Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba
Community Initiatives Grant Program

Young worker responses to workplace hazards

Final Report

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Executive Summary

In 2008, the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba Community Initiatives Grant Program awarded funding to study how young workers respond to workplace hazards. We conducted four studies to understand how in the face of dangerous working conditions this vulnerable group of workers use exit (i.e., quitting the job) or voice (e.g., reporting a safety issue to a supervisor), patience (i.e., taking a wait-and-see approach), or neglect safety concerns (i.e., ignoring personal safety in the face of danger) (Hirschman, 1970; Leck & Saunders, 1992). We refer to these as EVPN responses. In total, 833 young people participated in the four studies.

In the focus group study (Study 1), we explored the types, frequency, temporal patterns, and consequences of the safety-related EVPN behaviours. The results showed (1) most participants favoured patience if and when they have concerns about workplace safety; (2) voice is reserved for serious safety concerns; and (3) exit is very uncommon and only used as a last resort. We found no differences in males’ and females’ use of EVPN.

In Study 2, we developed age-appropriate measures for general turnover intentions (i.e., exit), and safety-specific voice, patience, and neglect. The reliability, dimensionality, and validity of these scales were demonstrated across multiple samples of young people.

The experimental study (Study 3) used a scenario approach in which safety conditions (high vs. low), financial reasons for working (high vs. low), and being injured (injured vs. not injured) were manipulated in a hypothetical restaurant kitchen setting. Participants assigned to the injury condition were more likely to exercise patience than those assigned to the non-injury condition. Low quality safety conditions were associated with higher turnover intentions. Finally, females reported higher voice, patience, and neglect than males.

Study 4 was a short-term longitudinal field study. We found that injuries, organizational commitment, having ideas about how to improve safety, and feeling that it was futile to improve safety were related to future exit intentions. In terms of voice, injuries, safety ideas, safety compliance behaviour, and futility were related. Patience was associated with work hours, tenure, injuries, organizational commitment, taking responsibility for safety, safety ideas, safety compliance, and availability of other jobs. Finally, neglect was predicted by futility and experiencing resistance to voice. We found no differences between males’ and females’ use of EVPN responses. We also report findings related to predictors of injuries, prevalence of injury reporting, and other responses to unsafe work (e.g., work refusals).

The storyline that emerges from this research is that teenaged workers initially try to adapt to work conditions (i.e., patience) when they encounter injuries or have concerns about safety. As a secondary strategy they may talk about quitting an unsafe job. There is also evidence that voice punctuates periods of patience, especially when safety concerns are of a serious nature.

Based on these findings, we make recommendations related to improving the marketing of occupational safety behaviour to young workers (e.g., focusing on the positive implications of proactive forms of safety behaviour), effective safety management of young workers (e.g., supportive safety communication from supervisors), and public policy.
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1.0 Background and Project Objectives

In 2008, one Manitoban aged 15 to 19 years lost their life at work and 871 lost time injuries were reported for this cohort (Association of Workers Compensation Boards of Canada, 2009). Manitoba WCB statistics show that the overall injury rate among young workers is equal to the rate for older workers. A sub-group of young workers, namely young males, are at the greatest risk of injury. Serious early-career injuries carry long-term economic consequences which are borne by injured workers, their families, and WCB Manitoba.

Despite progress in understanding the causes of young worker injuries, gaps in knowledge remain. One particular gap is how young workers respond to workplace hazards they identify. The purpose of the “Young Workers Responses to Workplace Hazards” research project was to investigate factors that predict whether teenaged workers at risk of on-the-job injuries chose to quit hazardous work (exit), speak up about potential hazards (voice), wait to see if conditions improve (patience), or ignore the potential hazards altogether (neglect) (Hirschman, 1970; Leck & Saunders, 1992).

There are three objectives for this project:

1. Develop measurement tools for assessing safety-specific exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect responses to hazards.

2. Systematically study individual and contextual factors which enable and inhibit working teenagers from using constructive responses to workplace hazards over time.

3. Communicate the project’s findings to teenaged workers, employers, researchers, and educators. Further, to work with these stakeholders to identify ways that the research findings can benefit existing young worker safety resources and high school curriculum.

2.0 Review of Work Completed

Four studies were conducted to understand the causes, consequences, and patterns of safety-related EVPN responses. Full length papers of the studies are available by contacting the researchers.

Table 1 shows a summary of the work completed between the beginning (April 2008) and completion of the project (August 2010). Here we also highlight how this work relates to the project’s objectives.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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| Months 1 – 3 (May 2008 to August 2008) | - Apply to Winnipeg School Divisions research ethics for Study 1 (focus group study)  
- Apply for University of Manitoba and Winnipeg School Division research ethics for Study 2  
- Recruit participants for Study 1  
- Conduct Study 1 | Began investigating individual and contextual factors that enable teenagers to use constructive responses to workplace hazards. |
| Months 3 – 6 (August 2008 to November 2008) | - Completion of Study 1 data analysis  
- Completion of Study 2 (development of measurement tools for Studies 3 & 4)  
- Pilot test Study 3 (experimental study) | Developed and validated measurement tools for assessing safety-specific exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect responses to hazards. |
| Months 6 – 9 (November 2008 to February 2009) | - Produce first WCB progress and financial reports  
- Begin recruiting participants for Study 3 |  |
| Months 9 – 12 (February 2009 to May 2009) | - Begin Study 4 data collection (field study)  
- Finish recruiting participants for Study 3 |  |
| Months 12 – 15 (May 2009 to August 2009) | - Completion of Study 4 data collection  
- Completion of Study 3 data analysis | Completed investigation of individual and contextual factors that enable teenagers to use constructive responses to workplace hazards. |
| Months 15 – 18 (August 2009 to November 2009) | - Completion of Study 4 data analysis  
- Discuss preliminary results with project consultative committee | Began communicating preliminary results from the project. |
| Months 18 – 21 (November 2009 to Studies 1 and 2 at) | - Present findings from | Continued communicating the project’s preliminary |
| Months 22 – 25  
(March 2010 to May 2010) | - Present findings to Comp Institute (Saskatchewan WCB)  
- Present findings from Study 3 to Administrative Science Association of Canada Conference.  
- Produce third WCB progress and financial reports | Continued communicating project’s preliminary results. |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Months 26 – 28  
(June 2010 to August 2010) | - Submit draft of final report to WCB  
- Present findings from Study 4 to the Academy of Management Conference | Continued communicating project’s preliminary results. |
| Months 29 – 31  
(September 2010 to October 2010) | - Submit draft of final report to WCB  
- Communication project findings to stakeholders | Communication of project results to stakeholder groups. |

3.0 Presentation of Results

3.1 Study 1: Focus group study

3.1.1 Introduction

This study used focus groups to examine young workers’ safety-related EVPN responses. Properly executed focus groups can allow researchers to gain deeper insight into behaviour than with one-on-one interviews or survey research. A recent review of focus group research highlighted two primary advantages (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). First, focus groups allow participants to interact with one another. These discussions allow “differences of opinion among group members [help to] identify how and why individuals embrace or reject [ideas and behaviours]” (p. 43). Second, focus groups offer efficiency gains because gathering information from multiple participants at one time and place requires less time and fewer financial resources than separate one-on-one interviews.

3.1.2 Method

Eight focus group interviews were conducted in August 2008 with 39 participants aged 15 to 18 years. The interviews occurred in Winnipeg, Manitoba (five focus groups) and Kingston, Ontario (three focus groups). Twenty participants were male and 19 were female.
Across the interviews, the average participant age was 16.5 years with 93% indicating that they attended school the previous year. Most participants worked in the restaurant industry (41%), convenience store, grocery store or supermarket (32%), and other (e.g., gas station, retail clothing store). Approximately 10% of participants were currently ‘in between’ jobs.

Several approaches were used to recruit a diverse sample (with number of participants ultimately recruited by each method in parenthesis). First, a youth job training centre for recent immigrants informed its clients about the study \( n =10 \). Second, the study was advertised to staff at a university. Parents employed at the university who indicated they had a son or daughter aged 15 to 18 years received a flyer about the study \( n = 6 \). Third, we handed out flyers to workers at fast food restaurants \( n = 2 \). Fourth, an advertisement for the focus group was placed in a newspaper \( n = 5 \). Finally, several participants heard about the study by word of mouth \( n = 17 \).

The interview was divided into four parts. First, we explored common hazards and injuries. Second, participants discussed responses to changes in safety conditions in their current and past jobs. In the third part, participants were asked to generate examples of exit and safety-related voice, patience, and neglect behaviour. Finally, we explored sequences of responses and reasons for these patterns.

To establish a common language for discussing exit, voice, patience, and neglect responses, we asked each group to provide examples that fit each category. We used these definitions for each category: Exit (Behaviours that teenaged workers use just before they quit a job. e.g., “Tell parents that you’re thinking about quitting the job’’); Voice (Behaviours that teenaged workers use when they have growing concerns about safety. e.g., “Get a group to address the safety problem’’); Patience (Behaviours that teenaged workers use when they wait for safety conditions to improve. e.g., “Adapt to safety conditions until the situation improves’’), and Neglect (Behaviours that teenaged workers use when they stop caring about safety. e.g., “Ignore warnings about hazards’’). The lists generated by each focus group were written on a flip chart and served as a common reference for discussing patterns of EVPN responses.

To contextualize the research, we began by asking workers to describe safety-related problems. Participant names have been changed for anonymity and the text was edited to improve readability (e.g., by removing words such as “like”).

### 3.1.3 Results

#### Hazards and Injuries

Participants reported experiencing a range of physical, chemical, and interpersonal hazards at their current and former jobs. Here are some representative examples:

Farah: [In the] summer the water starts dripping from the [kitchen freezer] ceiling on the ground. Then when you close the door it freezes, and then when you open it back the floor is all slippery. They don’t provide us with anything to remove the ice and they have written in big
letters “Please be careful because the floor is slippery.” Well you have to
do something. I mean I don’t know how people survive in there.

David: I work with an electronic pallet jack […]. I have to drive it
around and stuff. It's like pretty scary sometimes - it goes pretty fast.

Laura: [In] the summer I work in the photolab. Upstairs in our lab it’s
not well ventilated, so there have been times when it gets really hot, and
the chemical starts evaporating, so you have to wear a gas mask.

Several participants, mostly female, who worked in frontline customer service positions
shared stories about incidents of customer-initiated sexual harassment and verbal abuse.

Emilie: People like to get angry about burgers and then people – old guys
– hit on you but that’s not really anything new.

Catherine: I’ll have to go check in the suites [in an entertainment
complex] and normally, like, especially it's during an event where it's
typically mostly only guys in the building they get drunk. And it's like, I
don’t know, they’re just all touchy. It’s gross. No one else will go in [the
suites], so I’m sent to go in. And I’m the youngest one that works in my
section. I have had a guy actually like lose his mind because he ran out of
tonic for his gin. He was so furious and I [said] “okay, it’s all right. I’ll
bring you some tonic, calm down.”

Nearly everyone reported being injured at a current or former job. The most common
injuries were burns to hands and arms, followed by cuts to fingers, slips and falls, and exposure
to chemicals. Here are several representative descriptions:

Chelsea: I had to go to the hospital once because I got hit by the slicer.
But not the blade, but the part where the meat sat. Someone turned it on
when I was cleaning underneath it. They didn’t realize [that] my hand
was underneath and they got me on the collarbone and so I had to go to
the hospital and wear a sling for a long time.

Sophia: I had a lot of big boxes of futons fall on me and a bunch of fabric
rolls, that were pretty massive, tumbled over and kind of trapped me.
[But] it wasn’t a big injury at all.

Andrew: Oh, a week ago I sliced part of my thumb off and I also burned
myself a couple of times with the oven […]. I’ve had to take plants off
the ceiling and almost fallen off the ladder and stuff like that. And I have
like permanent burns. After two months they’re still there.

Daniel: I was given a job [at the gym] and told to clean, no training,
nothing like that. I had regular latex gloves, normal gloves […]. I had to
clean a hot tub at one point, very early on, I think it was like the first month or so that I was on the job. My hands started to get really hot. They were just bright red from the bleach and these gloves.

These discussions established that this sample of workers was knowledgeable about occupational safety hazards in their current and former jobs. Further, it was evident that a majority (22 out of 39) have at one time had concerns about work-related hazards. However, many participants viewed injuries as ‘part of the job,’ a finding that is consistent with previous research (Breslin, Polzer, MacEachen, Morrongiello & Shannon, 2007a).

EVPN Sequences and Barriers to Voice

The main part of the content analysis related to identifying sequences of EVPN responses and themes related to these patterns. These discussions were both descriptive (i.e., rooted in participant’s actual work experiences) and hypothetical (i.e., how participants said they would act in a given situation). We asked participants what their initial and secondary responses would be when they have safety concerns and why they preferred these responses.

Fear of job loss. A small number of participants, primarily male and those with longer tenures with a particular employer, said they would immediately speak out (voice) about concerns. However, the most common first response for both male and female participants was patience. Three themes emerged from this discussion. First, participants said they feared losing their jobs or hours for speaking up to a supervisor or manager about safety concerns. Here is an excerpt from one group:

Phillip: I guess everyone wants to have a safe workplace but there’s only so much you can do with certain workplaces. So I guess it’s mostly just waiting out and hoping for the better. (inaudible)

Author: Why is that? Why would you say that most people would just wait it out?

Shane: If they speak up they are afraid they will get fired or something.

Phillip: Yeah, stuff like that, they’re afraid to speak up and get fired. They just kind to wait and see if anyone else notices it besides them (inaudible).

Participants in another group believed that calling a government safety inspector would likely jeopardize their employment.

Author: It came up before that you [would] get fired if you [called] the inspector. According to the law [employers] aren’t allowed to fire you.

Andrew: Well they eventually will. They will find out a reason.
Sandy: Yeah, they will stop calling you.

Andrew: No, they will like find a reason…

Raj: They will try and find any reason to fire you.

Andrew: They will find a really small mistake and fire you for it.

Farah: Fake customers, they would have somebody come in and make you mad and then…

Leslie: Make it like you are still technically employed there but you're never getting shifts.

Catherine: Or they will just make it really bad for you. Like everyone just starts treating you differently so that you want to quit.

**Powerlessness.** The second theme associated with the use of patience related to participants’ perceived powerlessness to raise safety issues with management. It was evident from the discussions that work inexperience and newcomer status reinforced feelings of fear. For instance, a 15 year old female who worked in an entertainment arena and was dissatisfied with aspects of safety (e.g., burns, customer harassment) practiced patience because she felt she could not change the situation:

Author: [Any thoughts on] where would you start?

Catherine: Wait for someone to do something. I’d wait as long as possible for someone else to say something and if I was asked if I felt the same way I’d agree with it but only if I knew it wasn’t going to cost me my job. I find that people that are older, when they need something to change it seems like it's not that big of a deal and they will try to come up with a solution. But when it's our age group it seems like we are just complaining about stuff. If anyone else was to complain about it probably it can get changed.

Author: And by older you mean how old? Like 20? Over 20?

Catherine: Most of the women I work with are servers and in their 30s and 40s. And they are considered like mature adults. Their opinions seem to matter more than ours. Age is a huge factor in whether or not something is done.

Similarly, another female worker recalled her response to poor quality working conditions at a former job in a restaurant kitchen:
Maggie: [It] wasn’t really that safe. The floor was always wet and nobody would wipe it off and there was never a sign telling you the floor was wet. And again there was a lot of the stuff we had to deal with, hot things, like it was a hotel kitchen. […] I guess I just didn’t find it that safe. And the clothes we had to wear […] it would get really hot but it was the uniform so I can’t really change it out.

Author: Would you say you had concerns about safety at that job?

Maggie: Yes, I did. A lot. (laughs)

Author: And so what did you do?

Maggie: Well I couldn’t really do much because I don’t think I could tell anyone what to do then because of the position I was in. I don’t think I would have gone to the manager and say “hey this needs to be improved”. Maybe I would have got fired or something. (laugh) I wasn’t really in a position to ask people to change anything.

This excerpt is from a 17 year old male who had worked at a restaurant job for two months. He claimed to have permanent scars on his arm from lifting hot trays and said that he generally liked his job and work colleagues, but also that he was not willing to raise safety issues:

Andrew: Right now I am pretty much in patience because I haven’t worked there for too long. I’m still getting used to the safety conditions because they keep throwing more and more dangerous stuff to me. (speaker’s emphasis)

When asked to describe why new workers are reluctant to raise safety concerns, this group of participants said they worried about how others would view them and their inexperience on the job:

Author: What would be some of the barriers that would prevent some people your age raising concerns about safety?

Emilie: Just don’t want to rock the boat.

Lisa: And also I guess, especially when you are new, you kind of feel like you don’t have much authority or you don’t really have a right to say something. You haven’t been there for a long time. Maybe you’re scared.

Kelly: Everyone else knows better.

Author: You don’t feel you have a right to say something? Why is that?
Lisa: I don’t know, you might think you’re wrong or something. Or maybe people will look at you like you are just complaining because you’re new.

**Perceived consequences of hazards.** A third theme associated with the use of patience related to the perceived consequences of tolerating hazards. Across the interviews, the seriousness of a hazard was understood in terms of the likelihood that it would result in personal harm. Work tasks that were perceived to result in an injury requiring medical attention or hospitalization were labeled “serious”. These issues marked a shift from patience to low level voice for many participants. The perceived seriousness of the hazard was an important factor in whether both young males and females switched from patience to voice. Two females who had worked together at a fast food restaurant had this to say about this issue:

Chelsea: It if was a new job, I would probably just not say anything because I would be scared or intimidated. […] That’s why I said patience first. And I think I would probably stick with the patience until, I saw something really bad happen out of it […] or just until I got comfortable.

Author: Anne, any thoughts about it? What do you or even people around you do when they have growing concerns about safety?

Anne: Well, I think like for waiting it also depends on what it is. If it’s something smaller probably you wait probably a little longer because it’s really not going to hurt someone then. (speaker’s emphasis)

Here is an excerpt from another discussion that also illustrates the transition from patience to voice:

David: Well probably everybody starts off with safety patience because until something actually happens nobody really cares, I would say. And then safety voice.

Farouk: And then neglect and then exit.

Author: That’s interesting, so something happens. What would be the threshold for taking action and speaking out?

David: It’s like [got to be] big, for me. I wouldn’t really speak out [otherwise].

Farouk: Yeah unless it’s something– it could be personal, I guess. Yeah it’s important to you because otherwise who cares.

Author: That’s interesting. Ian and Chris, what would you [do]?
Ian: I’ll basically do the same because I will just wait for something to happen to me. If it’s really concerning me, then obviously I will talk about it to my boss. Yeah, if she doesn’t do something about it then I will just let it go. I’ll just be careful about myself (sic). And if something bad happens then maybe I’ll quit or do something drastic.

Interestingly, as the previous quote shows threats to coworkers’ safety were not enough to warrant speaking up. Participants in a different focus group were asked whether a common hazard, in this case a wet or greasy floor in a restaurant kitchen, would motivate action to protect one’s coworkers.

Thomas: I think it could be completely different for each person because if all four of us went down to the kitchen with a wet floor and one of us slips and breaks their skull then it’s a little problem for everyone else but it’s a big problem for the person who is in the hospital.

Kimberly: Yeah, but as soon as someone got seriously hurt then it’s a big problem for everyone because then they would realize that we shouldn’t be walking on the floor if it’s that slippery. It might not be slippery to some people, and some people might not have grip on their shoes and they go flying.

Author: So is the greasy floor a serious problem or not a serious problem?

Kimberly: It depends if someone gets hurt.

Author: But isn’t it too late to speak out after you get hurt?

Kimberly: But then you can prevent other people from getting hurt, after one person gets seriously hurt.

Thomas: Well I think what [the Moderator] is saying is if you notice there is a slippery floor but no one has been hurt yet, would you speak out then before it becomes a big problem?

Kimberly: No. I wouldn’t.

Thomas: I wouldn’t.

Maggie: Most people wouldn’t.

In summary, most participants preferred patience as a short- to medium-term response to safety concerns. This strategy was favoured over voice because participants were fearful of raising safety concerns. Fear seemed to be associated with newcomer status, age, and perceived consequences of speaking out about concerns. Another reason for exercising patience related to
the perceived risk of injury to oneself. In most cases, when a hazard was not a serious threat to one’s personal safety, it was tolerated.

When a matter was considered serious, many said they would or have tried voicing. The process of voicing was strikingly similar across the interviews. First, participants said they complain to coworkers about the safety concern. This served as an informal method for gauging opinion about whether others saw the issue as one that warranted action. Next, in situations in which there was consensus that there was a safety problem, participants said they would try to establish an ad hoc coalition to raise the issue with a supervisor or manager. In other cases, an outspoken worker would take the issue forward. More often, safety voice was described as a collective act. However, trepidation and caution were the hallmarks of the voicing process. A participant who was confident in speaking up in his workplace said:

Thomas: For me personally, I tell people what happened and I [will] try to find support from coworkers. And if I find the support then I go right away to tell someone higher than me. If [I do not have the support of coworkers] I will wait a bit and see if the situation persists. If it does persist, even without coworker support, I would contact the person.

Author: What happens if you don’t have coworker support?

Kimberly: Because you’d be alone and nothing would be done (inaudible)

Thomas: Safety in numbers.

With a couple of exceptions, voice was most commonly described as informal and non-threatening to managerial authority. An exception was a story about a sit down work stoppage that forced management to repair dangerous equipment. Unionization as a form of collective voice was rarely mentioned in the interviews. When it was, the focus quickly shifted back to informal forms of collective action:

Author: How often does collective action occur at a workplace if you’ve got [safety] concerns?

Sandy: It’s called a union.

Catherine: Not ours. It’s called let’s all group together and hopefully we don’t all get fired.

While the majority of participants said they would initially use patience followed by voice, there was mixed opinion about what they would do when informal voice strategies (e.g., speaking to coworkers) were ineffective. Some said they would revert back to patience and hope that safety problems were addressed, while others said they would switch to neglect. Exit was rarely considered as an initial or secondary response. Figure 5-1 illustrates the general sequence of responses over time in relation to the seriousness of the safety issue.
Participants reported that they did not think about quitting a dangerous job without first waiting to see if things improved and, in some situations, attempting informal voice. Some workers said they would leave when they were completely “fed up” with hazards. As one interviewee said, “I either have to change it or quit.” However, the majority expressed that they would be reluctant to leave a job due to safety concerns. Participants noted benefits associated with their jobs (e.g., pay, hours, and tips), friendly coworkers, and job search costs that made them reluctant to quit an unsafe job. Here is an excerpt from one interview:

Farah: I was surprised to know that all of us are in the same boat, pretty much. All of us have some sort of a common point in our workplace safety. All of us have problems but we can’t help it.

Catherine: Personally we ignore problems, because we get a lot of perks to where we work, like free concerts.

Andrew, Raj: Ya, we get free food.

Catherine: So like sometimes it’s just not worth complaining about the safety hazards because there are a lot of perks.

Raj: Discounts on food.

Farah: I only get free cookies. That’s it.

Participants in other interviews noted perceived job search costs and negative employer reactions to quitting past jobs that deterred them from leaving jobs.

Phillip: You could have ten different jobs on your resume but if they are only a month long then places won’t hire you because of your commitment is very low.
Steven: I’d probably be patient because I don’t want to start all over at another job for the same amount of money.

Previous research has found that supervisors and managers can play a key role in whether younger workers raise safety issues (e.g., Mullen, 2005). Approximately half of participants said their current and former supervisors were genuinely open to listening to their safety concerns and taking action on suggestions. Others described management and owners who were not receptive to hearing about safety concerns. The first quote below relates to a restaurant owner who was open to worker suggestions. The second example describes managers at a large fast-food restaurant franchise who were not genuinely interested in safety.

Andrew: Everyone is just cool with each other, even the owner, we will just tell him what's wrong. If he doesn’t like it, he doesn’t like it, but if he likes the idea….

Author: There are no repercussions?

Andrew: No, I haven’t seen any really.

Here is the second example:

Paul: I don’t think anyone [listened to concerns at my former job]. They always say that [they cared]. I don’t think anyone […] wants to piss off the manager. Plus I go there and there is some manager that I don’t even know. They have so many different employees. Half the time I go [to work] I don’t know who I work with. I kind of felt like I didn’t really want to go nag at the manager. I kind of just went in there and like did my shift and then left.

Author: In your training the manager said they wanted to hear concerns but Paul was saying that sometimes they don’t really want to hear your concerns. Is that right?

Paul: Yeah, I guess. Like I think maybe they do but I think you know they kind of say stuff like that but they don’t really care…

Joshua: Yeah, it’s too common.

Paul: …because they’re busy. So many times you are going there and they will be like on the phone. They’re always busy or try to seem busy.

Author: What could they have done to make workers speak up more about concerns about safety?
Paul: Actually seem like really open to it. Like they weren’t intimidating or something like that, they genuinely thought that.

Joshua: [Be more] friendly.

3.1.4 Discussion of Results

Despite facing a range of potentially harmful work-related hazards, most of the teenaged workers that were interviewed said they exercise patience if and when they have safety concerns. Their reluctance to take action by voicing was related to an underlying fear of being fired, their inexperience and newcomer status, and relatedly, a belief that they were powerless to bring about improvements in safety. Patience was also preferred when the likelihood of serious injury to oneself was perceived as low or voice had failed.

These findings show that safety-related voice was episodic and punctuated sometimes by lengthy periods of waiting and thinking about what to do about safety concerns. We found that voice is a social process whereby teenaged workers informally consult work colleagues about safety issues. When coworkers agree that a problem exists the concern is legitimated and collective or individual action can occur. The likelihood of upward voice increased when management was genuinely open to hearing concerns.

The voice process may explain why young newcomers to jobs are especially reluctant to speak up about safety concerns. The social relations that appear to support the process require time to develop before action can be taken on a safety concern. Young workers are most vulnerable to injury when they first start at a job (Breslin & Smith, 2006), which we found coincides with the period during which they are most reluctant to speak up about safety concerns and have underdeveloped relationships with their coworkers. Future research is needed in this area and, similarly, could examine the voice experiences of young people who work alone.

Of the four EVPN responses, exit and neglect were the least frequently mentioned. Some participants viewed leaving a dangerous workplace as a last resort and not appropriate before they had tried other strategies (e.g., patience or voice). There was a high level of agreement that other aspects of work such as ample work hours, free products and services, and friendly coworkers were barriers to leaving dangerous jobs. In terms of neglect, some participants said their coworkers do not care about safety and a few participants admitted they would stop caring about safety if voicing was futile.

3.1.5 Limitations

This study has some limitations. First, some participants who were recent immigrants to Canada and whose second language was English had a more limited involvement in the interviews. Second, with the exception of one all-male focus group, groups were comprised of both females and males. Research on the gender composition of focus groups has found differences in the interaction styles of men and women (Breslin et al., 2007b), with male participants tending to dominate conversation more than females. We did not observe this in the interviews; in fact, overall female participants tended to speak more than males. Lastly, this
sample was not randomly selected and participants may have had more (or less) concerns about workplace hazards and engaged in more (or less) active responses.

3.1.6 Evaluation of Study 1

The focus group study was evaluated in two ways. First, we asked participants to complete a short feedback survey at the end of each interview. Table 2 summarizes the feedback we received.

Table 2: Summary of participant feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Example Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Did you find your participation in the focus group enjoyable?</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;Not unpleasant, but somewhat dull;&quot; &quot;I wished that others had been more involved in discussion.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I learned about different workplace situations that other youth have encountered vis-à-vis safety.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Harassment;&quot; &quot;Safety regulations;&quot; &quot;Discuss how to complain about issues without losing your job!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did you find that you learned something from participating in the focus group?</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;I learned about different workplace situations that other youth have encountered vis-à-vis safety.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Harassment;&quot; &quot;Safety regulations;&quot; &quot;Discuss how to complain about issues without losing your job!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Were there other topics that you would have liked to have discussed in the focus group?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>&quot;Maybe more participants for more ideas;&quot; &quot;Pick a controversial topic;&quot; &quot;Have a larger group of people.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you have any suggestions to help improve the focus group?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I learned some new stuff about workers safety;&quot; &quot;Good communicating on our level, not above/below;&quot; &quot;I enjoyed hearing what others had to say about work and safety;&quot; &quot;Good having people your age talking with you because they have experienced the same things;&quot; &quot;Very interesting and informative. Eye opener.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Any additional comments?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;I learned some new stuff about workers safety;&quot; &quot;Good communicating on our level, not above/below;&quot; &quot;I enjoyed hearing what others had to say about work and safety;&quot; &quot;Good having people your age talking with you because they have experienced the same things;&quot; &quot;Very interesting and informative. Eye opener.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second way the focus group study was evaluated was through the blind peer review process. In October 2009, we presented results from the focus group study at the International Conference on Occupational Stress and Health. This peer-reviewed conference provided valuable feedback on this study. Currently this study is under second review to the journal *Work, Employment, and Society*.

3.2 Study 2: Measurement Development Study

3.2.1 Introduction and Results

Using data from multiple independent samples, we developed and validated measures for safety-related EVPN. In addition to safety-related exit, voice, patience, and neglect, we found a fifth category of response, namely safety compliance. Collectively, the studies support the reliability of the measures. These measures were used in the scenario and longitudinal studies. Appendix A shows the final measures.

3.2.2 Evaluation of Study 2

We also presented results from the measurement development study at the peer reviewed International Conference on Occupational Stress and Health. The study has been accepted for publication in the journal *Accident Analysis and Prevention*.

3.3 Study 3: Scenario Study

3.3.1 Introduction

In the third study, we created hypothetical scenarios in which we manipulated workplace safety conditions (high vs. low), financial reasons for working (high vs. low), and being injured (injured vs. not injured) to understand how these factors affect EVPN behaviour. This approach is used to isolate conceptually relevant factors that account for differences in behaviour and attitudes. A key strength of scenario study designs with random assignment is that they allow researchers to explore systematically questions related to causality among conceptually relevant variables. The scenarios used in the current study were grounded in the actual experiences of young workers and set in a work environment in which both males and females are represented.

3.3.2 Method

The scenarios were set in a restaurant kitchen and grounded in the stories shared by the focus group participants. Appendix B shows the eight scenarios that were used. We verified the quality of the scenarios using a pilot test involving 90 first-year university students. In the main study participants were high school students who completed the survey during regular school hours. Two hundred and twenty people started the survey for which 199 provided useable data. The average participant age was 16.37 years (SD = 1.20) and 50% were female. The majority (70%) reported working in the last year and 44% indicated that they had worked in a restaurant or food services organization at one time.
Participants were randomly assigned to one scenario. We conducted separate analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the predictors.

3.3.3 Results

Participants who read a scenario describing how they sustained a workplace injury reported higher intentions to exercise patience than those in the non-injury condition. Participants who read about a job with low quality safety conditions reported they intended to talk more about leaving the job than those in the high quality safety conditions. Compared to males, females reported higher voice, patience, and low neglect. Financial reasons for working at no influence on EVPN behaviours.

3.3.4 Discussion of Results

Consistent with the findings in the focus group interviews, participants were more likely to report intentions of elevated patience after experiencing a workplace injury. They were also more likely to report wanting to talk about leaving the job when exposed to general low quality safety conditions. Together, these results suggest that while both forms of safety-related decline may be relevant predictors of different EVPN responses, experiencing an injury may be most salient for adaptive safety behaviour (e.g., patience). Consistent with recent studies showing young female workers being more likely to speak up about safety issues than young male workers (e.g., Breslin et al., 2007a), the current results reveal that female participants reported higher voice, patience, and lower neglect intentions in response to the restaurant scenarios.

3.3.5 Limitations

Vignette studies ask respondents to report on their behavioural intentions in a given situation, not their actual behaviour. Hence, it is possible that participants may have found it costless to indicate that they would, for example, neglect when in real life workplace they would choose patience when confronted with a similar situation. Second, it is possible that males and females assumed different roles in the restaurant kitchen (e.g., server versus dishwasher) that may have influenced their responses, perhaps because they held different perceptions of the risk of future injury. We do not think this affected the results because the injuries described in the scenarios were the same for male and female participants and were related to jobs performed in a restaurant kitchen (e.g., cook, dishwasher). Finally, approximately 50% of the sample reported not having worked in the past year. Thus, the study may have lacked realism for these participants. On the other hand, the results speak to how young newcomers may react to dangerous working conditions.

3.3.6 Evaluation of Scenario Study

The evaluation for Study 3 is based on feedback from four sources: analysis of the quality of the survey data, participant ratings of the realism of the scenarios, feedback from high school teachers and research assistants, and comments from academic reviewers. First, we explored the data for extreme responses (outliers) which may indicate that a participant did not take the survey seriously. We found no outliers. Second, we asked participants to rate the realism of the
scenarios using a 10 point scale with 1 being “not realistic” and 10 being “very realistic.” The average score was seven out of ten which is acceptable in experimental research. Third, we asked teachers and research assistants who administered the survey in computer classrooms how students approached the survey. Below are quotes from related email messages:

Teacher 1: “It seemed like students were well focused and taking the survey seriously.”

Teacher 2: “It's interesting to see the different responses - it's the low reading levels for some of them that makes the process difficult, and for others a difficulty in engaging their imagination (but I don't work at a restaurant!), but for the readers in the crowd, it seems to be working.

Research Assistant: “The study went well today. People generally moved through it without a problem. [...] Everyone finished the study.”

We received only positive feedback about student attitudes toward survey when we spoke to teachers by phone. Overall, we are satisfied with the integrity of these data.

We presented results from the scenario study at the peer-reviewed Administrative Science Association Conference in May 2010. Using the feedback from the reviewers and comments from audience members at the conference, we are currently preparing this study for submission to a safety journal (e.g., Journal of Safety Research).

3.4 Study 4: Longitudinal study

3.4.1 Introduction

In the final study, we examined how the quality of supervision, workplace injuries, exposure to dangerous work, and other factors affect exit and safety-related voice, patience, and neglect behaviour. We also summarize findings related to the prevalence of safety training, injuries, and injury reporting.

Starting in April 2009, participants completed four on-line surveys across four months with one month between each survey. A longitudinal design enabled testing of the several predictors and addresses methodological limitations associated with the focus group study and scenario study concerning generalizability.

3.4.2 Method

Participants were employed teenagers residing within and near Winnipeg, Manitoba. They were invited to complete surveys at four points in time (hereafter Time 1 = T1, Time 2 = T2, Time 3 = T3, Time 4 = T4) between April 2009 and August 2009, with one month between each survey. The study was advertised to an occupationally diverse group in several settings (e.g., high school classrooms, lobbies of movie theatres). For each time period participants received an email invitation. Participants who completed the T1 survey (N = 302) were emailed a unique link to the T2 survey exactly one month later. Two hundred and fifty-seven responded to the T2 survey (response rate 85%) of which 27 changed jobs and two reported being
unemployed. Two hundred and fourteen completed the T3 survey (83% response rate) of which five reported being unemployed and 23 indicated they had changed jobs. Finally, one hundred and twenty-seven participants completed the T4 survey (59% response rate) of which five reported being unemployed and 14 indicated they had changed jobs.

Our main findings relate to participants who completed surveys at both T1 and T2. The final sample consisted of 222 participants who had worked at the same main job over the two surveys, were not self-employed, and provided useable data. Participants were aged 14 to 19 years (M = 17.56 years, SD = 1.20) and 60% female. The median tenure at T1 was 11 months (M = 16.81 months, SD = 16.98). The average number of hours per week worked at their main job at T1 was 20.35 hours (SD = 13.31) and 24.30 hours (SD = 15.60) at T2. The most common workplaces were restaurants and food service operations (38%), grocery store (21%), retail (13%), entertainment venues (e.g., movie theatre) (7%), office or call centre (5%), gas station or garage (4%), and other (12%).

The main analysis involved ordinary least squares multiple regression.

3.4.3 Results

Prevalence of Workplace Safety Training

First, we examined the prevalence of different types of workplace safety training received by participants in jobs at T1 (N = 302) and those who started a new job between T1 and T4 (N = 55). Tables 3 and 4 summarizes these results.

Table 3: Percentage of participants who received job training by type (N = 302)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No training</th>
<th>WHMIS training</th>
<th>Co-worker trained</th>
<th>Supervisor trained</th>
<th>Safety supervisor trained</th>
<th>Training workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Percentage of participants who received job training for a new job by type (N = 55)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No training</th>
<th>WHMIS training</th>
<th>Co-worker trained</th>
<th>Supervisor trained</th>
<th>Safety supervisor trained</th>
<th>Training workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We combined the responses of participants who reported receiving no job-related training at T1 with those who received no training at a new job. Table 5 shows the percentage by job category who did not receive any training job. Some jobs that exposure workers to physical risks (e.g., dishwasher, server) have relatively high rates of not receiving training.
Table 5: Participants not receiving job training by job title (N = 85)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job category</th>
<th>Percentage of participants in this job category who did not receive training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishwasher</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation (e.g., athletic instructor)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., interviewer)</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Server</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashier</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Predictors of Injuries and Injury Reporting.

Second, we examined the prevalence of injuries and injury reporting. At T1 and T2 participants were asked about the number of work-related injuries they experience in the previous month. These injuries included a strain or sprain; scratch or abrasion (superficial wound); cut, laceration, or puncture (open wound); work-related burn or scald; bruise or contusion; fractured bone; a dislocated joint; work-related concussion; hernia or rupture; and other. The response scale was 0 (never), 1 (once), 2 (two to three times), 3 (four to five times), and 4 (more than five times). They were also asked about the number of first aid injuries and injuries requiring medical attention. Table 8 shows the number of self-reported injuries by type and the prevalence of reporting for T1 through T4.

Table 8: Prevalence of Injuries and Injury Reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
<th>T3</th>
<th>T4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of injuries</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First aid injuries</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injuries requiring medical attention</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number reported to supervisor/manager</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number reported using &quot;Green Card&quot;</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number reported to WCB</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also examined the predictors of physical injuries. Time 1 transformational supervisory leadership (an inspiring form of leadership that emphasizes meeting individual employee needs and motivating goal achievement) was negatively related to injuries at T2. Further, a change in work pressure over one month was related to injuries at T2. Finally, hours
worked was also positively related to injuries. In addition, we found that the effects of work pressure on injuries varied by work hours. Specifically, higher levels of injuries were reported by participants who experienced both high work pressure and high hours. Factors unrelated to T2 injuries included participant gender, age, tenure, the personality characteristic conscientiousness, unionization, compliance with safety policies, receiving any type of workplace safety training, size of employer, and coworker support for safety.

Lastly, we examined the prevalence of exposure to dangerous work and injury reporting. Over one month periods 23% and 26% (Time 1 and Time 2, respectively) of participants said they were asked to perform at least one dangerous task.

Predictors of EVPN Responses

Next, we tested the relationship between several predictors measured at T1 and T2 EVPN responses (see Table 6 for summary of results). We found that T1 injuries, organizational commitment, having ideas about how to improve safety, and feeling that it was futile to improve safety were related to T2 exit intentions. In terms of T2 voice, T1 injuries, safety ideas, safety compliance behaviour, and futility were related. Time 2 patience was associated with T1 work hours, tenure, injuries, organizational commitment, taking responsibility for safety, safety ideas, safety compliance, and availability of other jobs. Finally, T2 neglect was predicted by T1 futility and experiencing resistance to voice (e.g., being treated unfairly for raising a safety concern).

Table 6: Summary of relationships among predictors and EVPN behaviours (N = 222)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor at Time 1</th>
<th>Exit/turnover intentions*</th>
<th>Voice*</th>
<th>Patience*</th>
<th>Neglect*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average hours per week*</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure (months)*</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of injuries</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to dangerous work</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational commitment</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt responsibility for safety</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas about how to improve safety</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety compliance</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of other jobs</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor openness</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to voice</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futility</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also considered the exit and voice behaviour of participants who were highly committed to their employers. We found that felt responsibility for improving safety changed the relationship between commitment and both exit and voice. Specifically, participants who reported the highest levels of T2 voice indicated at T1 that they felt both highly committed to their employer and a high felt responsibility for improving safety. There was also evidence that participants who reported the highest level of commitment and highest level of responsibility reported the lowest level of exit intentions at T2. These relationships are illustrated in the figures below.

**Figure 2: Felt Responsibility for Improving Safety Time 1 Moderating the Relationship Between Time 1 Organizational Commitment and Time 2 Exit Intentions**

![Figure 2: Felt Responsibility for Improving Safety Time 1 Moderating the Relationship Between Time 1 Organizational Commitment and Time 2 Exit Intentions](image1)

**Figure 3: Felt Responsibility for Improving Safety Time 1 Moderating the Relationship Between Time 1 Organizational Commitment and Time 2 Voice**

![Figure 3: Felt Responsibility for Improving Safety Time 1 Moderating the Relationship Between Time 1 Organizational Commitment and Time 2 Voice](image2)
We also examined the reasons why participants left their main job between T1 and T4. They were asked to rate the importance of nine factors using a five point scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). Table 7 shows that work hours, wages, and work schedule ranked as the most important reasons. Concerns about injuries and unsafe working conditions ranked last and second last, respectively.

**Table 7: Reasons for leaving job (N = 61)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for leaving job</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work hours</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work schedule</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work location</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworkers</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe working conditions</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-related injuries</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, we examined if any of the EVPNC responses at T1 were related to T2 injuries. Only voice and compliance behaviour at T1 were related to injuries at T2 controlling for T2 work hours, T2 work pressure, and T1 transformational leadership. Specifically, both voice and compliance were negatively related to injuries.

### 3.4.4 Discussion of Results

Overall, the results related to the prevalence of safety training are comparable to population studies. Smith and Cameron (2007) they found that approximately one in five new employees in Canada received safety training from their employer. We also found evidence of injury under-reporting, however finer-grained data is needed to determine the number of eligible injuries that should be reported to an employer or the WCB.

Injuries at T1 were related to higher exit intentions, voice, and patience. In terms of the predictors of voice, the non-significant result for supervisor openness is surprising given that previous studies show a strong positive relationship (e.g., Detert & Burris, 2007). It may be that supervisors indirectly influence voice behaviour by positively influencing safety compliance behaviours. In terms of patience, we found that those who feel responsible for making changes in safety at their workplaces were less likely to engage in adaptive safety behaviour. It is interesting that gender had no influence on injuries and EVPNC responses given the findings from the scenario study and other recent research suggested that show young females are more likely to speak out about safety concerns (Breslin et al., 2007a).

In terms of the predictors of injuries, the findings show that transformational leadership was negatively related to injuries. This result emphasizes the importance of young workers receiving high quality supervision. Finally, our study found further evidence that levels of work pressure are associated with injuries and that work pressure is especially risky when combined with high levels of work hours.
3.4.5 Limitations

Despite having advantages, a relatively short lag between surveys may introduce testing effects. It is possible that participants became more aware of safety and may have changed their job-related behaviour by virtue of their participation in the study.

Second, the sample was disproportionately unionized which may have influenced voice behaviour given that union members have access to formal voice mechanisms (e.g., a grievance process). However, we found no difference across union and non-unionized workers on any of the outcome variables. A representative of the union told us that most of their young members are difficult to service (i.e., have no contact with the union) because they frequently change employers.

Third, participants were aged 14 to 19 years, thus these results may not extend to 20 to 24 year olds or adult workers.

In terms of the results related to the predictors of injuries, the data were self reported which could have influenced the results. In particular recent research shows there is a recall bias for reporting injuries. Andersen and Mikkelsen (2008) compared aggregate daily diary reports of injuries to retrospective survey data over a 28-day period, and found that, on average, surveys captured only 37% of the actual number of injuries.

3.4.5 Evaluation of Longitudinal Study

The evaluation of this study is based on feedback from three sources: participant retention, participant comments, and feedback from the blind peer-review process.

We tracked the number of participants who dropped out of Study 4. Between the first survey (April 2009) and the fourth survey (August 2009), approximately 49% of participants remained in the study. Given the nature of the sample and number of surveys, we are satisfied with this retention rate.

At the end of the surveys participants were asked to provide comments about any aspect of workplace safety. Below are representative comments. Overall, the feedback was supportive.

Work safety is very important to a lot of teens, but I think that they would rather talk directly to a manager rather than in front of their co-workers. Some people think that speaking out about safety makes you a keener, but it really just makes you smart.

I think it's great you are doing this, talking to management about work place safety is not always an easy topic.

I think that the in school presentations were an effective way to teach kids about workplace safety.

It's interesting, I rarely think about these types of issues.
There are a lot of repeated questions in this survey, but otherwise it was good.

Finally, the results from this study were presented at two academic conferences. In June 2010, we presented findings related to the predictors of physical injuries at the International Commission on Occupational Health Conference. Results related to EVPN responses were presented at the Academy of Management Conference in August 2010. Overall, the comments from anonymous reviewers have been supportive of the quality of this study. Here is a sample of reviewer feedback:

The topic is relevant and the amount of work gone into the paper and gathering sample participants is apparent. An interesting read.

This paper piqued my interest, held my attention, and satisfied my desires to learn something new. […] I enjoyed the theoretical springboard used by the author(s) whose investigation was solid and insights supported with strong evidence.

3.5 Summary of Results Related to Other Responses to Specific Safety Incidents

Across the studies, we examined the prevalence of other responses (e.g., work refusals) to incidents of dangerous work. First, we analyzed responses from 224 young people who participated in the measurement development studies. One hundred and twenty (54%) participants said that in their working life they have been asked one or more times to perform a task that they thought was unsafe. We asked these participants about specific responses they used in these situations. Table 9 summarizes the results for those who had been asked to perform one or more tasks that they thought was unsafe.

Table 9: Responses to Unsafe Work ($N = 120$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage that used the response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asked a question about unsafe work</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused unsafe work</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought of quitting a job due to unsafe work</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the scenario study, participants ($N = 233$) were asked “Have you ever been asked to do a task at work that you believed was dangerous to you or someone you work with?” Thirty-six percent responded “yes” to this question. Next, these participants were asked to think about the last time they were asked to do a task at work that they believed was dangerous to themselves or a coworker and how they responded. The table below summarizes the responses.
Table 10: Responses to Dangerous Work (N = 89)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage that used the response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eliminated the danger yourself</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoke to coworkers about the dangerous task</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported the dangerous task to a supervisor or manager</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused to do the dangerous task</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performed the dangerous task without doing anything about it</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, in the longitudinal study, we asked participants (N = 222) if they had been asked to perform a dangerous task at least once. Of those who were exposed to dangerous work at Time 1, 27% reported refusing dangerous work. Similarly, 42% of participants who reported being exposed to dangerous work at Time 2 said they refused dangerous work.

4.0 Recommendations

Based on the results of this research, we propose several recommendations related to the content of young worker occupational safety campaigns, safety management, evaluation of injury prevention interventions, and young worker research in Manitoba.

1. Young worker safety campaigns:

- The results show that in the context of starting a new job, a time when it is important for young workers to engage in safe work practices because they are more likely to be hurt, young workers who are injured or have safety concerns prefer to take a wait-and-see or adaptive approach rather than ask questions or voice concerns. Further, we found that young workers are reluctant to raise safety concerns with supervisors, managers, and sometimes in front of their coworkers. Thus, we recommend that media and school-based campaigns that seek to raise awareness about young worker safety should be explicit about barriers to voice (e.g., fear of job loss) and propose practical ways of voicing in the face of fear (e.g., coalition building). Relatedly, voice should be portrayed both as an individual and collective act in campaigns.

- Campaigns should be broadened to target supervisors and managers and inform them about teenage workers reluctance about speaking up about safety issues. Line and upper management need to be aware of the impact of their perceived openness to hearing about safety concerns and the negative consequences of subtle forms of resistance to voice (e.g., embarrassing a young worker who raises a safety concern).

- Young worker safety awareness campaigns should also encourage speaking up about seemingly minor issues (i.e., close calls), which research shows are associated with major injuries (e.g., Alamgir, Yu,
Gorman, Ngan & Guzman, 2009). We found that young workers tend to take a wait-and-see approach in the face of dangerous work.

- In the scenario study, females reported higher voice, higher patience, and lower neglect than males. Although these results were not replicated in the other studies, we recommend giving consideration to targeting teenaged males about the potential benefits of voice and problems with neglecting safety.

- Campaigns should highlight the benefits of reporting injuries to employers. Accurate injury reporting can signal to employers (and the WCB) areas in which safety management could be improved. At the same time, young workers also need to be aware of reporting mechanisms.

2. Safety management:

- We found that voice was negatively related to injuries. Thus, steps should be taken to encourage speaking out about safety concerns.

- The findings from the longitudinal study showed that taking responsibility for safety alone may be insufficient for promoting proactive safety behaviours (e.g., voice) among young workers; commitment to the organization is also important. What is troubling about these findings is that workers who felt a responsibility for safety but did not feel committed to their employer reported the highest intention to exit and lowest level of voice. These results emphasize the importance of organizations taking steps to cultivate both responsibility for safety and organizational commitment among young workers if they wish to promote conditions for voice.

- Employers should offer leadership development and safety training to their front-line supervisors as these measures have benefits for increasing proactive safety behaviour and injury prevention (Kelloway & Barling, in press). We also recommend employers attempt to reduce work pressure by ensuring adequate staffing and production planning. Our findings show that injuries were highest when work hours and work pressure were highest. Thus, organizations need to be especially proactive under these circumstances.

- Job-related training is important (and, indeed employers have a legal responsibility to provide job appropriate training), yet we found that some job categories may not be receiving any training.

- Given the importance of accurate injury reporting for prevention, we recommend that employers encourage injury reporting and that young
workers be made aware of mechanisms for efficiently reporting injuries (e.g., via a posting on a staff bulletin board).

3. Evaluating injury prevention interventions:

- We recommend using the EVPNC measures developed in this research to evaluate the efficacy of interventions designed to improve safety behaviour and reduce injuries among young workers.

4. Young worker research

- We recommend examining the EVPNC safety behaviours of young agricultural workers who are at high risk of injury.

- Future research should compare the EVPNC behaviour to young workers to adult workers in similar jobs.

5.0 Dissemination of Results

As of August 2010, the project’s results have been presented at three peer-reviewed academic conferences (please refer to earlier discussion), with a consultation committee, and at a provincial WCB conference. We are currently working with the Manitoba WCB to develop a communication strategy for disseminating the project’s results to stakeholders.

On November 19, 2009, a nine-member consultative committee met to discuss preliminary results from the project’s studies and how to best communicate these results to the community. Committee members include:

1. Bruce Cielen (Manitoba WCB)
2. Judy Fraser (Workplace Safety and Health)
3. Rob Hilliard (UFCW)
4. Bruce North (St. Norbert Collegiate)
5. Ellen Olfert (Safe Workers of Tomorrow)
6. Darren Oryniak (Manitoba WCB)
7. Christine Panas (Safe Hospitality)
8. Irene Sanchez Cielen (Retail Safety Council & Manitoba Liquor Control Commission)
9. Janine Swanson (Manitoba WCB)

Members of the committee were interested in many of the findings, particularly those related to taking responsibility for safety, futility in a safety context, and factors related to injury underreporting. Several ideas were shared for communicating the project’s findings (e.g., working in conjunction with Manitoba for Youth, Association of Parents, chambers of commerce, human resource associations, and associations that represent industries). We are working with the WCB to implement suggestions from this meeting for effectively communicating the project’s results to stakeholders.
In March 2010, the main findings from the project were presented to an audience of 250 safety practitioners and WCB representatives at the Saskatchewan WCB Comp Institute.

6.0 Financial Report

Appendix C shows the project’s financials updated to August 20, 2010. In the final stages of the project, we expect to incur approximately $4,000 in expenses related to communicating the results to stakeholder groups (e.g., young workers, employer associations, teachers). Overall, the project is on budget. However, some budget lines are over budget (i.e., salaries and benefits ($1,676), equipment ($1,218), and participant incentives ($1,303)) while others are under budget (i.e., transcription fees ($522), materials and supplies ($759), travel ($2,367), communication/dissemination ($4,656), and facilities ($258)).

7.0 References


Appendix A: Resources Developed from the Project

Final EVPNC Measures

Exit
Tell my parent(s) that I'm thinking about quitting the job
Think about how to tell my boss I'm leaving the job
Tell my non-work friends that I'm going to quit
Tell my co-workers that I'm thinking about quitting the job
Tell a girlfriend/boyfriend that I'm going to quit

Safety Voice
Speak to co-workers at risk and encourage them to fix safety problems
Tell my supervisor about the consequences of dangerous working conditions
Group together with co-workers and take safety concerns to the supervisor
Tell my supervisor about hazardous work
Talk to the owner about safety concerns
Remind co-workers to take precautions

Safety Compliance
Wear protective clothing/equipment
Read instructions before using chemical substances
Attend safety training sessions

Safety Patience
Adapt to safety conditions until the situation improves
Find a way to protect myself from being hurt at work

Safety Neglect
Take short cuts that threaten my personal safety
Get in the habit of not working safely
Stop following health and safety policies
Ignore safety problems altogether
Don’t tell the supervisor about hazards
Don’t warn co-workers of potential dangers
Appendix B

Experimental Vignettes

Vignette 1

High quality safety conditions, injuries, and high financial reasons for working

Please try to imagine yourself in this situation...

You’re one month into a new job at a restaurant. You work in the restaurant’s kitchen. In the kitchen, your coworkers and shift managers keep things clean and follow proper work practices even during the busy lunch and dinner hours. Like all new employees, you received mandatory training during your first month on the job. With this training you know how to do your job and about hazards in the kitchen.

In the past month, you’ve noticed that spills of oil and other liquids are quickly mopped up, that protective equipment (e.g., gloves, oven mittens, eye protection) is available when you need it, and that boxes and crates are never left out where people walk. Further, cleaning chemicals are properly labeled.

Your coworkers and shift managers always communicate concerns about hazards in the kitchen. For example, they let you know whenever liquid or food is spilled on the floor, or when they’re walking behind you with a hot tray.

In the past month, you slipped and fell on a greasy spot on the kitchen floor. In a separate incident you cut your finger on a knife that had been left in a sink of dirty pots. The cut required first aid attention.

Aside from occasional minor burns to fingers, no one else has been injured since you started working at the restaurant. Further, no one else has slipped or fallen in the past month.

With this job you’re getting the hours you want – not too many and not too few hours. And you’re satisfied with your hourly wage and the discount that you get on restaurant food.

You need the money from this job to pay off a $2,000 debt that you owe to a family member. You are also saving money for an important purpose (e.g., car insurance, tuition).

Vignette 2

High quality safety conditions, no injuries, and high financial reasons for working

Please try to imagine yourself in this situation...

You’re one month into a new job at a restaurant. You work in the restaurant’s kitchen.
In the kitchen, your coworkers and shift managers keep things clean and follow proper work practices even during the busy lunch and dinner hours. Like all new employees, you received mandatory training during your first month on the job. With this training you know how to do your job and about hazards in the kitchen. In the past month, you’ve noticed that spills of oil and other liquids are quickly mopped up, that protective equipment (e.g., gloves, oven mittens, eye protection) is available when you need it, and that boxes and crates are never left out where people walk. Further, cleaning chemicals are properly labeled.

Your coworkers and shift managers always communicate concerns about hazards in the kitchen. For example, they let you know whenever liquid or food is spilled on the floor, or when they’re walking behind you with a hot tray.

In the past month, you have not had any accidents, close calls, or injuries at this job. Aside from occasional minor burns to fingers, no one has been injured since you started working at the restaurant. Further, no one has slipped or fallen in the past month.

With this job you’re getting the hours you want – not too many and not too few hours. And you’re satisfied with your hourly wage and the discount that you get on restaurant food.

You need the money from this job to pay off a $2,000 debt that you owe to a family member. You are also saving money for an important purpose (e.g., car insurance, tuition).

Vignette 3

High quality safety conditions, injuries, and low financial reasons for working

Please try to imagine yourself in this situation...

You’re one month into a new job at a restaurant. You work in the restaurant’s kitchen. In the kitchen, your coworkers and shift managers keep things clean and follow proper work practices even during the busy lunch and dinner hours. Like all new employees, you received mandatory training during your first month on the job. With this training you know how to do your job and about hazards in the kitchen.

In the past month, you’ve noticed that spills of oil and other liquids are quickly mopped up, that protective equipment (e.g., gloves, oven mittens, eye protection) is available when you need it, and that boxes and crates are never left out where people walk. Further, cleaning chemicals are properly labeled.

Your coworkers and shift managers always communicate concerns about hazards in the kitchen. For example, they let you know whenever liquid or food is spilled on the floor, or when they’re walking behind you with a hot tray.

In the past month, you slipped and fell on a greasy spot on the kitchen floor. In a separate incident you cut your finger on a knife that had been left in a sink of dirty pots. The cut required first aid attention.
Aside from occasional minor burns to fingers, no one else has been injured since you started working at the restaurant. Further, no one else has slipped or fallen in the past month.

With this job you’re getting the hours you want – not too many and not too few hours. And you’re satisfied with your hourly wage and the discount that you get on restaurant food.

You do not owe money to anyone and are not saving money for any purpose. You use the money from this job for recreation and leisure (e.g., going out with friends, shopping).

Vignette 4

*High quality safety conditions, no injuries, and low financial reasons for working*

Please try to imagine yourself in this situation...

You’re one month into a new job at a restaurant. You work in the restaurant’s kitchen. In the kitchen, your coworkers and shift managers keep things clean and follow proper work practices even during the busy lunch and dinner hours. Like all new employees, you received mandatory training during your first month on the job. With this training you know how to do your job and about hazards in the kitchen.

In the past month, you’ve noticed that spills of oil and other liquids are quickly mopped up, that protective equipment (e.g., gloves, oven mittens, eye protection) is available when you need it, and that boxes and crates are never left out where people walk. Further, cleaning chemicals are properly labeled.

Your coworkers and shift managers always communicate concerns about hazards in the kitchen. For example, they let you know whenever liquid or food is spilled on the floor, or when they’re walking behind you with a hot tray.

In the past month, you have not had any accidents, close calls, or injuries at this job. Aside from occasional minor burns to fingers, no one has been injured since you started working at the restaurant. Further, no one has slipped or fallen in the past month.

With this job you’re getting the hours you want – not too many and not too few hours. And you’re satisfied with your hourly wage and the discount that you get on restaurant food.

You do not owe money to anyone and are not saving money for any purpose. You use the money from this job for recreation and leisure (e.g., going out with friends, shopping).

Vignette 5

*Low quality safety conditions, injuries, and high financial reasons for working*

Please try to imagine yourself in this situation...
You’re one month into a new job at a restaurant. You work in the restaurant’s kitchen. In the past month, you’ve noticed that your coworkers and shift managers do not put much effort into keeping the kitchen clean. Much of the time they do not follow safe work practices. Employees who were hired in the past month received no training about how to do their jobs or about hazards in the kitchen.

In the last month you’ve noticed that spills of oil and other liquids are frequently not mopped up, protective equipment (e.g., gloves, oven mittens, eye protection) is not available when you need it, and boxes and crates are often left out where people walk. Further, all cleaning chemicals are improperly labeled.

Your coworkers and shift managers rarely communicate about potential hazards in the kitchen. For example, they usually do not let you know when liquid or food is spilled on the floor, or when they’re walking behind you carrying a hot tray.

In the past month, you slipped and fell on a greasy spot on the kitchen floor. In a separate incident you cut your finger on a knife that had been left in a sink of dirty pots. The cut required first aid attention.

Several people have been hurt in the last month. Recently, someone slipped on grease on the floor, fell backwards and hit their head on a fryer. This person needed stitches at the hospital. The most common injuries, which occur often, are burns and cuts to fingers and arms, and bruises from contact with equipment. Most of these injuries required first aid attention. People sometimes slip on wet floors and someone fell while trying to get around crates at the back of the kitchen.

With this job you’re getting the hours you want – not too many and not too few hours. And you’re satisfied with your hourly wage and the discount that you get on restaurant food.

You need the money from this job to pay off a $2,000 debt that you owe to a family member. You are also saving money for an important purpose (e.g., car insurance, tuition).

Vignette 6

Low quality safety conditions, no injuries, and high financial reasons for working

Please try to imagine yourself in this situation...

You’re one month into a new job at a restaurant. You work in the restaurant’s kitchen. In the past month, you’ve noticed that your coworkers and shift managers do not put much effort into keeping the kitchen clean. Much of the time they do not follow safe work practices. Employees who were hired in the past month received no training about how to do their jobs or about hazards in the kitchen.
In the last month you’ve noticed that spills of oil and other liquids are frequently not mopped up, protective equipment (e.g., gloves, oven mittens, eye protection) is not available when you need it, and boxes and crates are often left out where people walk. Further, all cleaning chemicals are improperly labeled.

Your coworkers and shift managers rarely communicate about potential hazards in the kitchen. For example, they usually do not let you know when liquid or food is spilled on the floor, or when they’re walking behind you carrying a hot tray.

Several people have been hurt in the last month. Recently, someone slipped on grease on the floor, fell backwards and hit their head on a fryer. This person needed stitches at the hospital. The most common injuries, which occur often, are burns and cuts to fingers and arms, and bruises from contact with equipment. Most of these injuries required first aid attention. People sometimes slip on wet floors and someone fell while trying to get around crates at the back of the kitchen.

In the past month, you have not had any accidents, close calls, or injuries at this job.

With this job you’re getting the hours you want – not too many and not too few hours. And you’re satisfied with your hourly wage and the discount that you get on restaurant food.

You need the money from this job to pay off a $2,000 debt that you owe to a family member. You are also saving money for an important purpose (e.g., car insurance, tuition).

Vignette 7

Low quality safety conditions, injuries, and low financial reasons for working

Please try to imagine yourself in this situation...

You’re one month into a new job at a restaurant. You work in the restaurant’s kitchen. In the past month, you’ve noticed that your coworkers and shift managers do not put much effort into keeping the kitchen clean. Much of the time they do not follow safe work practices. Employees who were hired in the past month received no training about how to do their jobs or about hazards in the kitchen.

In the last month you’ve noticed that spills of oil and other liquids are frequently not mopped up, protective equipment (e.g., gloves, oven mittens, eye protection) is not available when you need it, and boxes and crates are often left out where people walk. Further, all cleaning chemicals are improperly labeled.

Your coworkers and shift managers rarely communicate about potential hazards in the kitchen. For example, they usually do not let you know when liquid or food is spilled on the floor, or when they’re walking behind you carrying a hot tray.

In the past month, you slipped and fell on a greasy spot on the kitchen floor. In a separate
incident you cut your finger on a knife that had been left in a sink of dirty pots. The cut required first aid attention.

Several people have been hurt in the last month. Recently, someone slipped on grease on the floor, fell backwards and hit their head on a fryer. This person needed stitches at the hospital. The most common injuries, which occur often, are burns and cuts to fingers and arms, and bruises from contact with equipment. Most of these injuries required first aid attention. People sometimes slip on wet floors and someone fell while trying to get around crates at the back of the kitchen.

With this job you’re getting the hours you want – not too many and not too few hours. And you’re satisfied with your hourly wage and the discount that you get on restaurant food.

You do not owe money to anyone and are not saving money for any purpose. You use the money from this job for recreation and leisure (e.g., going out with friends, shopping).

Vignette 8

Low quality safety conditions, no injuries, and low financial reasons for working

Please try to imagine yourself in this situation...

You’re one month into a new job at a restaurant. You work in the restaurant’s kitchen. In the past month, you’ve noticed that your coworkers and shift managers do not put much effort into keeping the kitchen clean. Much of the time they do not follow safe work practices. Employees who were hired in the past month received no training about how to do their jobs or about hazards in the kitchen.

In the last month you’ve noticed that spills of oil and other liquids are frequently not mopped up, protective equipment (e.g., gloves, oven mittens, eye protection) is not available when you need it, and boxes and crates are often left out where people walk. Further, all cleaning chemicals are improperly labeled.

Your coworkers and shift managers rarely communicate about potential hazards in the kitchen. For example, they usually do not let you know when liquid or food is spilled on the floor, or when they’re walking behind you carrying a hot tray.

Several people have been hurt in the last month. Recently, someone slipped on grease on the floor, fell backwards and hit their head on a fryer. This person needed stitches at the hospital. The most common injuries, which occur often, are burns and cuts to fingers and arms, and bruises from contact with equipment. Most of these injuries required first aid attention. People sometimes slip on wet floors and someone fell while trying to get around crates at the back of the kitchen.

In the past month, you have not had any accidents, close calls, or injuries at this job.
With this job you’re getting the hours you want – not too many and not too few hours. And you’re satisfied with your hourly wage and the discount that you get on restaurant food.

You do not owe money to anyone and are not saving money for any purpose. You use the money from this job for recreation and leisure (e.g., going out with friends, shopping).