



**UMBRELLA<sup>®</sup>**

# Mental Wellbeing as a Risk Management Priority

Dr Dougal Sutherland | Clinical Psychologist

# Why is this important?

1

## Legal obligations

In NZ, organisations have a legal duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to care for the mental health and wellbeing of their people.

2

## Psychosocial risks overlap with physical risks

Many critical (physical) risks have a psychosocial component

3

## Good for business

Management of psychosocial risks leads to enhanced productivity and performance

# Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA)

- Organisations (as PCBUs) have a legal duty to ensure the health and safety of workers.
- This includes mental health as well as physical health.
- Organisations should focus on ensuring their workers aren't mentally harmed by the work they do.

TRANSPORT

## WorkSafe issues notice to Auckland rail company

WorkSafe has issued Auckland One Rail an improvement notice after finding the known psychosocial risk to workers of viewing, experiencing, or hearing about on-track collisions was not being managed effectively



by Emma Hatton 06/11/2023

Share

## Unpacking the Employment Court's \$1.8 million award for mental harm

Publications | 14 December 2023

## Leaders of 'toxic' Chch Hospital anaesthetic technician department no longer employed



Kristie Boland | January 27, 2024

## Former Noel Leeming employee to be paid \$50,000 after suffering burnout

Susan Edmunds

January 09, 2024, - 05:00am

Share

## Manager's 'culture of fear and intimidation' cited in report into man's death

Amy Ridout

January 09, 2024, - 05:06pm

Share

## Bullied Magnum Hire manager awarded \$137,000 for workplace abuse



By [Natalie Akoorie](#)

Open Justice multimedia journalist,  
Waikato

6 Mar, 2024 11:35 AM ⌚ 6 mins to read

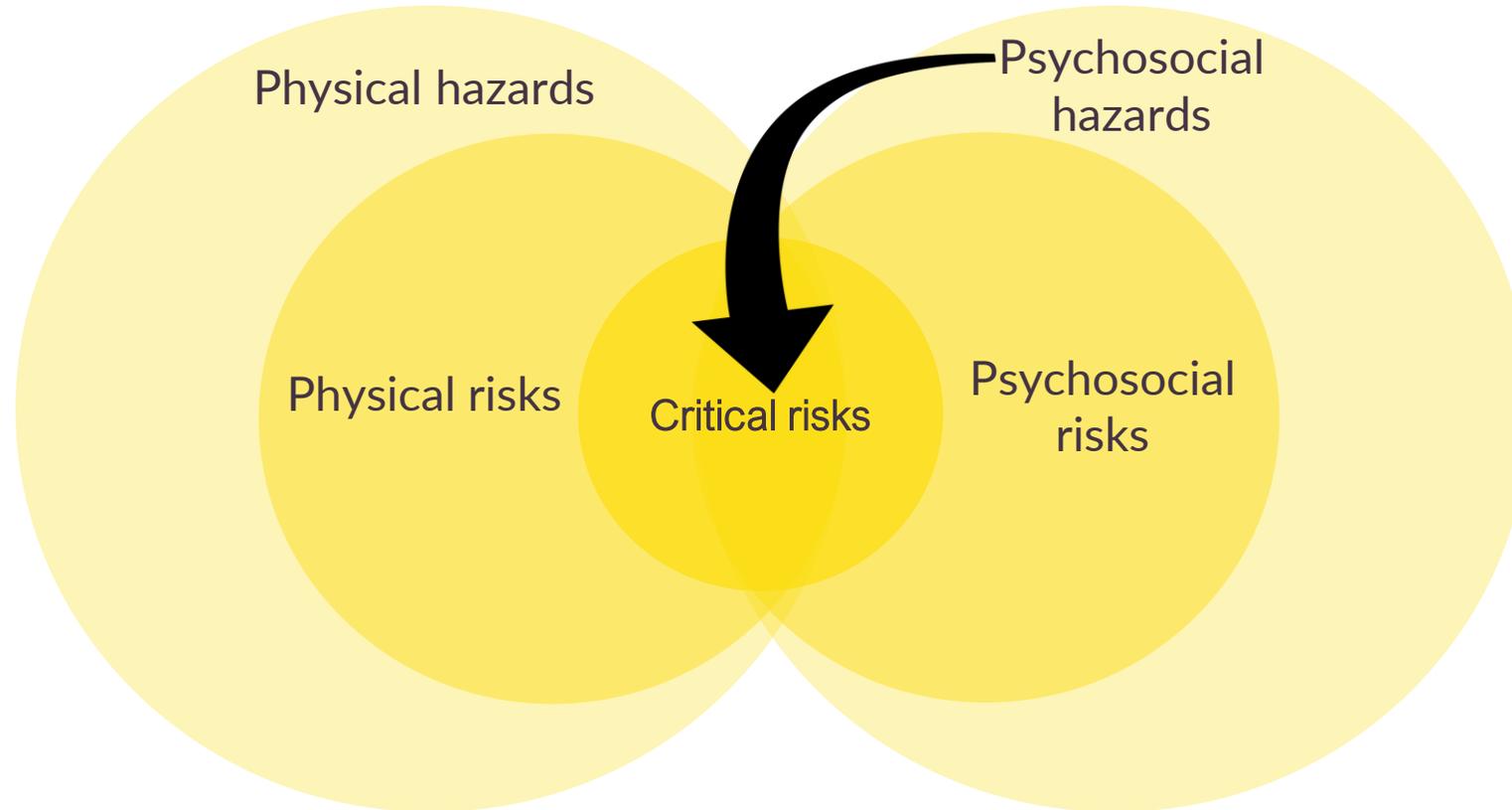
Save

Share

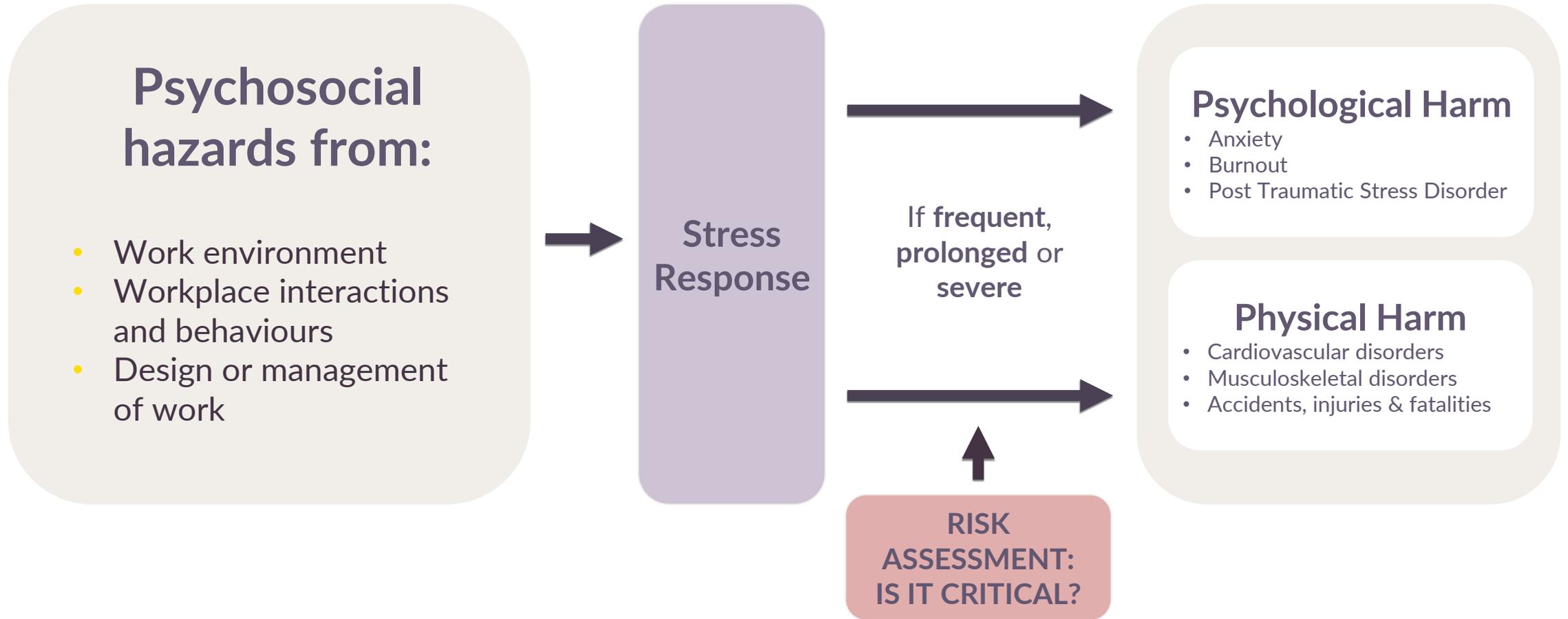
# Separate?



# Together?



# The Stress Pathway



**WORKSAFE**

Mahi Haumaru Aotearoa

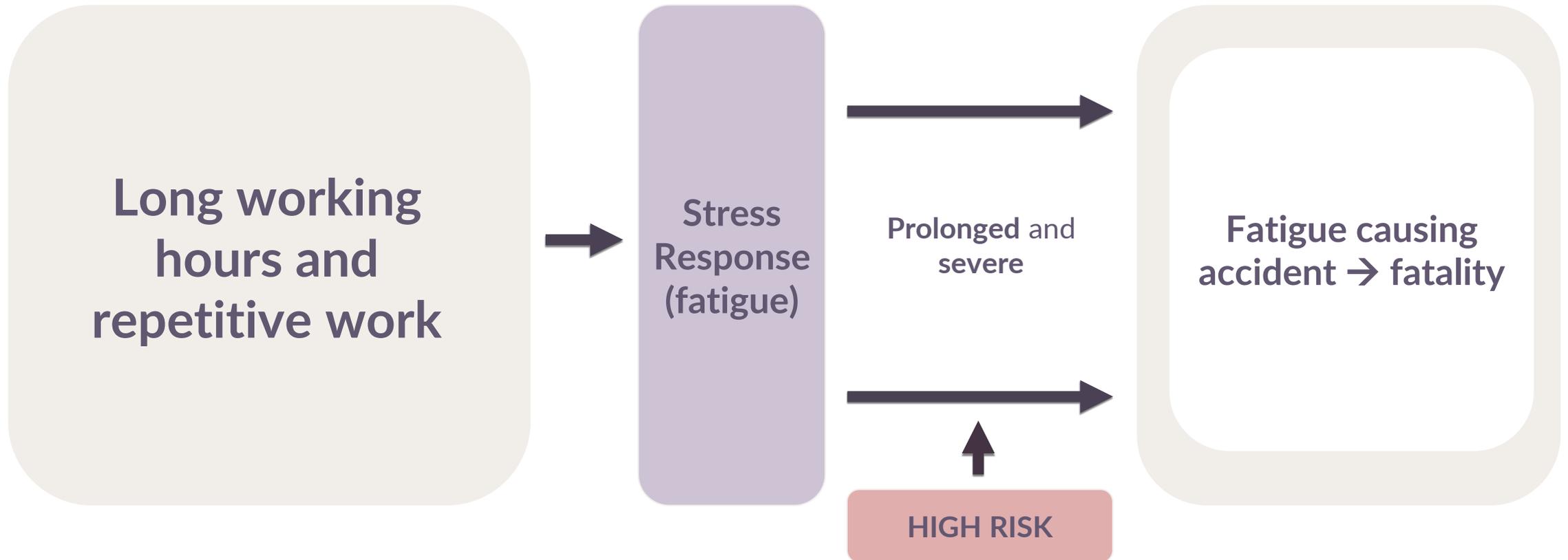
News and media

# **Tractor driver had worked almost 200 hours in the fortnight leading up to his death**

---

10 May 2018

# Stress pathway (long working hours)



# Psychological harm can create physical harm

## Culhana v State of New South Wales

Mr Stockwell was employed as a police officer by the State of New South Wales. In the course of his employment with the State, Mr Stockwell sustained a psychological injury as a result of struggling with recent jobs involving suicide. Liability to pay workers compensation for the psychological claim was accepted by the State.

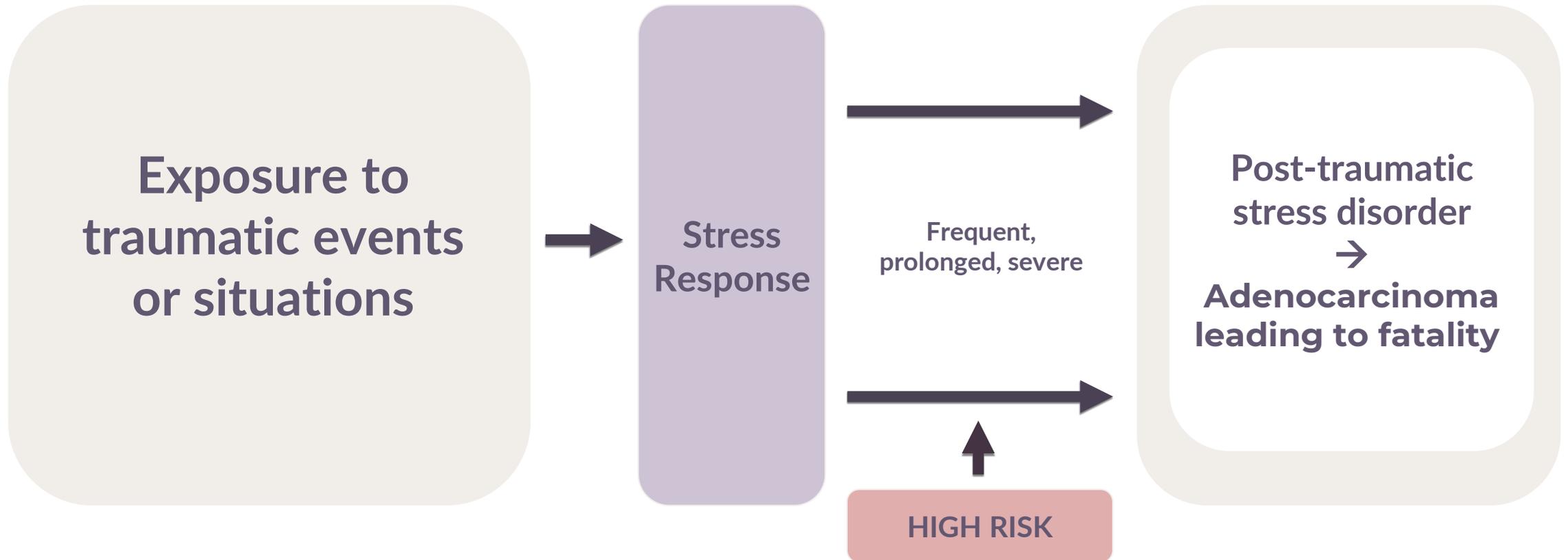
Two years later, Mr Stockwell was subsequently diagnosed with Barrett's oesophagus and adenocarcinoma. Liability to pay compensation for this injury was disputed. On 27 November 2022, Mr Stockwell died as a result of metastatic gastroesophageal functional carcinoma.

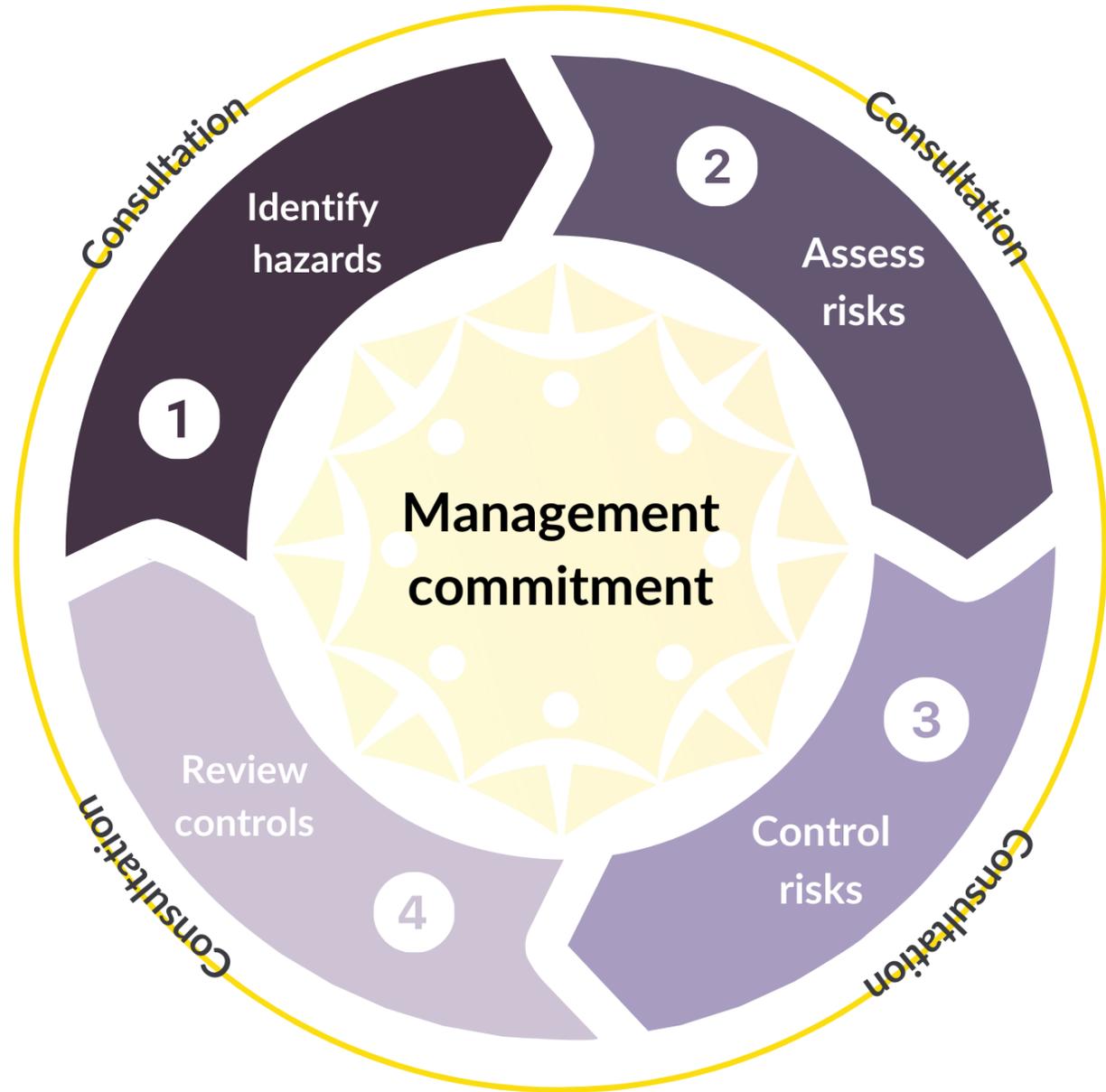
Evidence presented in court demonstrated that Mr. Stockwell's PTSD symptoms, exacerbated by his job stress, led to increased stomach acid secretion, causing gastroesophageal reflux disease (GORD) and eventually Barrett's oesophagus. His coping mechanisms included heavy alcohol and tobacco use, to relieve his symptoms of anxiety and PTSD, further aggravated these conditions.



JACKSON McDONALD  
MULTI-SECTOR LAW

# Culhana v State of New South Wales





**Psychosocial hazards** need to be identified, and risks assessed and controlled, too.



## Two crucial components:

1. Management Commitment
2. Consulting with Employees



# A quick detour ISO45003



**UMBRELLA**

Occupational health and safety management – Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks.

---

Global standard for workplace psychological health

Organises risk factors into 3 categories

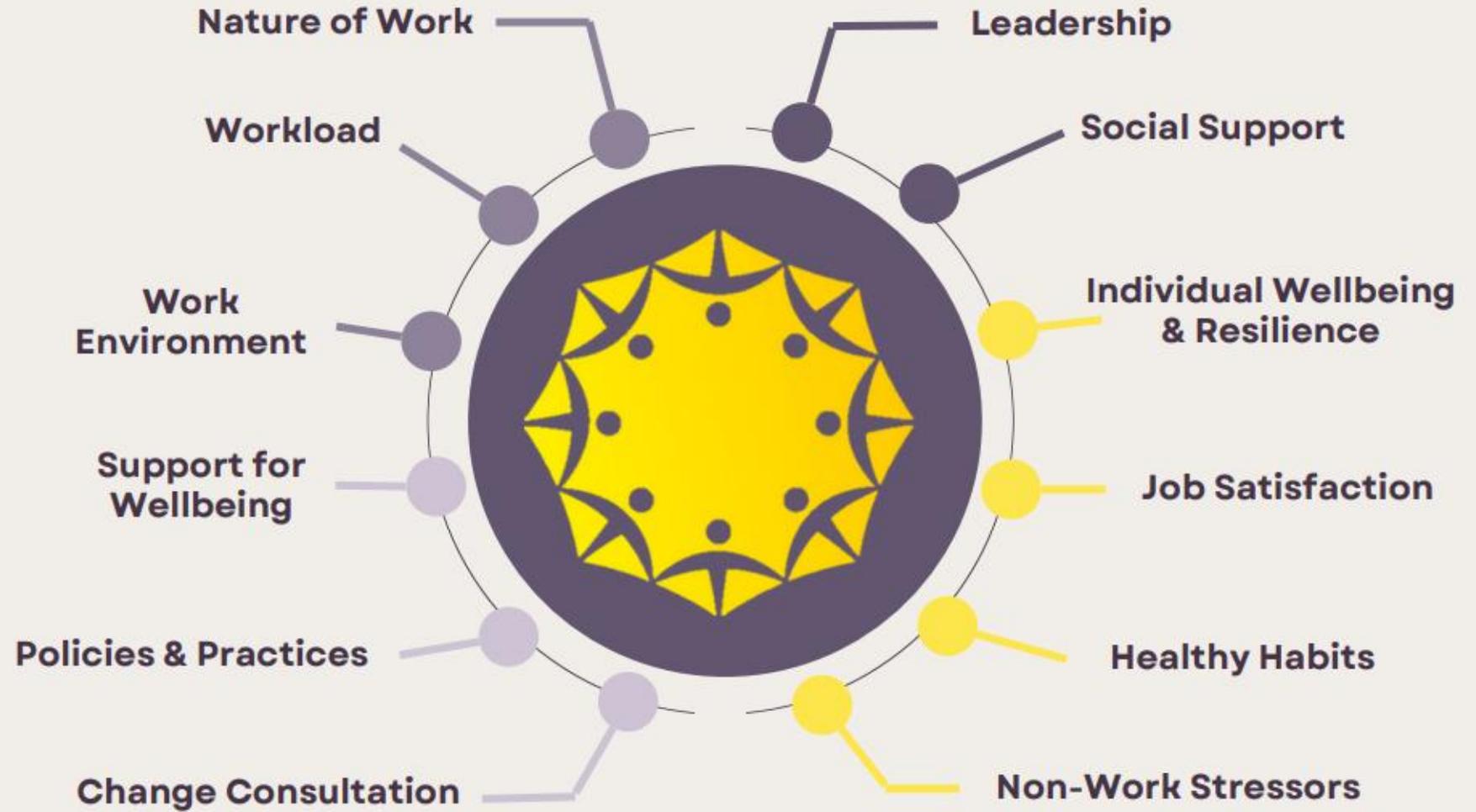
- Aspects of how work is organised
- Social factors at work
- Work environment and hazardous tasks

Individual factors are not included in the ISO45003 framework

# The Umbrella Framework



## Umbrella Psychosocial Risk Framework



# Examples of Psychosocial Hazards

Workplace bullying

Excessive workload

Poor management

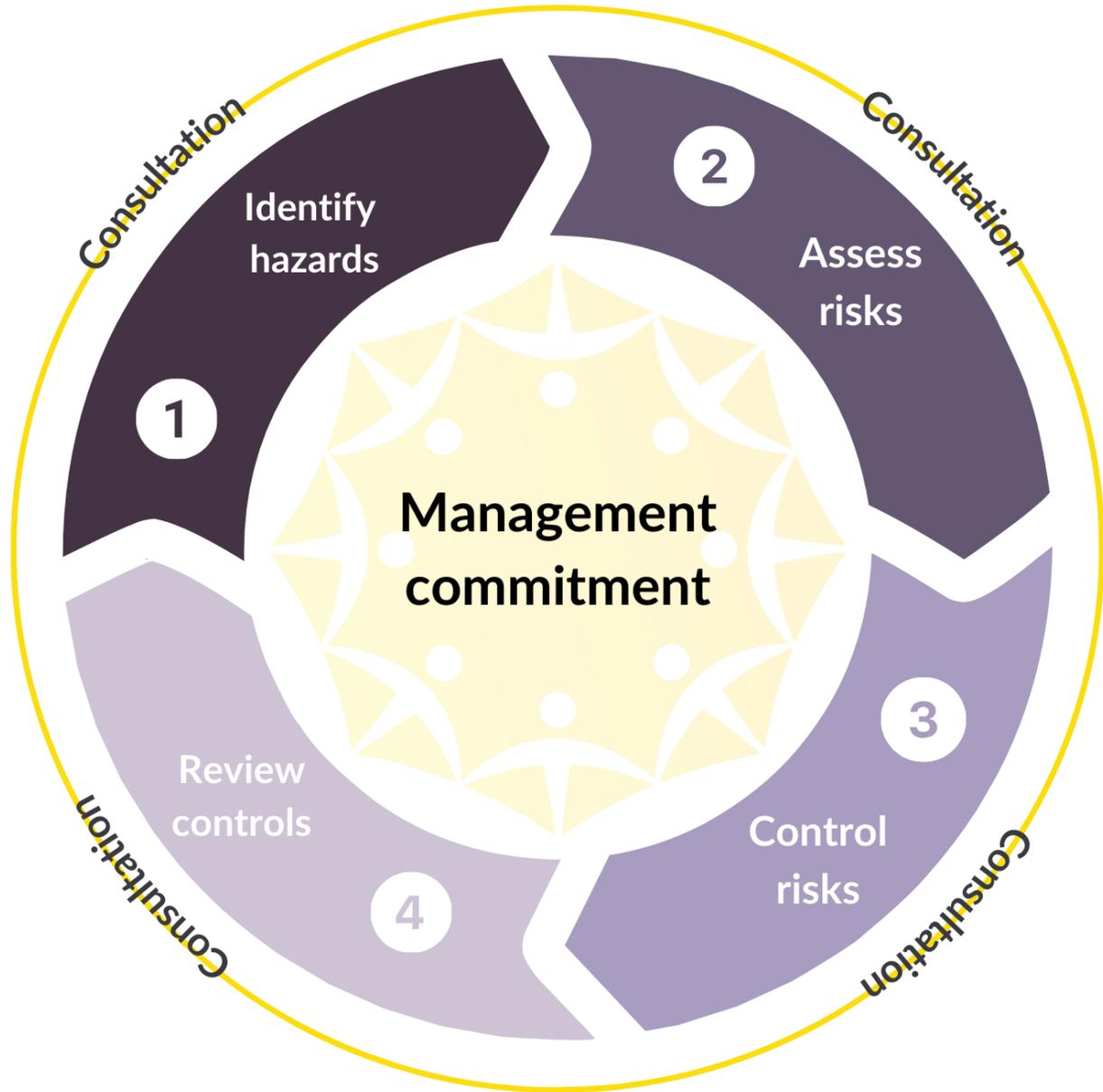
Job insecurity

Work-life balance

Discrimination

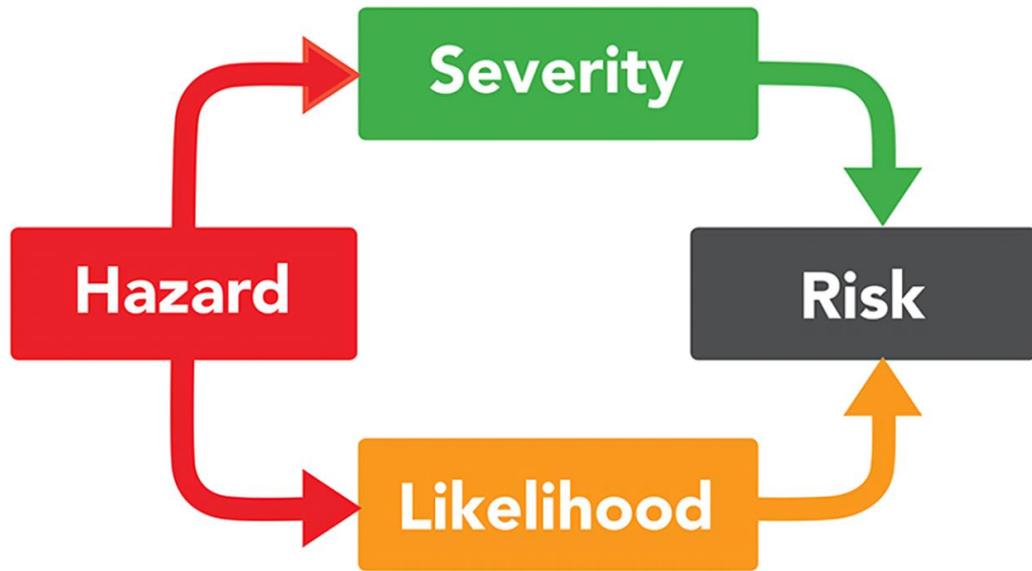
Cultural incompetence

- Violence and aggression
- Poor working conditions
- Lack of autonomy/control
- Social isolation
- Lack of recognition
- Organisational injustice
- Poor role clarity



Manage  
psychosocial risks  
just as you would  
physical risks

# Assess Psychosocial Risk



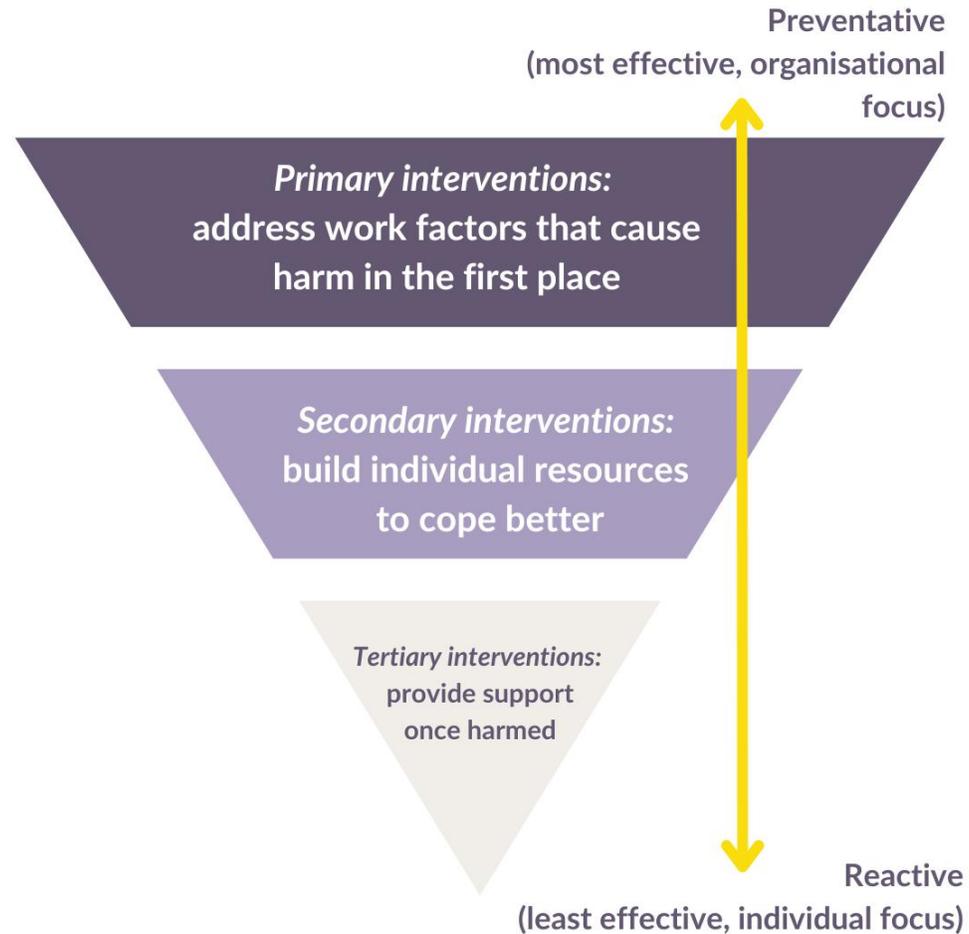
Likelihood  
(Frequency/Duration)

		Low	Med	High
Severity	Mild	1	2	3
	Mod	2	4	6
	Severe	3	6	9

# Implement controls to....

- Eliminate the hazard/s if possible
- Minimise the risk of harm if not possible to eliminate the hazard/s

# Proactive Prevention of Psychosocial Harm



Government H&S Lead Framework

# Example: Controlling for trauma exposure

- 1 Only involve essential workers in traumatic events/reviewing traumatic materials
- 2 Rotate workers through different tasks so that frequency of exposure is lower
- 3 Flag or password protect traumatic materials to stop accidental exposure
- 4 Increase breaks and recovery time if workers are exposed to traumatic events/materials
- 5 Increase support available to workers who are exposed to traumatic events/materials
- 6 Remove unnecessary exposure e.g., banning users after a serious breach



*“We've reported near misses and accidents and so on and when we do a lot of that's ignored - sometimes guys get punished, reduced number of shifts, and that's the culture of management, that's how they treat us.”*

Anonymous employee, 2021 RNZ interview



# Physical safety starts with psychological safety

- 1 A climate in which people are comfortable being (and expressing) themselves.
- 2 The belief that you won't be punished when you make a mistake.
- 3 To know that others will have your back.

Amy Edmondson  
Harvard University



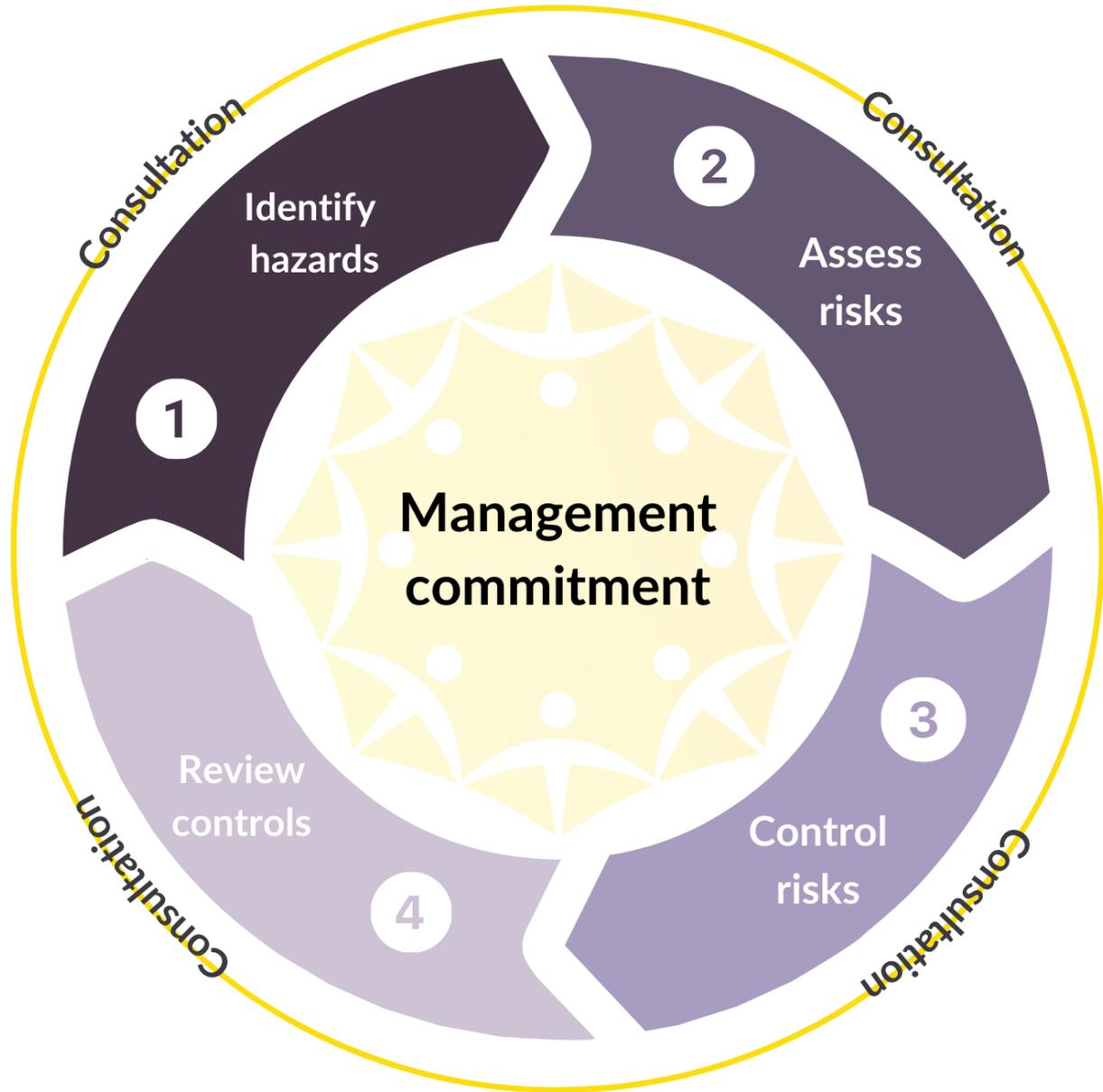
# Case study: Culture Change

“My experience is that we ask questions, but we don’t really listen to what is being said,” she says. “But when I say ‘listen’, it’s about empowering that voice as well, because the whole listen piece is about taking action when they do tell you something.”

“For the first six months, I was spat at, sworn at, screamed at [...] I apologised. I let them cry. I let them heal. Because no one had done that...”

But her first task was to build trust and respect. Rather than bringing in qualified health and safety people, she brought in great communicators who could sit in the lunchroom and chat with staff. She fronted the team, turning up every day at 7am, being visible, present and listening. That management visibility – other managers also joined her – was one of the biggest shifts [...]

It took 12 months to build the necessary trust and respect. A 2022 survey of [...] staff saw the safety and wellbeing score jump 16 points from 2020, to 74%.



Manage  
psychosocial risks  
just as you would  
physical risks

# Thank you

- Wellbeing and Psychosocial Risk Assessment & Strategy
- Mental Health and Leadership Training and eLearning
- Enhanced EAP



[www.umbrella.org.nz](http://www.umbrella.org.nz)



[office@umbrella.org.nz](mailto:office@umbrella.org.nz)



0800 643 000



Umbrella Wellbeing