



# Healthy Professional Worker Partnership

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NURSES' MENTAL HEALTH AND EXPERIENCES OF LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND A HEALTHY RETURN TO WORK



# Overview of webinar in three parts:

## Overview of Partnership

- Commissioned StatCan Analysis

## Ivy Bourgeault

- Partnership Director



## Pilot Study Findings

- Interviews, Surveys & Scoping Review

## Mélanie Lavoie-Tremblay

- Nursing Co-Lead



## Preliminary Findings

- Interviews & Updated Scoping Review

## Abby Ayoub

- Nursing Trainee





# Overview of HPW Partnership

IVY BOURGEAULT



# The HPW Partnership

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The Healthy Professional Worker Partnership is a CIHR and SSHRC funded initiative that examines the gendered nature of

- mental health,
- leaves of absence and
- return to work experiences

from a comparative perspective.





# It focuses on seven case study professions



Varies by setting:

- Health care
- Outside of health care

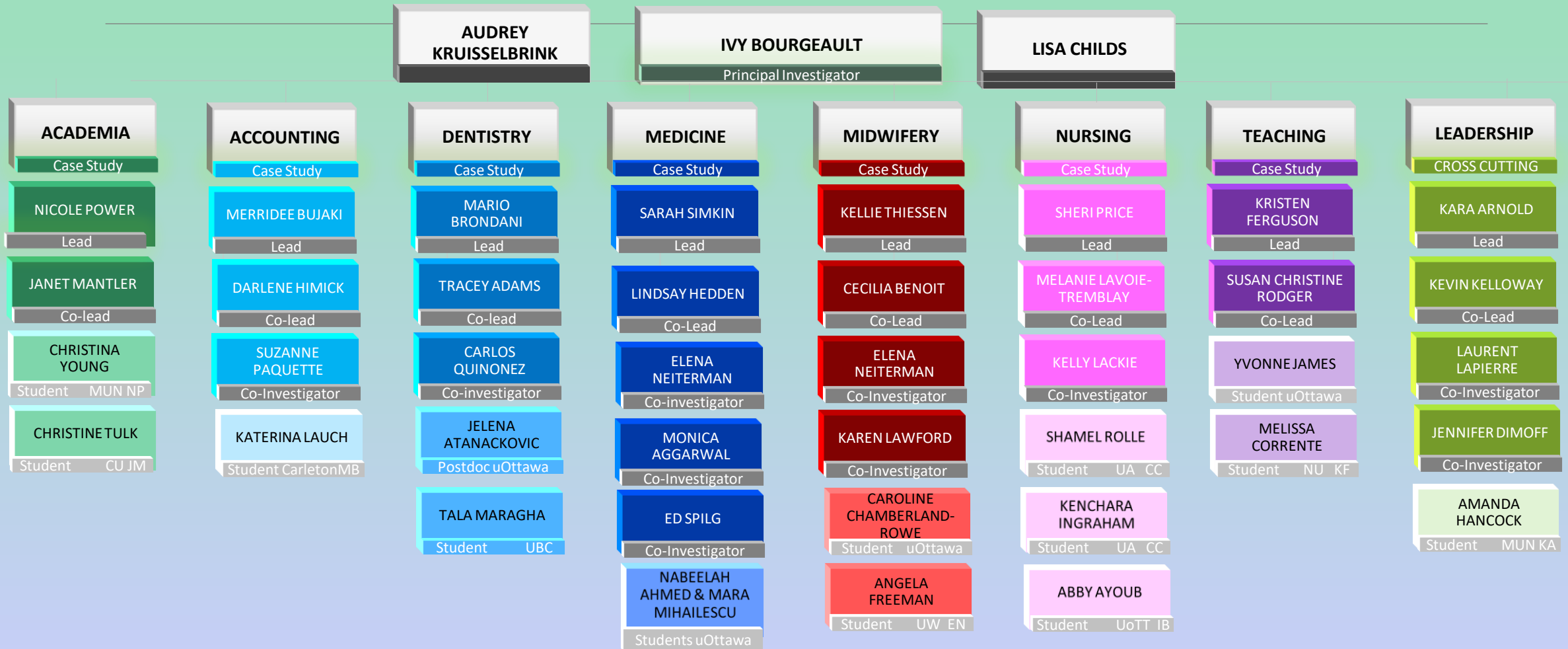
Varies by gender composition:

- Traditionally feminine
- Traditionally masculine

Leadership is a cross-cutting focus

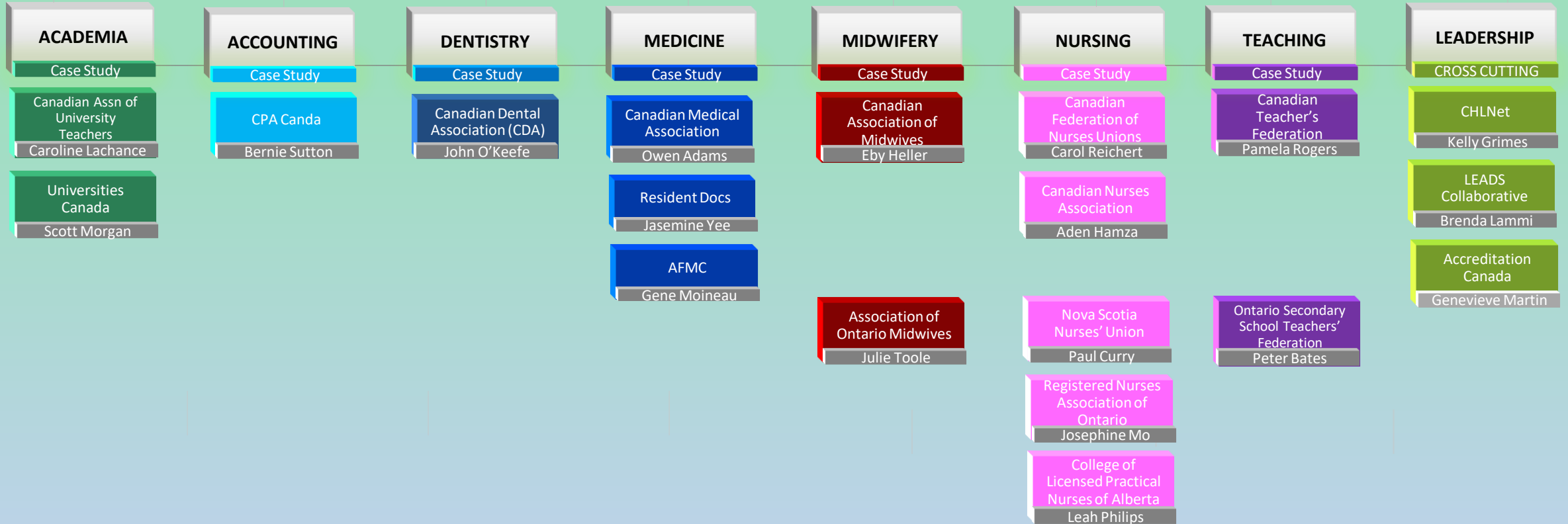


# It involves over 25 investigators & 15 trainees at 16 universities ...





# ...and over 30 Partner organizations



## CROSS-CUTTING



- Hannah Kohler
- Jungwee Park/Dafna Koken
- Lauren Lyseck/Nora Spinks
- Geoff Ballinger
- TBA
- Lindsay Williams

- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- Statistics Canada
- Vanier Institute of the Family
- Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI)
- HealthCareCan
- Health Canada



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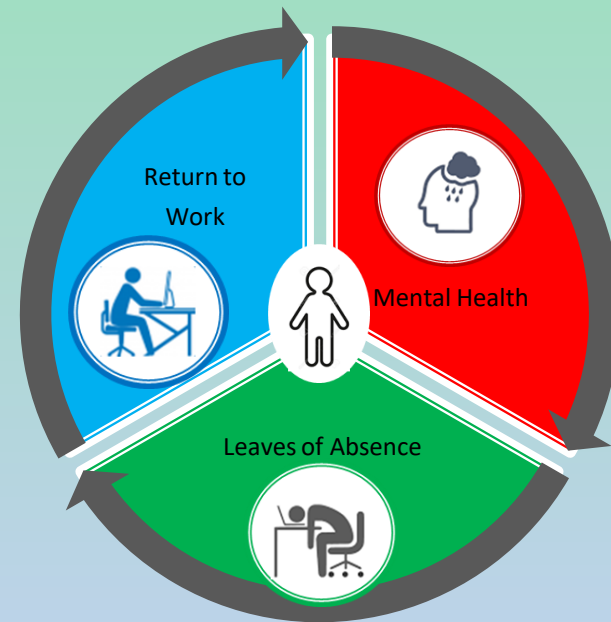
# Conceptual Framework & Research Objectives

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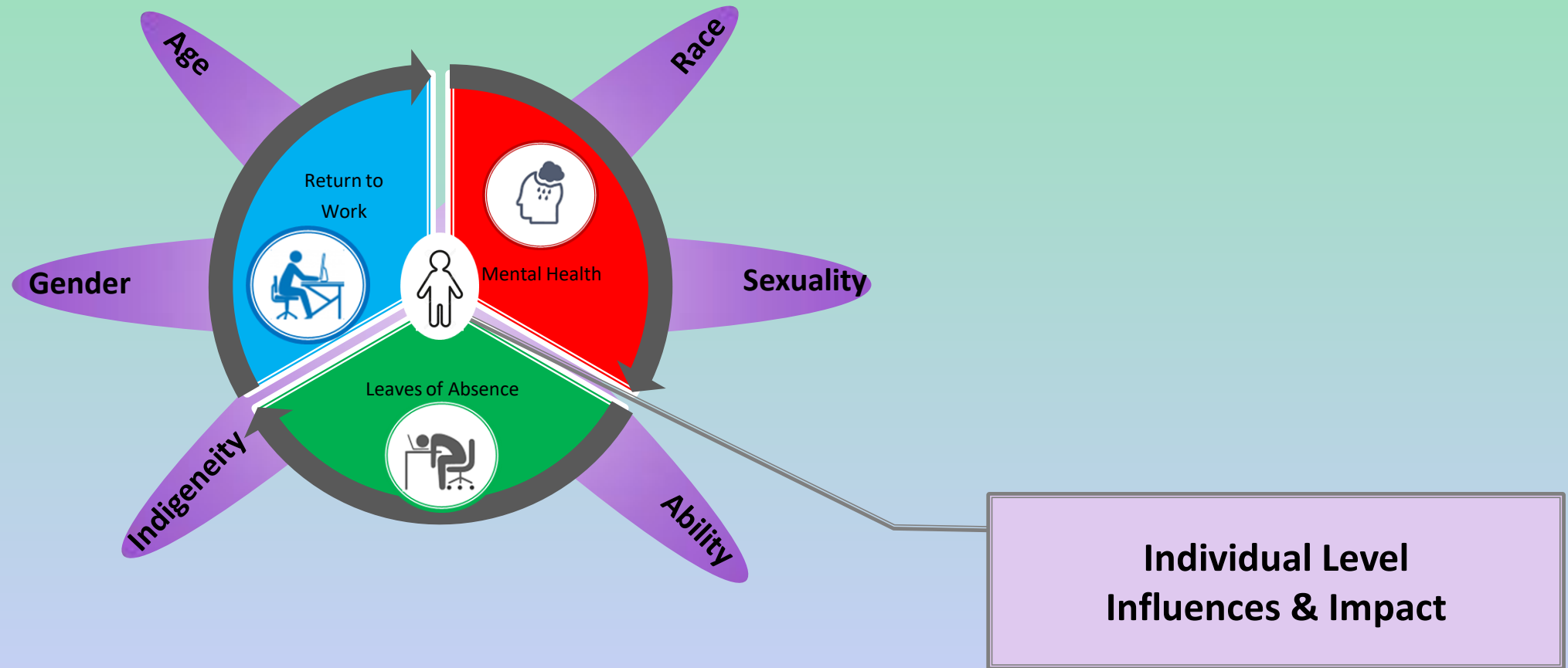


# An Intersectional, Contextualised Path Model of Mental Health, Leaves of Absence & Return to Work Experiences

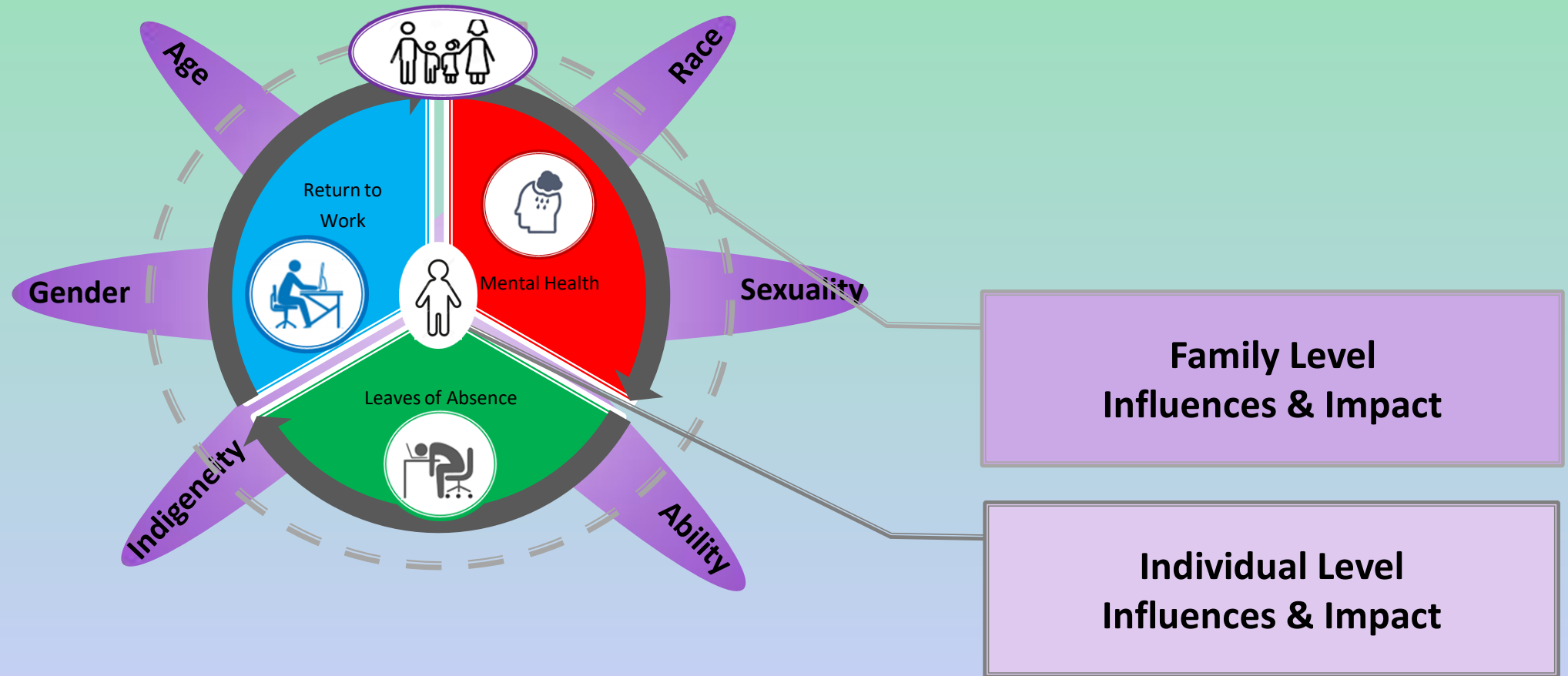
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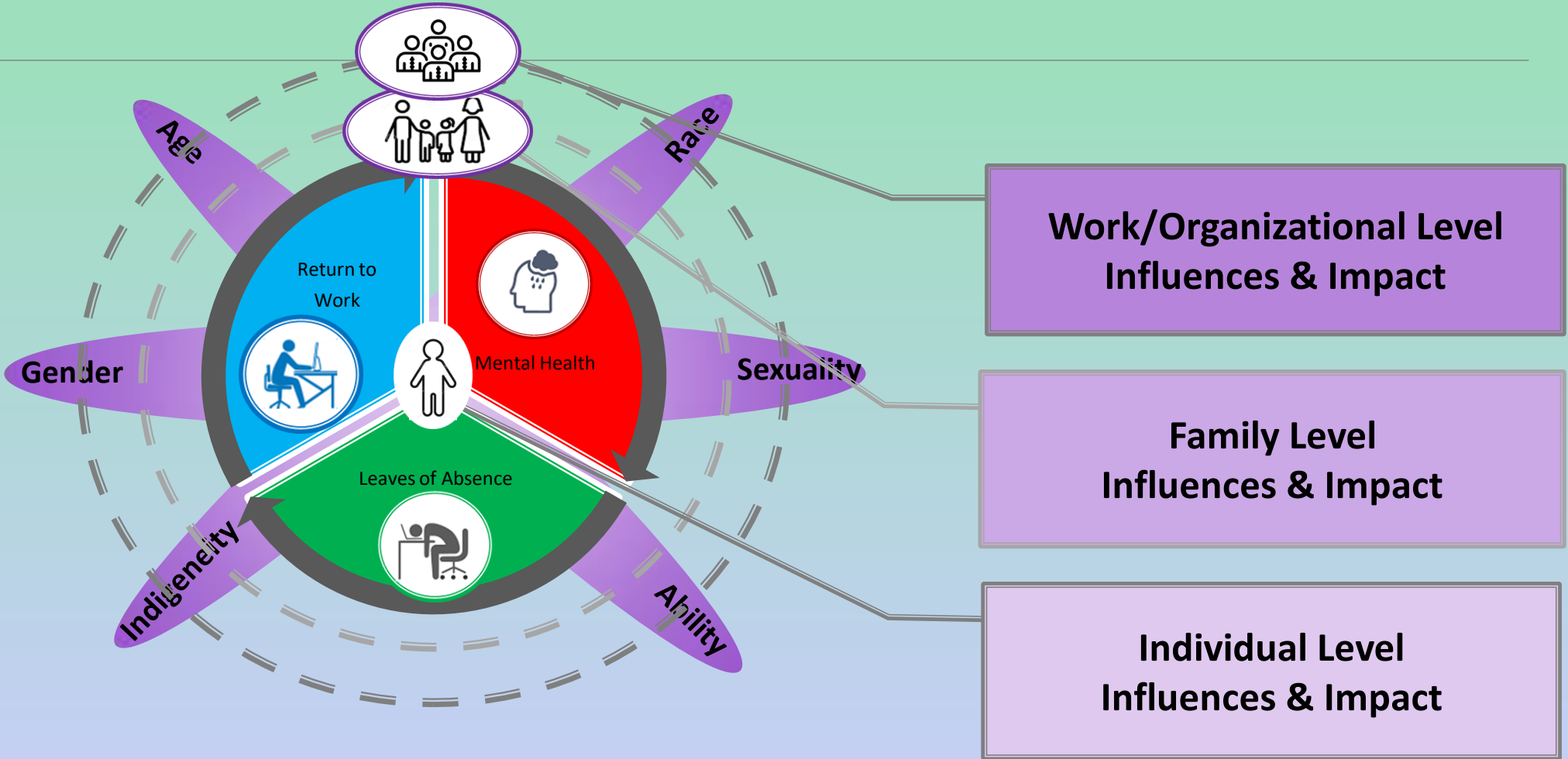
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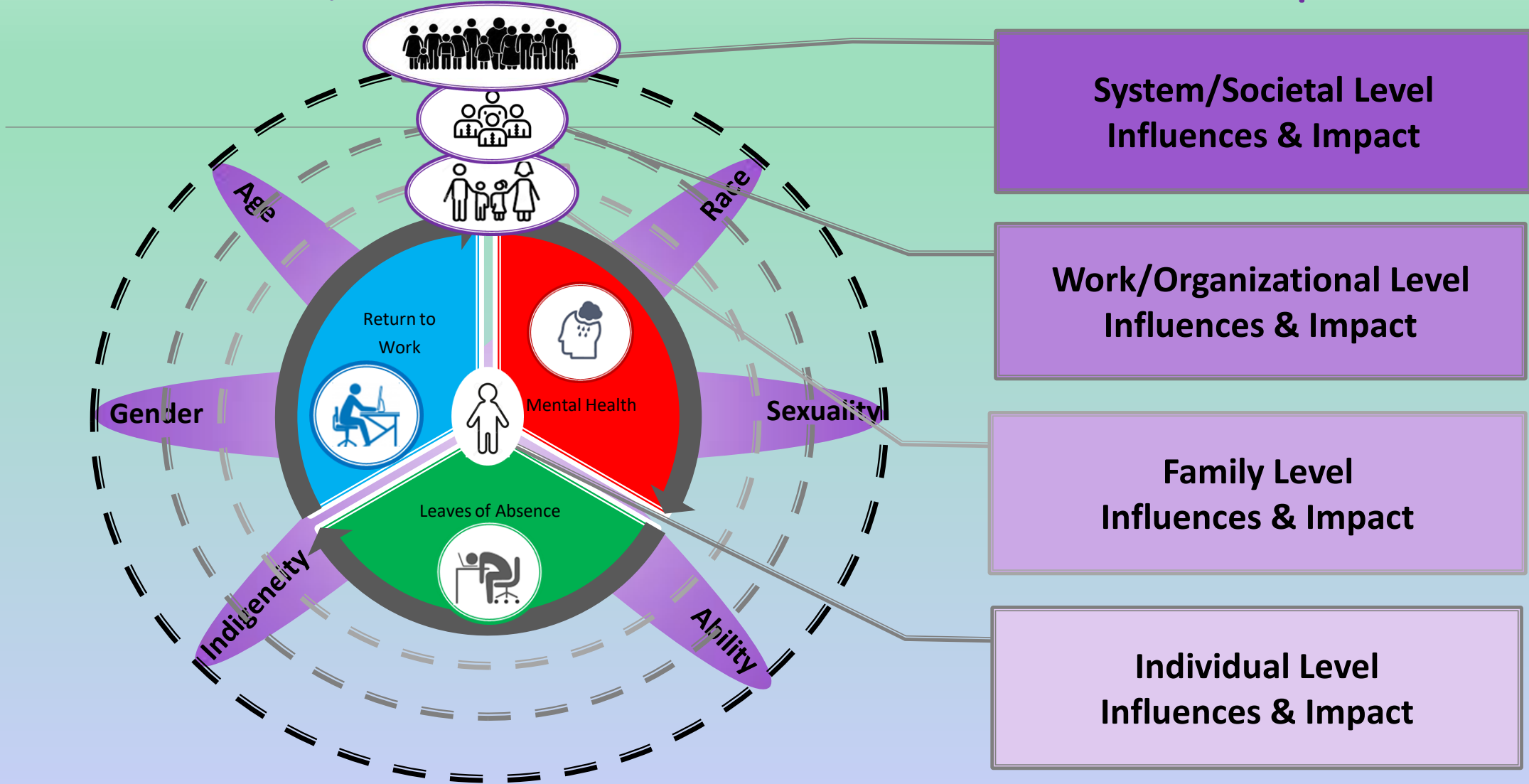
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# An Intersectional, Contextualised Path Model of Mental Health, Leaves of Absence & Return to Work Experiences



# An Intersectional, Contextualised Path Model of Mental Health, Leaves of Absence & Return to Work Experiences





# Research Objectives

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## MENTAL HEALTH [MH]

To understand the mental health experiences of professional workers.

- To understand how **personal**, **familial**, **work** and **organizational** factors impact the mental health of professional workers.

## LEAVES OF ABSENCE [LOA]

To identify the [**PFWO**] factors that influence workers' decisions to ***contemplate*** OR ***take*** a leave of absence from work.

- What are the **antecedents** to taking a leave.
- What are the ***barriers & facilitators*** to taking a leave.



# Research Questions & Objectives

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## RETURN TO WORK

To identify the [PFWO] factors that *facilitate* or create *barriers* to return to work.

To identify **interventions** at the [PFWO] level that facilitate healthy return to work.

## IMPACT

To understand the *impact* of mental health issues & leaves of absence on ...

- Professional workers
- their
  - Work
  - Clients, students & patients
  - Colleagues
  - Supervisors/managers
  - Organizations



# Research Questions & Objectives

## Gender Based Analysis

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Gender is a multi-dimensional concept:

- Gender Identify
- Gender Norms
- Gender Roles
- Gender Relations

1. How does gender influence these personal, familial and work-related mental health issues, the experience of **contemplating, negotiating** and **taking** a leave of absence and return to work?
2. What interventions can explicitly mediate these gendered experiences?





# Methodological Approach

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MULTI-PHASED, MULTI-METHODS



# Partnership Development → Partnership

## Partnership Development

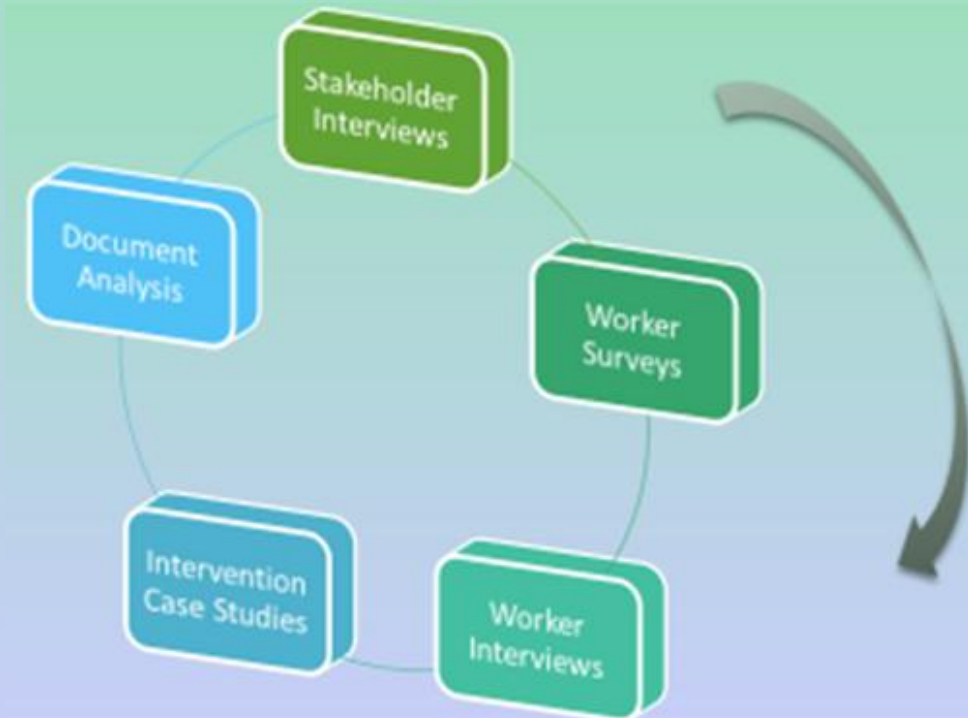
(2016-18 \$150,000)

- Scoping Review
- Worker Survey (n=) & Interviews (n=)
- Stakeholder Interviews (n=26)
- StatCan Analysis

## Partnership

(2018-23 \$1.425M)

- Stakeholder Interviews
- **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**
- Worker Survey & Interviews
  - StatCan Analyses
- Analysis of Interventions





# Partnership Development/ Pilot Study Findings

STATCAN ANALYSIS → MENTAL HEALTH

SCOPING REVIEW → RETURN TO WORK INTERVENTIONS

MÉLANIE LAVOIE-TREMBLAY



# Mental Health & Work - Nurses

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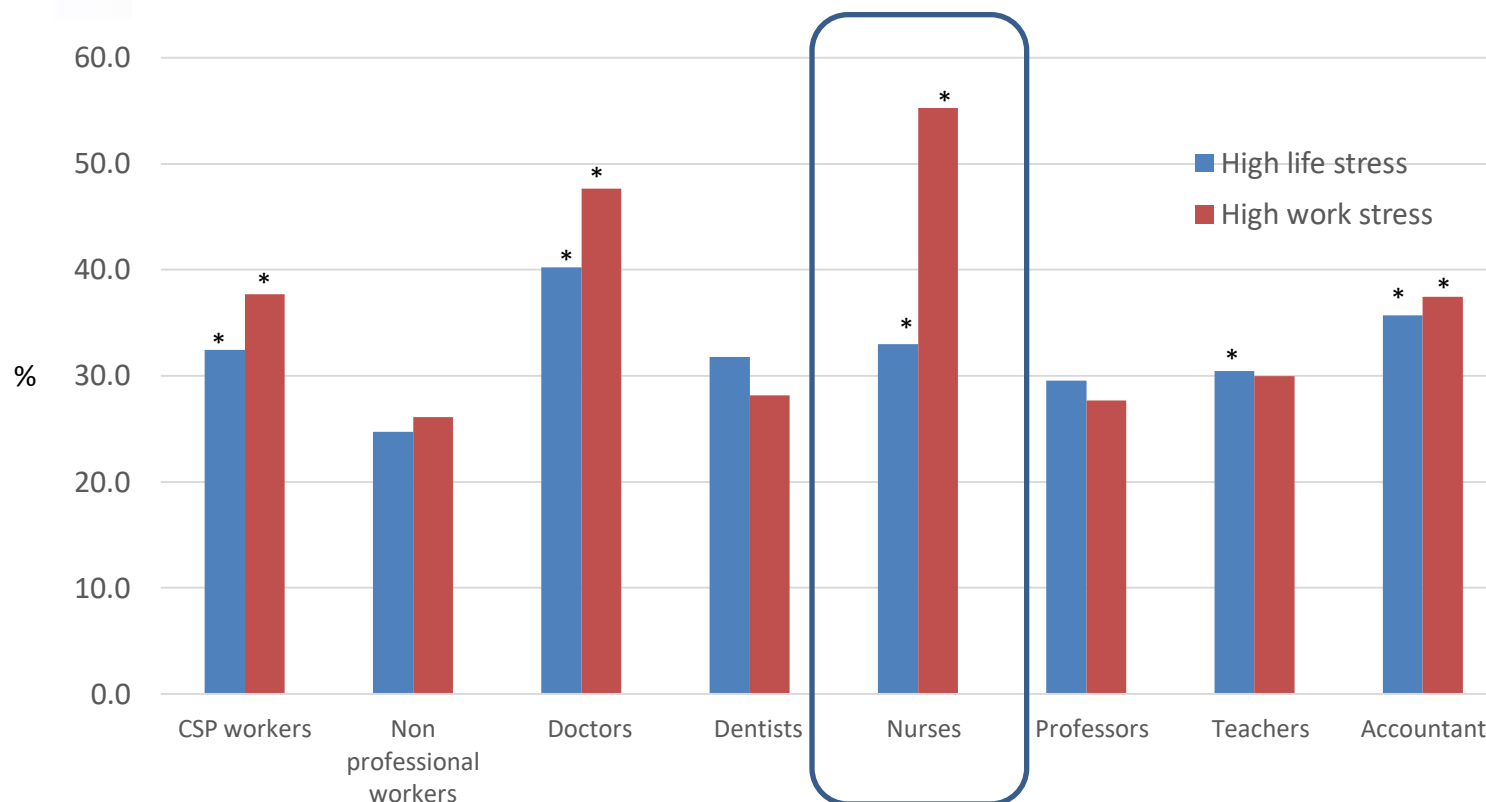
The HPW Partnership commissioned a comparative analysis of the Canadian Community Health Survey 2013/14, where the nursing case study stood out.

Under Review:

Bourgeault, I.L., Park, J., Kohen, D., Atanackovic, J., James, Y., Healthy Professional Workers: A Gendered Analysis of Mental Health, Work and Stress.



Case Study Professional workers reported high (quite a bit or extremely stressful) work and life stress compared to non-professional workers. **Nurses reported the highest work stress** while professors reported the lowest.



\*Significantly different from Non professional workers

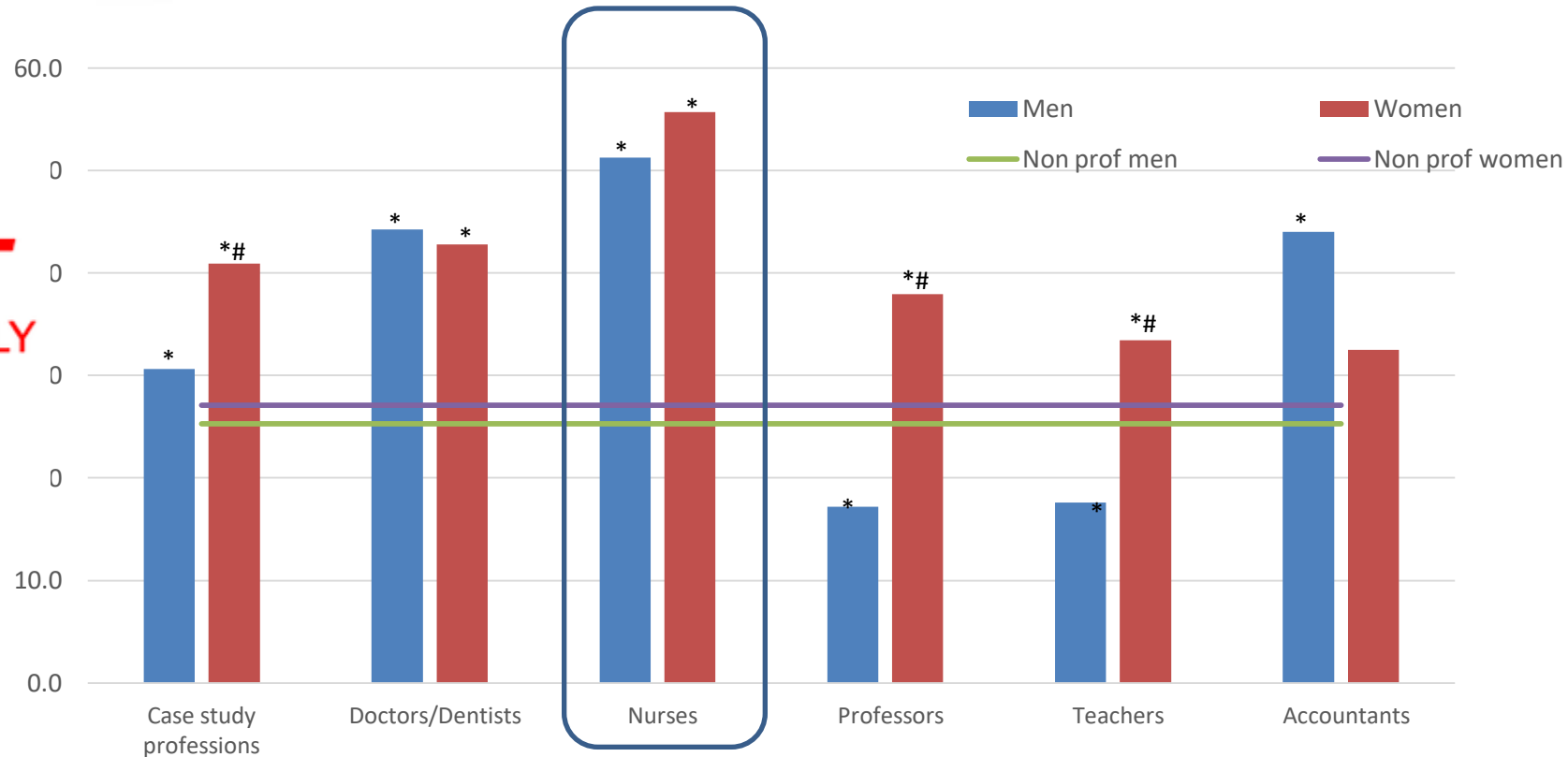
Data source: CCHS 2013/2014

**DRAFT**  
FOR REVIEW ONLY



Among case study professions (especially teachers), women showed a higher rate of self-perceived work stress than men. No gender difference was found for other professional or non-professional workers.

**DRAFT**  
FOR REVIEW ONLY



\*Significantly different from non professional workers of the same gender group

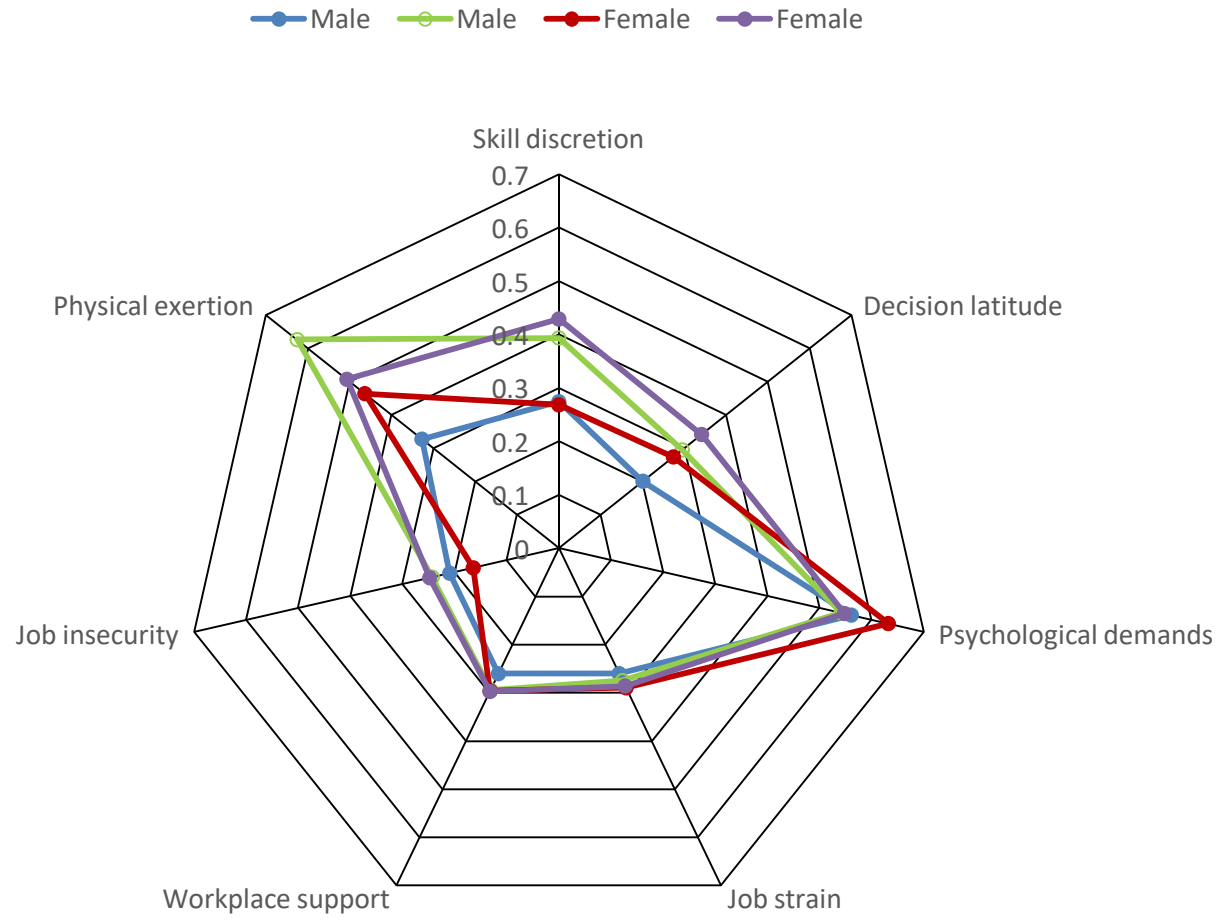
#Significantly different from men of the same occupational group

Data source: CCHS 2013/2014



Compared to men, **women workers in case study professions showed a higher job strain, physical exertion, and lower job authority.**

**DRAFT**  
FOR REVIEW ONLY



Data source: CCHS 2012



# Scoping Review of RTW Interventions

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## CITATION:

Covell, C. Rolle Sands, S, Ingraham K., Lavoie-Tremblay M., Price S, Reichert C., Bourgeault I. (2020). Mapping the Peer Reviewed Literature on Accommodating Nurses' Return to Work after Leaves of Absence for Mental Health Issues. *Human Resources for Health*.18:36

<https://human-resources-health.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12960-020-00478-8>





# Scoping Review of RTW Interventions

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## BACKGROUND

As nurses engage in their practice and are confronted with the need to address the multiplicity of occupational challenges and demands, their mental health (MH) may be adversely affected

Researchers suggest that psychological challenges such as depression, anxiety, stress, and burnout often result in leaves of absence (LOA) from work for nurses



# Scoping Review of RTW Interventions

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AIM:

Considering the risk and factors associated with nurses developing MH issues, we wanted to map the literature about accommodations for nurses returning to work (RTW) after a LOA.



# Scoping Review of RTW Interventions

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## KEY FINDINGS

The records were primarily quantitative studies ( $n = 4$ ), published between 1997 and 2018, and originated in the US ( $n = 6$ ).

The qualitative thematic findings addressed three major themes:

1. alternative to discipline programs (ADPs),
2. peer support, and
3. return to work policies, procedures, and practices.



# Scoping Review of RTW Interventions

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## ALTERNATIVE TO DISCIPLINE PROGRAMS

ADPs primarily focus on nurses with substance use disorder and may be referred to by various terms such as intervention, monitoring, or alternative programs

The purpose of these programs was to remove nurses from practice during the acute phase of the disorder, provide treatment and then allow the nurse to return to practice in a structured, monitored environment.

Voluntary, non-punitive programs developed and facilitated by a state board of nursing as an alternative to the traditional disciplinary approach



# Scoping Review of RTW Interventions

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## ALTERNATIVE TO DISCIPLINE PROGRAMS

Include after care monitoring of nurses as part of the required steps of program completion, and accommodates the RTW of such nurses primarily through the use of contracts and conferences

The RTW contracts may include various restrictions, e.g., hours of work and administration of narcotics, and the conferences are conducted primarily by nurse managers/supervisors who are responsible for oversight of the nurse upon their RTW



# Scoping Review of RTW Interventions

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## PEER SUPPORT

Peer support groups are usually a component of some of the state boards of nursing ADPs and are designed so that nurses guide nurses with alcohol and substance use disorders through recovery

More specifically, half of the literature (N = 3) identified the support from nurse managers and other colleagues as a major facilitator to RTW of nurses



# Scoping Review of RTW Interventions

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## RETURN TO WORK POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND PRACTICES

These policies, programs, or practices may be either singly or in concert, institutional, national, and state/provincial guidelines, methods, and routines adopted by organizations addressing nurses RTW following LOA for MH issues.

The literature mainly focused on alcohol use and other substance use disorders. The state boards of nursing each determine the policies, programs, and practices governing RTW of nurses following MH-related LOA.



# Scoping Review of RTW Interventions

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## CONCLUSION

The literature suggests that ADPs are a more humane approach to treatment, recovery, and RTW of nurses experiencing MH issues; however, little is known about the effectiveness of these programs

There is an overall paucity of empirical evidence regarding programs, policies, or practices to support nurses RTW following LOA for broader MH issues beyond substance use.

This review clearly demonstrates the need for more research focused on accommodations for nurses' RTW following LOA for MH issues.





# Emerging Findings

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS &  
FOLLOW UP LITERATURE REVIEW

ABBY AYOUB



# Emerging findings – Stakeholder interviews

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Interviews done: 3

Mental Health Issues:

- Stress, burnout, depression, anxiety, PTSD, fatigue, substance use

Causes:

- High Workload
- Understaffing
- Job characteristics
- Exposure to traumatic/stressful events
- Workplace violence
- Poor relationship with manager/Lack of managerial support
- Work setting (i.e. LTC, ICU, ER)
- Double caregiving responsibilities

**PANDEMIC HAS EXACERBATED ALL THESE ISSUES!**



# Emerging findings – Updated literature review

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## Mental health supports at work

- Focus is more on the individual rather than the organizational context
- Managers are not well equipped to deal with mental health issues
- Poor uptake of findings/recommendations from Governmental reports
- Taking leave is very difficult

## Presenteeism and Absenteeism

- High prevalence amongst nurses
- Highly addressed topics in the nursing literature
- High rates of sick leave
- Very difficult to take leave for mental health reasons



# Emerging findings – Updated literature review

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Mental health from a gendered perspective

- Very gendered profession
- The way nurses are treated as a workforce
- Pressure for presenteeism (specially for single or higher earners in the family)
- Double or triple caregiving responsibilities

Gender  
Always  
Matters



# Recent Key Studies

Stelnicki, A. M., Carleton, N., & Reichert, C. (2020). *Mental Disorder Symptoms among Nurses in Canada*. Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions

- Aim: To better understand probable rates of traumatic exposure, mental health disorders and burnout among a large pan-Canadian sample of nurses and to obtain information about mental health training, training effectiveness and mental health help-seeking behaviours among nurses.

Canadian Journal of Nursing Research

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Nurses' Mental Health and Well-Being: COVID-19 Impacts  
Andrea M. Stelnicki, R. Nicholas Carleton, Carol Reichert  
First Published June 9, 2020 | Editorial | Check for updates  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0844562120931623>

Article information

Abstract

The editorial will introduce a special section on nurses' mental health and well-being that will showcase results from a groundbreaking pan-Canadian study of nurses' occupational stress. The article series highlights research efforts toward better supporting nurses' mental health. In this editorial, we discuss the importance of this research in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We review the current stressors faced by nurses and anticipate how nurses' mental health and well-being will be impacted by COVID-19.

Keywords

Mental health, COVID-19, nurses, well-being



# Next Steps ...

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WORKER SURVEYS & INTERVIEWS



# We want to hear from you!

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You will receive a \$20  
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## SURVEY

Coming soon!

The survey will  
take 15-20 min

## Healthy Professional Worker Survey Path

