

Work, Stress, and Health Conference 2008

Turning Occupational Health Psychology Interests Into A Career

Chair: Christopher J. L. Cunningham, Ph.D., The University of Tennessee

Date: Friday, March 7th

Time: 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Location: Hampton Ballroom

Presenters: Carrie Bulger, Ph.D., Quinnipiac University, Laura Wheeler Poms, ABD, George Mason University, Russell Matthews, Ph.D., Louisiana State University, Sarah DeArmond, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Autumn D. Krauss, Ph.D., Kronos, Incorporated

Utilizing Occupational Health Psychology Interests and Education in Consulting Comments and Outline by Autumn D. Krauss

- Personal background
 - Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology with a Specialization in Occupational Health Psychology from Colorado State University
 - Peter Chen as advisor
 - Research interests at CSU were primarily occupational safety and the role of safety for blue-collar workers
 - *Dissertation Title: Examining the Direct and Interactive Effects of Safety Training Transfer Climate and Work Locus of Control on the Transfer of Safety Training*
 - *Thesis Title: Examination of the Motivational Component of Safety Performance: An Application of Expectancy Theory*
 - Also involved in three grant projects as PI, Co-PI, and Grant Coordinator
 - Safety training and safety campaigns across three US regions for construction workers
 - Predictors of workplace injuries for union workers
 - Occupational health predictors of turnover for certified nursing assistants in long-term care
- Current position
 - Senior Scientist at Kronos Incorporated, previously Unicru Incorporated
 - In the position for three years
 - Primary driver of my job offer was my prior experience conducting research focused on frontline healthcare workers
- Current job tasks and position responsibilities
 - Serve as an expert within healthcare by reading healthcare literature, conducting research projects in the healthcare industry, developing talent management tools for the healthcare industry, conducting educational seminars at healthcare conferences, and consulting with healthcare prospects and clients
 - Conduct competency modeling workshops with client subject matter experts
 - Develop, validate, and optimize selection assessments for use in the primary industries of healthcare, retail, and food service
 - Build other selection tools (e.g., behavioral interview guides) and associated training (e.g., behavioral interview training) for use in the industries listed above
 - Develop service offerings and tools for clients involving onboarding, training and development, employee engagement, and performance management
- Role of OHP in current position
 - Focus on population with high propensity of occupational health issues
 - Field-based hourly workers with limited education, technical skills, and work experience who have positions with significant physical and/or psychological demands
 - Common behavioral competencies identified as critical for position
 - *Managing stress* and *maintaining a safe work environment*
 - Use assessment to predict these competencies so learning about individual differences and item types that contribute to effective prediction of these types of behaviors
 - Situational judgment items

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- Educating clients as to the role of the organization and the work environment to also predict these types of behaviors
 - Research to evaluate the role of preferences and fit (i.e., person-organization, person-job) to predict job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee well-being for workers in these types of positions
 - Work environment characteristics can be assessed at the time of job analysis and competency modeling
 - Applicant preferences can be assessed at the time of application
 - Education to the client base, prospects, and industry in general
 - Topics broader than personnel selection to focus on the role of the organization to build a strong healthy organizational culture and staff engaged employees
 - White papers, trade conference presentations, webinars
 - Safety assessment as standard product offering
 - Ongoing research into its effectiveness in predicting safety incidents
 - Research project to define what onboarding looks like for the hourly worker and what onboarding activities impact employee engagement and retention for hourly workers
 - New potential opportunities resulting from the Kronos acquisition
 - New populations
 - Manufacturing
 - New products and services beyond selection
 - Time and attendance
 - Scheduling
 - Example of Kristin Charles and dissertation related to shiftwork
 - Potential for trainings offered to staffing coordinators on the psychological aspects of scheduling and their impact on employee health and well-being
 - Service to OHP organizations and collaboration with OHP researchers
 - OHP committees
 - Provision of data and collection of additional data points for OHP researchers
- General sources of synergy between consulting and OHP *under the assumption that the consulting position is not specifically focused on OHP areas*
 - External consulting
 - Regardless of the primary role (e.g., selection assessment, training, performance management, organizational development) it is the responsibility of the consultant to educate clients as to the role of occupational health psychology in any relevant client projects and build processes and tools that account for this role
 - When managing stress was identified as a key competency for healthcare managers, the selection assessment was designed to predict this competency; the competency is also being used as the basis for performance management and training and development programs for healthcare managers
 - Internal consulting
 - Regardless of the primary role (e.g., selection assessment, training, performance management, organizational development) it is the responsibility of the consultant to utilize a systems perspective when working within this primary function by incorporating occupational health learnings into the development of any tools or processes
 - A retention program developed internally at a healthcare organization cannot solely be focused on selection, onboarding, and compensations; it must take into consideration the occupational health issues that may be the impetus of an employee leaving not only the organization but also the industry