
Preface

This *Handbook* integrates the growing clinical research evidence related to the emerging transdisciplinary field of occupational health and wellness. This expanding field is especially important because of the growing costs, including social and economic, and those associated with human suffering. Indeed, numerous statistics have found a clear relationship between health status and risks in the workplace on one hand, and financial and productivity losses on the other. With these challenges in mind, it is not at all surprising that new models and occupational intervention approaches are being developed to address the wide range of issues in this field. Moreover, the recent national and international unrest caused by unemployment and political uncertainties, the rampant distrust of government and big business, and the problems associated with rising health care costs all add up to continuing changes that will have to be taken into account in future developments in this field.

The *Handbook* will be of great interest to physicians, psychologists, occupational therapists, vocational rehabilitators, labor relations and human-resource professionals, employee and family assistance counselors, disability case managers, supervisors/employers, as well as researchers and academicians alike. As delineated in the table of contents, there is a wide array of important topics, ranging from current conceptual approaches to health and wellness in the workplace, to common problems in the workplace such as presenteeism/abstenteeism, to common illnesses and job-related burnout, to prevention and intervention methods. The book consists of five major parts. *Part I*, "Introduction and Overview," provides an overview and critical evaluation of the emerging conceptual models that are currently driving the clinical research and practice in the field. This serves as the initial platform from which to better understand the subsequent topics to be discussed. *Part II*, "Major Symptoms and Disorders in the Workplace," exposes the reader to the types of critical occupational health risks that have been well documented, as well as the financial and productivity losses associated with them. In *Part III*, "Evaluation of Occupational Causes and Risks to Workers' Health," a comprehensive evaluation of these risks and causes of such occupational health threats is offered. This leads to *Part IV*, "Prevention and Intervention Methods," which delineates techniques to prevent or intervene with these potential occupational health issues. Finally, *Part V*, "Research, Evaluation, Diversity and Practice," addresses epidemiology, program evaluation, cultural considerations, and future directions.

All contributors to the *Handbook* were asked to provide a balance among theoretical models, current best-practice guidelines, and evidence-based documentation of such models and guidelines. The contributors were carefully selected for their unique knowledge, as well as their ability to meaningfully present this information in a comprehensive manner. At first blush, this may appear to be a quite diverse array of topics to cover in one book. However, we made it our mission to provide the most comprehensive coverage of the field to date. Even we were pleasantly surprised by the convergence of models, issues, and clinical research that resulted across the 26 chapters, albeit in a different light. Each chapter added a unique thread to the overall fabric of the present *Handbook*, making it a comprehensive overview of the field of occupational health and wellness. At the same time, the unique contributions of constructs such as stress, wellness, support, adaptive/maladaptive behaviors, and group and individual differences are represented across this overall fabric.

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