered corporate health ethic: in contrast to the old corporate health ethic that was narrow and specific to the workplace, the new corporate health ethic appears to judge the 'whole employee' and especially what the whole employee may become; the risks one faces and the abilities one has to shoulder the responsibility for developing into a real corporate value. The authors suggest that health experts' work is closely aligned with problems relating to the general management of organizations. Through a focused appraisal of this central albeit neglected occupational group in management studies, this book tries to explore and understand in some depth situations and experiences that are of general interest and concern in our society.



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