

CAN ADDRESSING PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS HELP PREVENT BOTH MUSCULOSKELETAL (MSDS) & MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS (MHDS)?

Bronwen Otto, FACP



PRESENTATION STRUCTURE

- **PREVALENCE OF MSDS AND MHDS**
- **CURRENT EVIDENCE ABOUT DEVELOPMENT OF THESE DISORDERS**
- **EVIDENCE TO PRACTICE GAP**
- **WHAT'S NEEDED?**
- **OVERVIEW OF STUDY**
- **HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED**



PRESENTATION SCOPE

Musculoskeletal conditions still account for the vast majority (87%) of workers' compensation claims for serious injuries. While their frequency has declined from 4.7 claims per million hours worked since 2007-08, to 3.4 claims per million hours worked in 2019-20, the reduction rate has slowed in recent years.

Meanwhile, **psychological injuries** are rising in number and severity. National data showed a 28% increase in workers' compensation claims for mental health conditions between 2007-08 and 2019-20. In addition, time off work in these cases is almost four times longer than for other injuries.

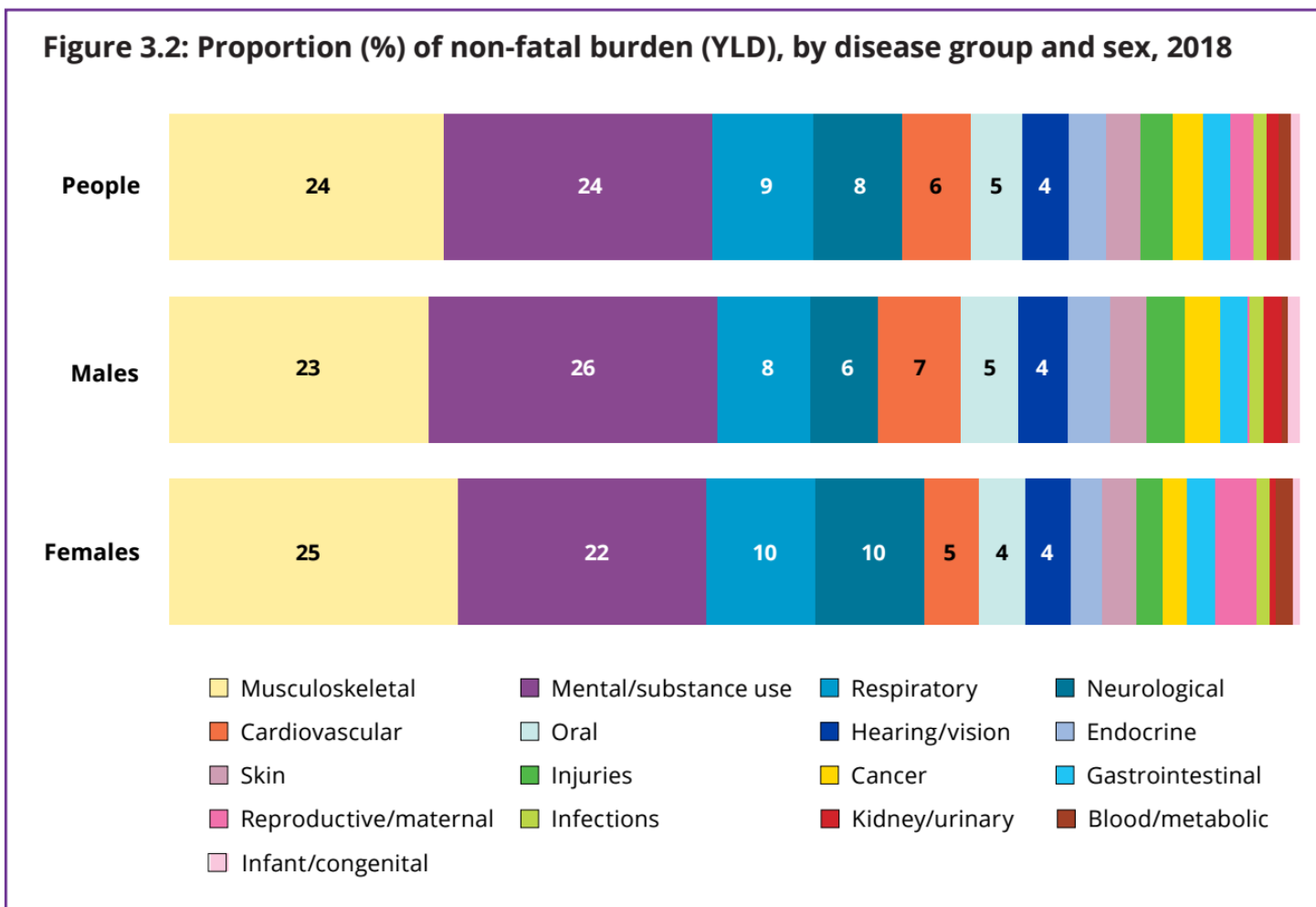
High priority must be given to the six industries in which workers face the highest rates of harm.

According to the latest data, 70% of fatalities and 58% of serious workers' compensation claims occur in just six industries:

- agriculture,
- construction,
- road transport,
- manufacturing,
- health care and social assistance, and
- public administration and safety.

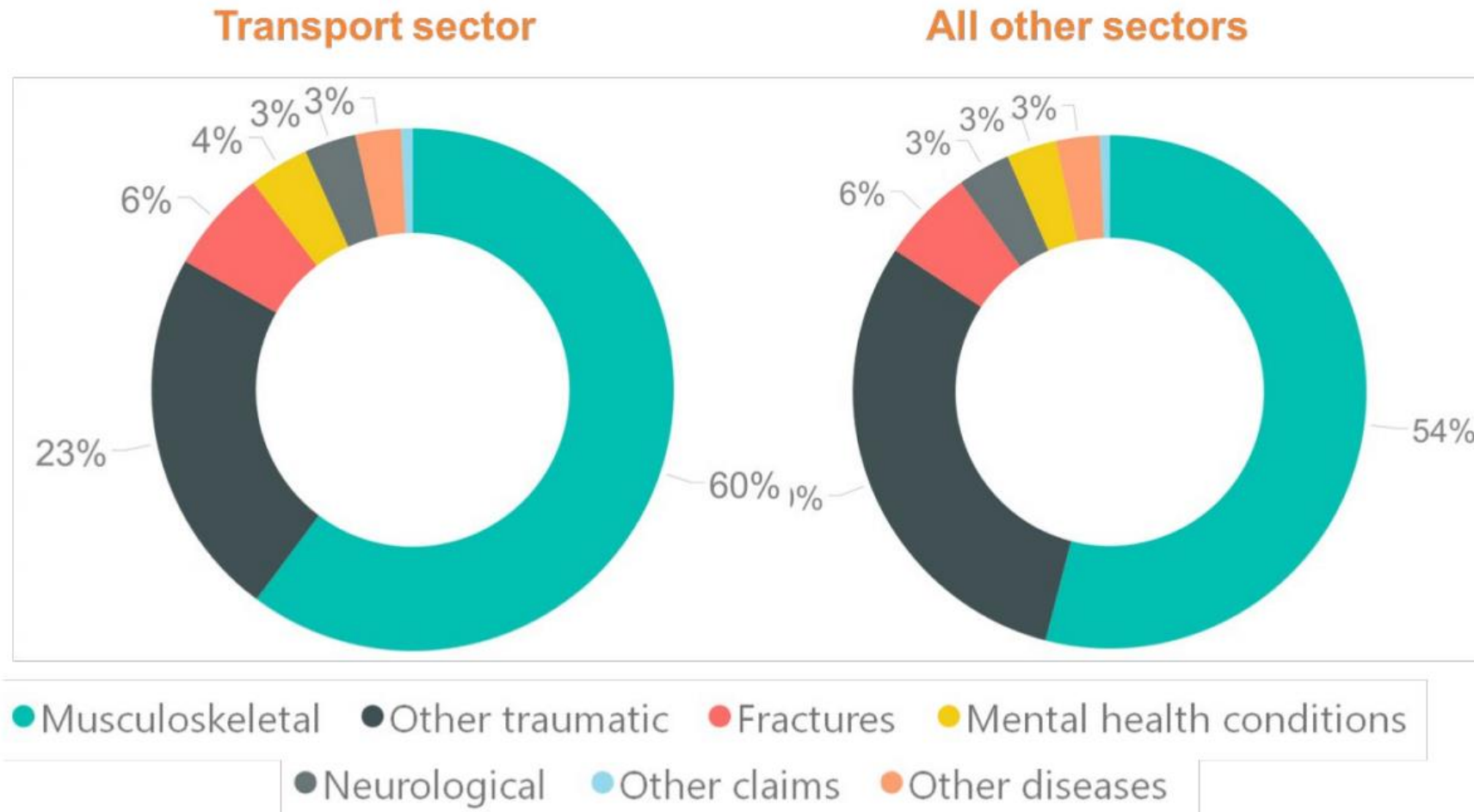
Safe Work Australia, 2023

PREVALENCE IN AUSTRALIA



Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2021

PREVALENCE IN AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT SECTOR



Xia, et al., 2018

Types of workplace hazards

Manual handling hazards (task specific)



La Trobe University

Psychosocial hazards

Organisational



- Working hours
- High workloads
- Poor job design
- Low levels of control
- Pace of work
- Conflicting work demands

Social context

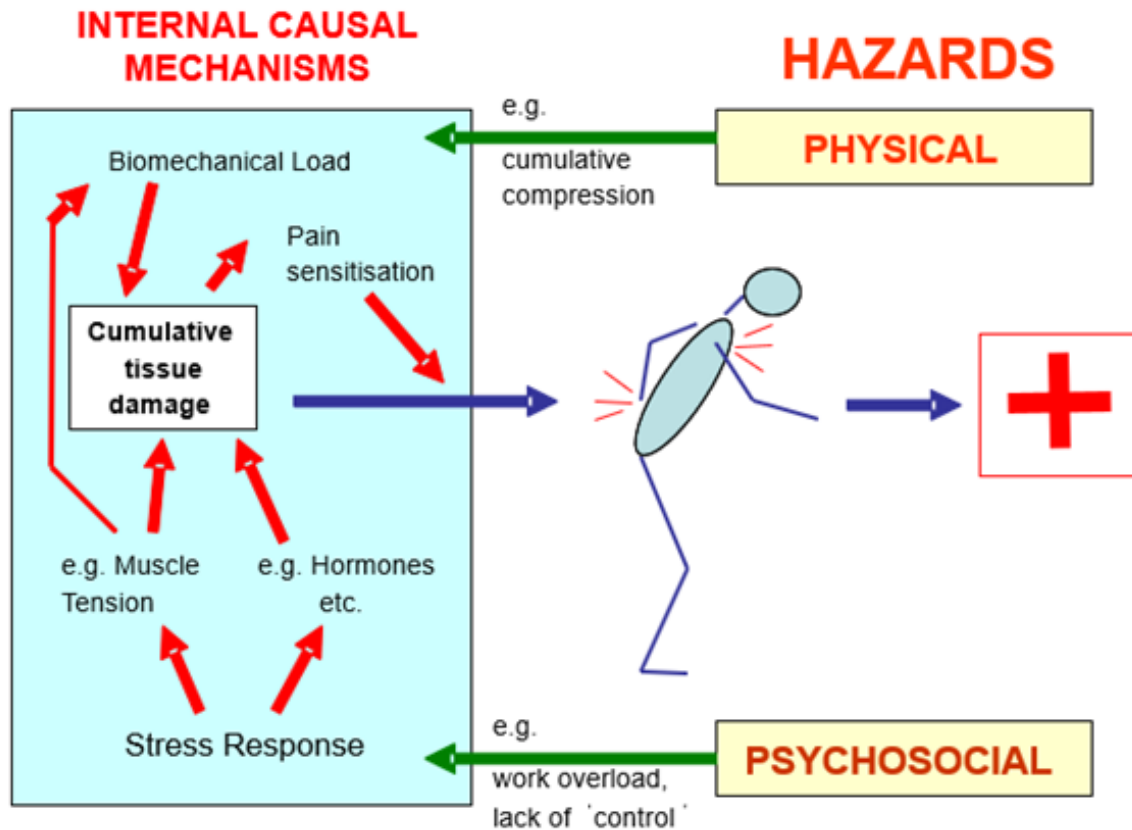


- Communication with management
- Being valued
- Health/safety culture
- Relationship with colleagues
- Relationship with supervisors

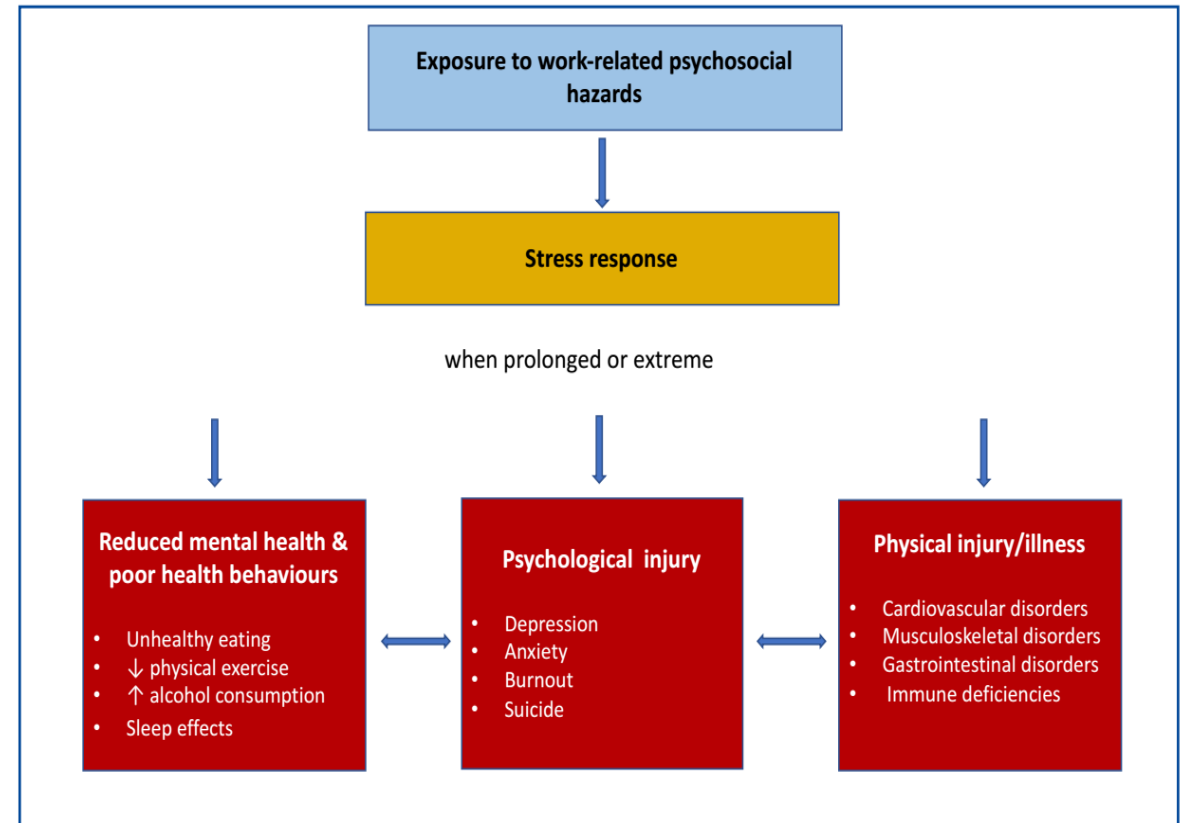
A Participative Hazard Identification and Risk Management (APHIRM) toolkit

<https://www.aphirm.org.au/>

EFFECTS OF EXPOSURE TO WORK-RELATED PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS



Macdonald & Evans, 2006



Way, 2020

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE PREVENTION OF MSDS & MHDS

- “Workplace risk management practices ... **largely fail to identify, assess and control risk from work-related psychosocial hazards**”
- “Most interviewees were **unaware that work-related psychosocial hazards affect MSD risk**”
- “Policies and practices addressing psychosocial factors **mainly addressed *personal* factors such as bullying, harassment and individual stress management**, rather than the work and organisational factors for which managers have clear responsibility”

Applied Ergonomics 75 (2019) 184–192



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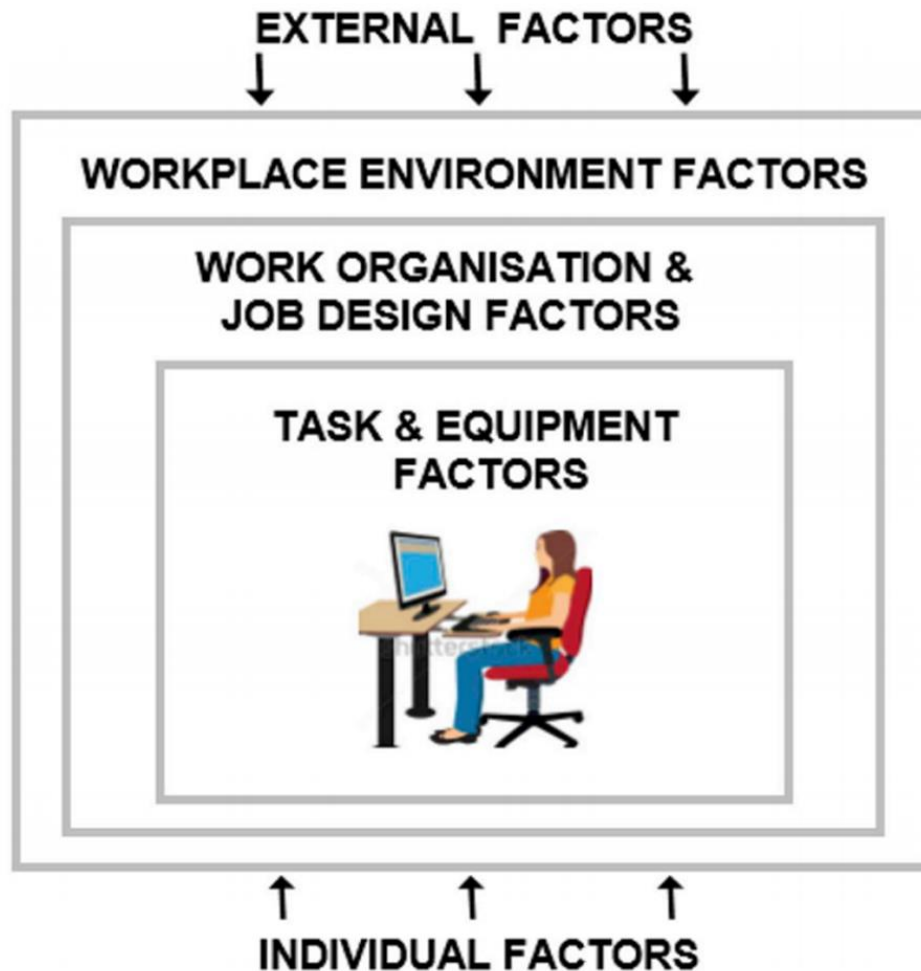
journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/apergo

Barriers to more effective prevention of work-related musculoskeletal and mental health disorders

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WHAT IS NEEDED TO REDUCE MSD & MHD PREVALENCE?



Government, Regulators, & External Influences



Organisation Governance & Administration



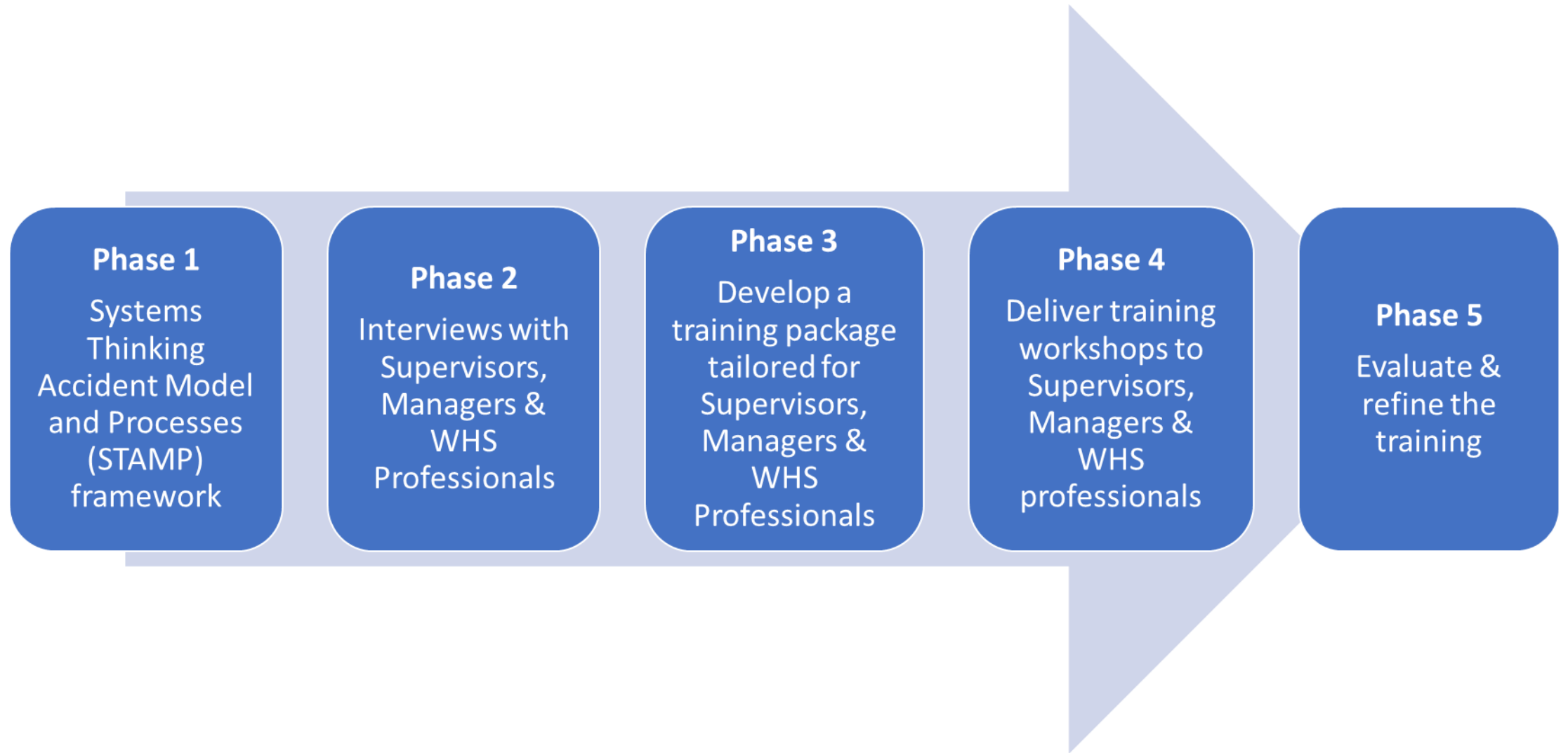
Operations Management



Frontline

Oakman, et al., 2019

STUDY OVERVIEW



HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN THE STUDY



SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE
TO REGISTER TO PARTICIPATE IN AN **INTERVIEW**



SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE
TO REGISTER TO PARTICIPATE IN A
FREE TRAINING WORKSHOP

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- **DR VICTORIA WEALE**

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INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT THE STUDY?

- **botto@latrobe.edu.au**

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