OVERVIEW OF THE
# HEALTH AND WELL-BEING COMMITTEE PROGRAM

What is a participatory workplace well-being program?

- Provides opportunities for workers to bring up concerns and ideas about their workplace.

- Focuses on change in working conditions (e.g., job demands, psychosocial conditions, physical working conditions) to support worker well-being

- Involves employees from across the organization, both frontline workers and managers, in structured processes for joint problem-solving.

Why focus on working conditions?

If you:

- Increase worker control over their work
- Rein in excessive job demands
- Improve social relationships at work
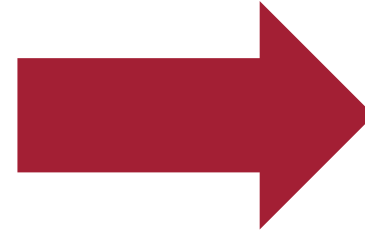
→ Improve Worker Well-being

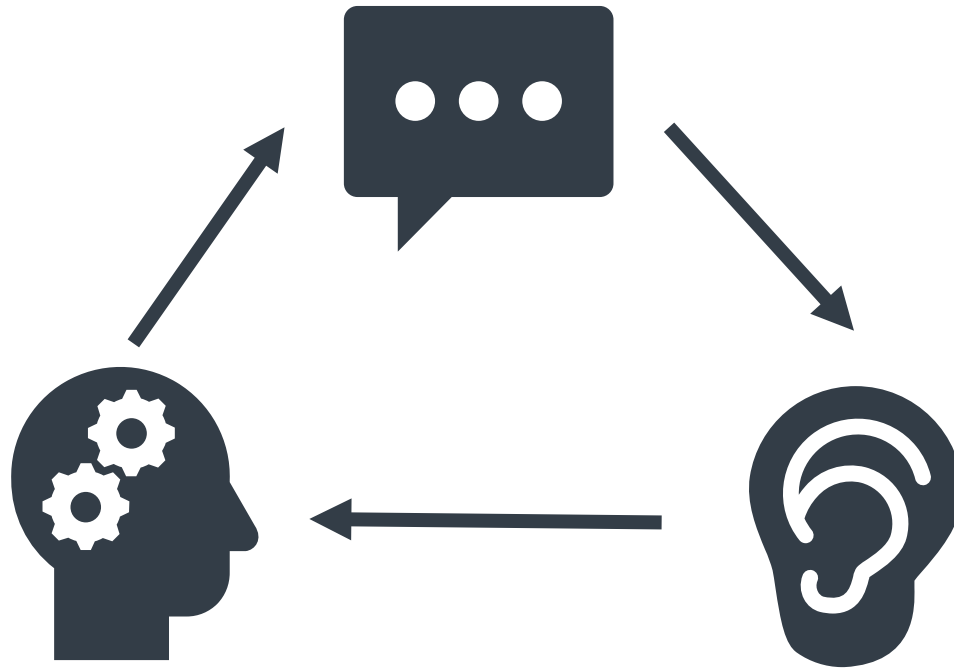# Improving working conditions also benefits the organization

- Enhancing worker well-being improves worker productivity, reduces absenteeism, and reduces turnover, all of which are cost-saving

- Participatory workplace programs can identify inefficiencies and use worker expertise to problem solve

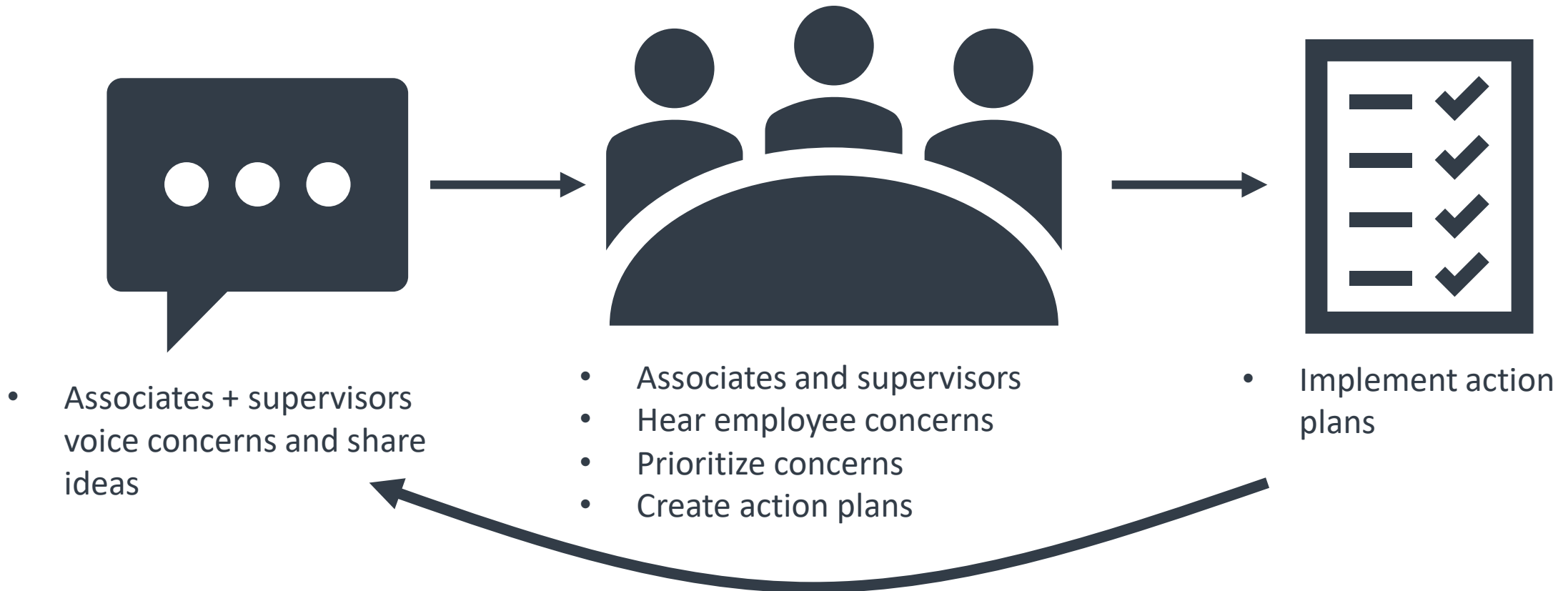# The Health and Well-being Committee (HaWC) Program

- Developed by researchers at MIT Sloan School of Management and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

- Incorporates latest evidence on what makes a successful participatory workplace program

- Tested in the warehousing industry using a randomized controlled-trial
  - 8 warehouses tested the HaWC and 8 warehouses continued operations as usual over 12 months

Overall Goal

Implement new processes to promote open communication and joint problem-solving and support a culture of health, well-being, and engagement inside the organization

Health and Well-being Committee (HaWC)

- Associates + supervisors voice concerns and share ideas

- Associates and supervisors
- Hear employee concerns
- Prioritize concerns
- Create action plans

- Implement action plans

A new channel for associate empowerment & shared leadership

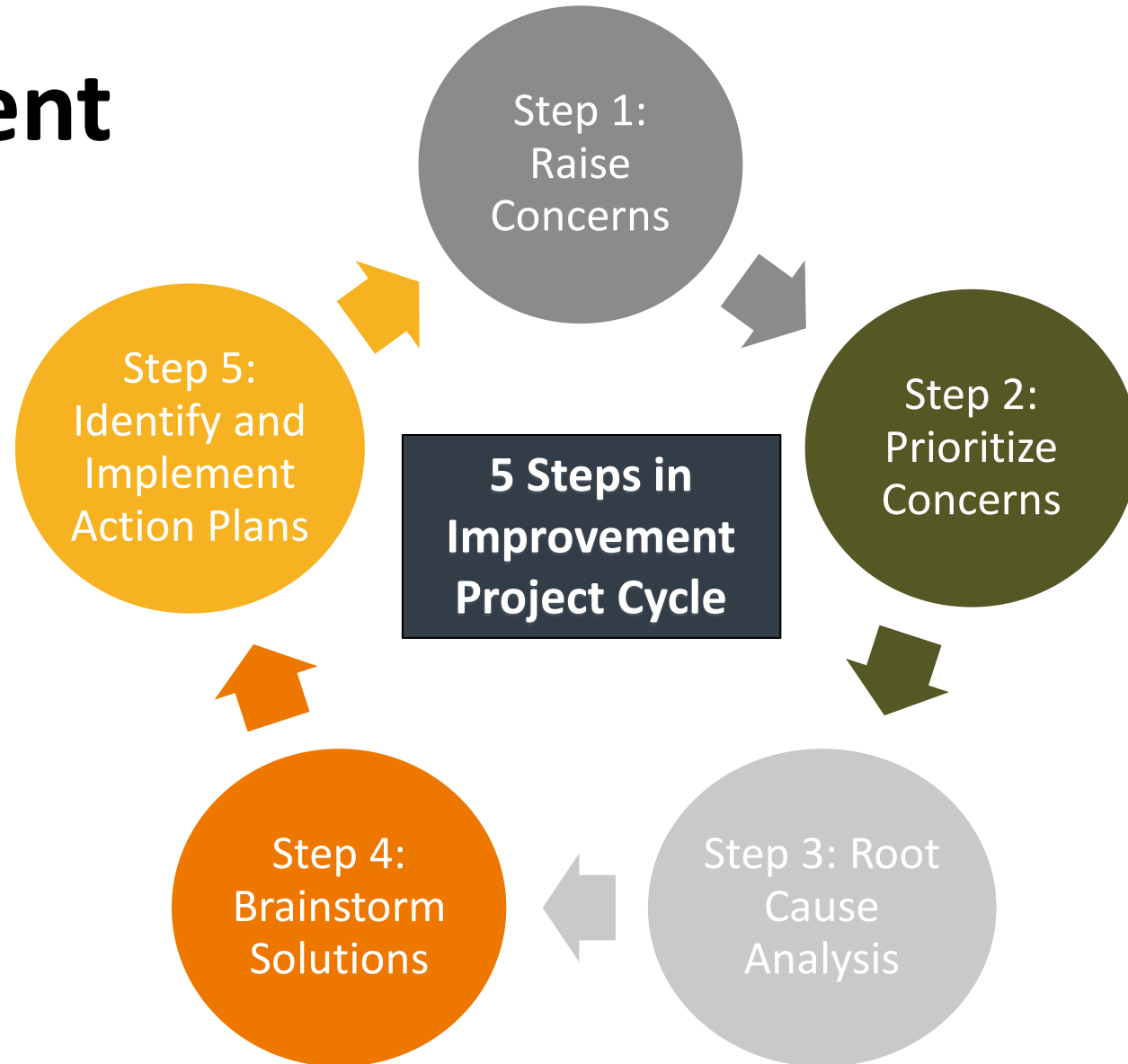# Health and Well-being Committee (HaWC)

Core Elements

- Shared HaWC leadership with one frontline worker co-lead and one supervisor co-lead

- Committee membership is primarily frontline workers

- Regular HaWC meetings, with a minimum of 2 per month

- The Improvement Project Cycle as a guide for HaWC meetings

- Distributed responsibility for action project implementation across co-leads and HaWC

Understanding the HaWC Scope

Scope of Health and Well-being Committee	
Category	**Definition**
Psychosocial Environment	How people feel about coming to work (i.e., treated well, respected, acknowledgement of personal life)
Work Organization	How the work gets done & could be improved (i.e., opportunities to learn, workflow, have enough say about how the work gets done, scheduling
Physical Environment	Safety hazards & other concerns about the physical environment
Grey Zone Topics: Hours, wages, changes in corporate policies – can advise management of concerns and suggest possible solutions	
Note: It is also important to adapt the scope based on whether the workplace is a unionized setting and involve union representatives in topics that fall under the collective bargaining agreement.	

Out of scope: Specific personnel issues

The Improvement Project Cycle

Step 1: Raise Concerns

Step 2: Prioritize Concerns

5 Steps in Improvement Project Cycle

Step 3: Root Cause Analysis

Step 4: Brainstorm Solutions

Step 5: Identify and Implement Action Plans

Examples of HaWC Projects and Successes

Improving work flow

- Supplementing equipment
- Addressing conveyor jams, breakdowns (with better work flow/cooperation)

Improving cleanliness

- Hiring new porter for restrooms
- Reminding associates to clean aisles daily

Mitigating stressful work conditions

- Fixing fans to reduce overheating in summer
- Adding 15 min break for OT shifts

More/improved training

- Improving existing supervisor training program and internal promotions

Making work more enjoyable

- Organizing holiday party
- Creating new music playlist

Other health and safety

- Adding smoke shack away from building to avoid pollution at front entrance

The HaWC as an investment

Estimated labor hours/month (ADAPT AS NEEDED FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION)		
Role	Activity	Total Hrs/Month
Coleads: 2	HaWC meetings (1 hr. 2x/mo.)	4
	HaWC meeting prep (30 min/mtg)	2
	HaWC tasks (30 min/week)	2
HaWC Members: 10-12*	HaWC meetings (1 hr. 2x/mo.)	20-24
	HaWC tasks (20 min/week)	14-16
	TOTAL	42-48 hours/month
*may be smaller for different organizations		

Effectiveness of the HaWC Program

- Improved worker mental health in the first 6 months of the program

- Reduced turnover in HaWC warehouses by 20% over 12 months
  - Turnover reduction equivalent to reducing labor costs by 1.5%

"Certain people were very skeptical [of the HaWC], and now… they're a believer. That transformation took less than 6 months. That person has been here a long time, probably 15 or 20 years, and felt that nothing ever changes, but now is empowered by HaWC" *– HaWC Co-Lead*

"[The HaWC] got people feeling like they were participating more in some decisions they weren't involved in before. In the past the only audience they had was their supervisor. Getting their team manager and people outside building to participate with them gave them more 'oof in their step.' Things that they came up with were things we were already looking to implement." - *Warehouse Manager*

"The HaWC allows the associate to voice their concerns. It gives them the power to make changes and see changes made. With corporate, an employee goes 'I see this issue,' corporate tells them 'stay in your lane.' With the HaWC it's 'let's see what we can do to fix it.'" *-HaWC Member*