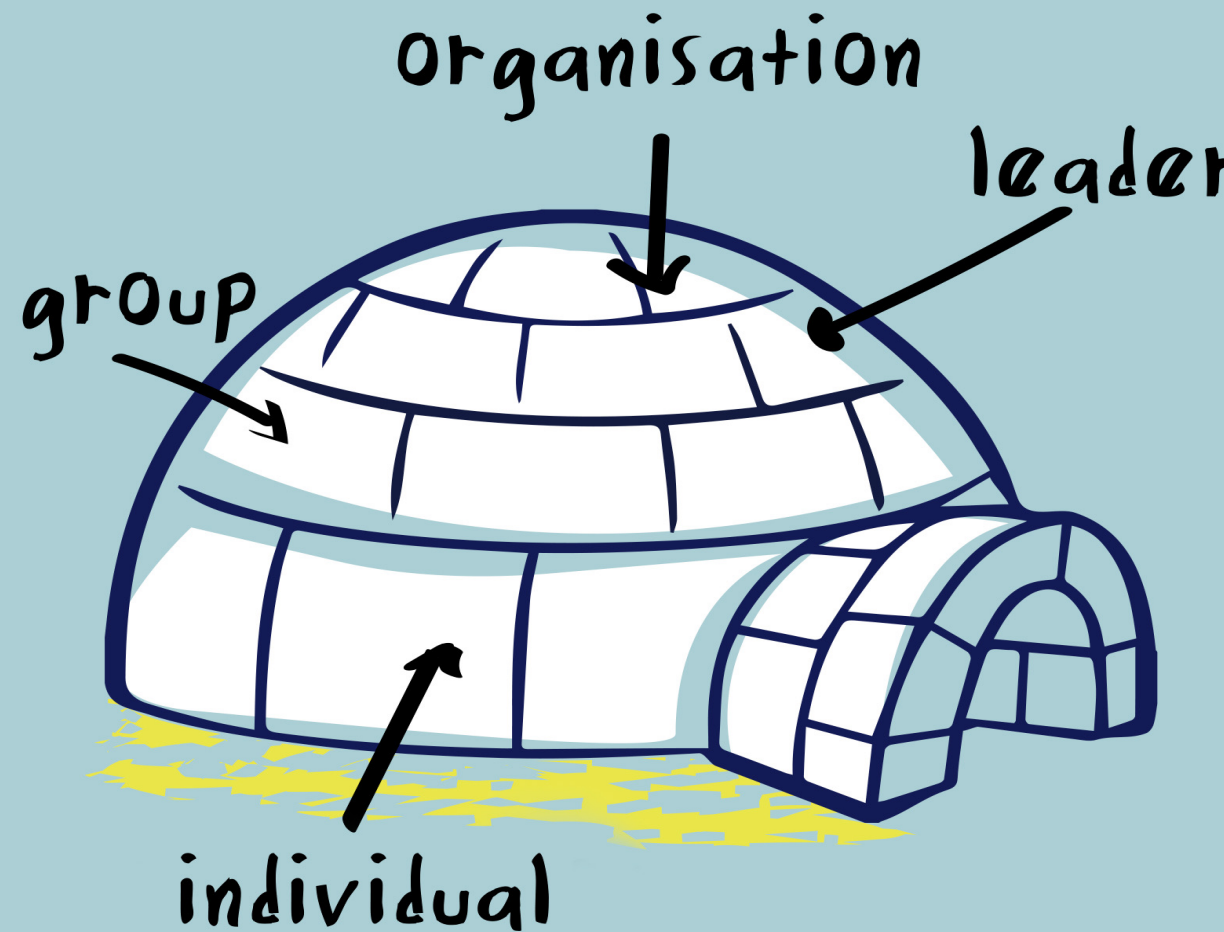


Sustainable return to work following mental health sickness absence



Overview

- Mental health sickness absence
- Introduction to the IGL0o approach
- Building your IGL0o
 - Individual level
 - Group level
 - Line manager level
 - Organisational level
- Things to think about
- Signposting resources



Sickness absence and mental health conditions

- TOO MANY (role of co-morbidity)
- FOR TOO LONG
- WITH TOO LITTLE SUPPORT

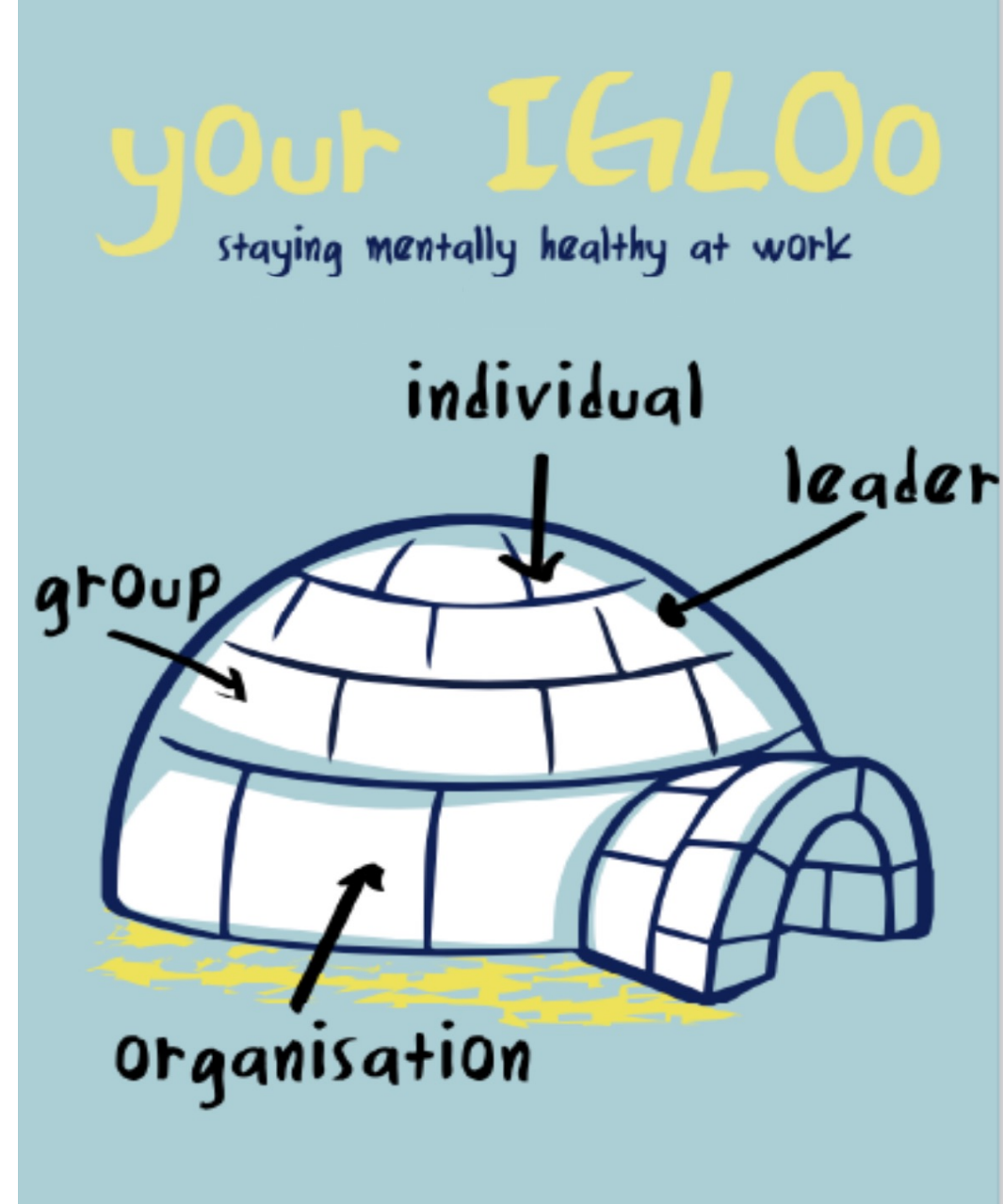
However, the focus is often on the initial return

- EVEN LESS IS KNOWN ABOUT HOW WE SUPPORT PEOPLE TO STAY AT WORK



Introducing the IGL0o approach to managing wellbeing

- Working with Professor Karina Nielsen, University of Sheffield
- Whole systems approach to employee wellbeing
- Draws from the Hofball's conservation of resources theory
- Interviewed 38 employees, 20 managers, over 4 months
- Individual, Group, Leader and Organisational resources to improve wellbeing and performance
- We can't do it all on our own



Individual level

Work

Create structure in your working day

Prioritise according to importance vs urgency

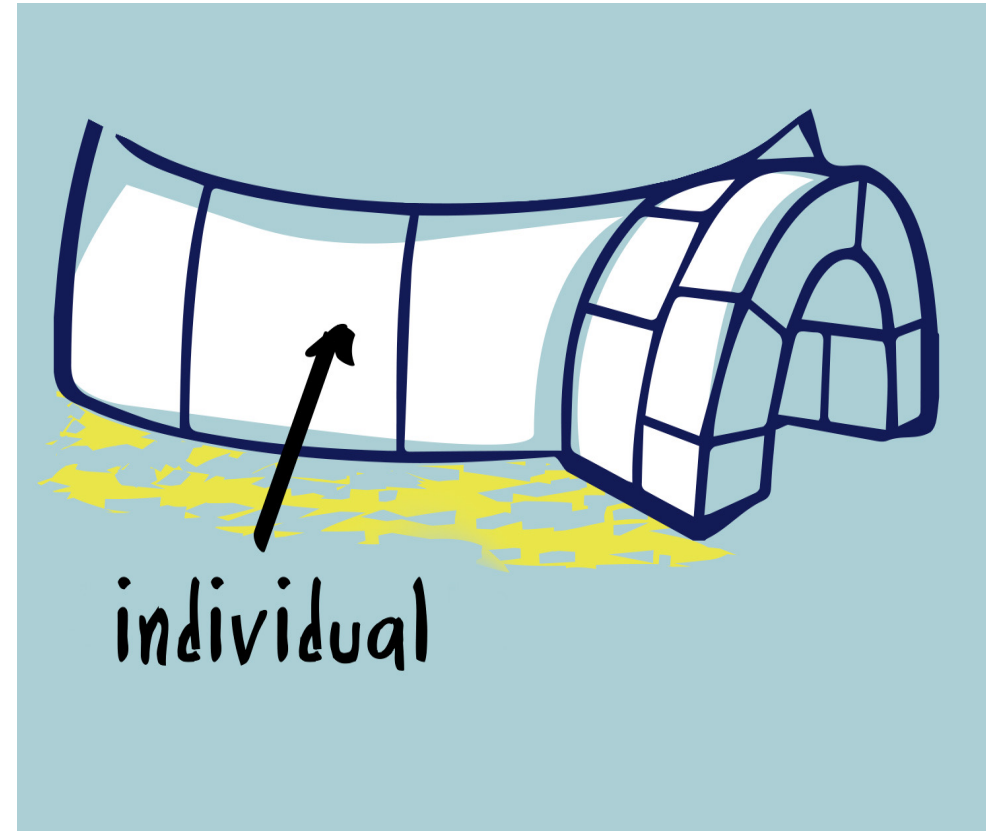
.....

Non-work

Prioritise self-care

Boundaries between work and home

.....



Group level

Work

Ask for and provide feedback

Offering and receiving help when doing challenging work

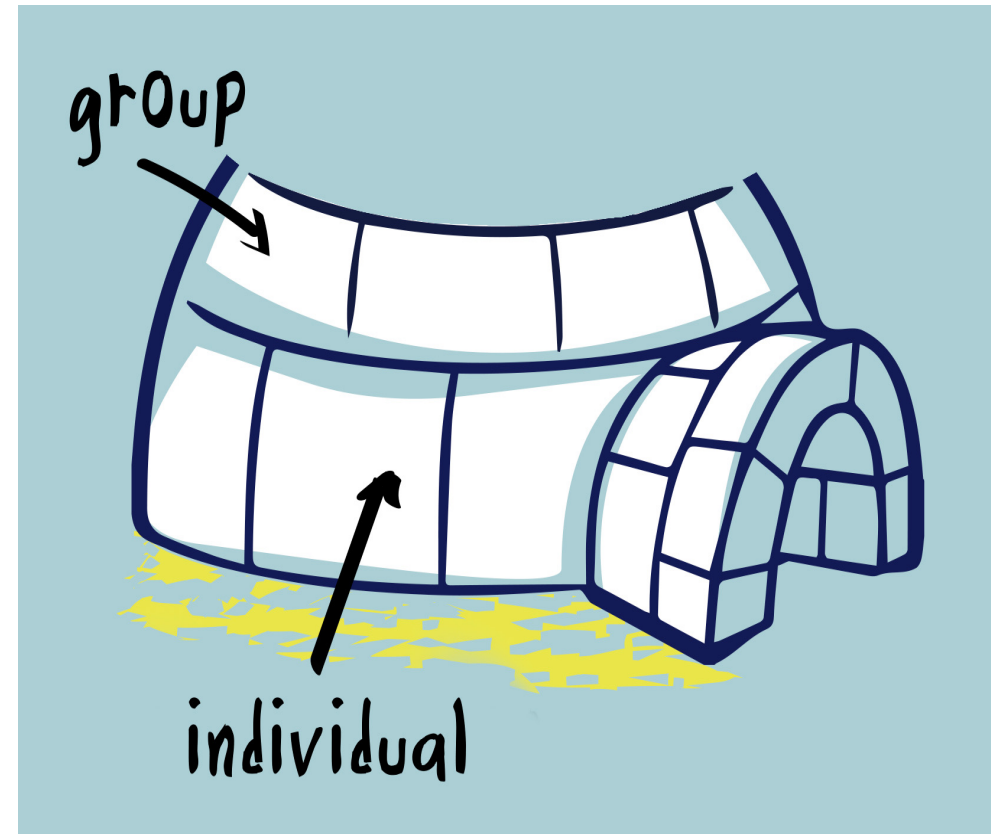
.....

Non-work

Maintaining contact

Receiving non-judgemental support

.....



Line manager level

Work

Giving control over the way the work is done

Providing emotional and practical support

Ongoing work adjustments

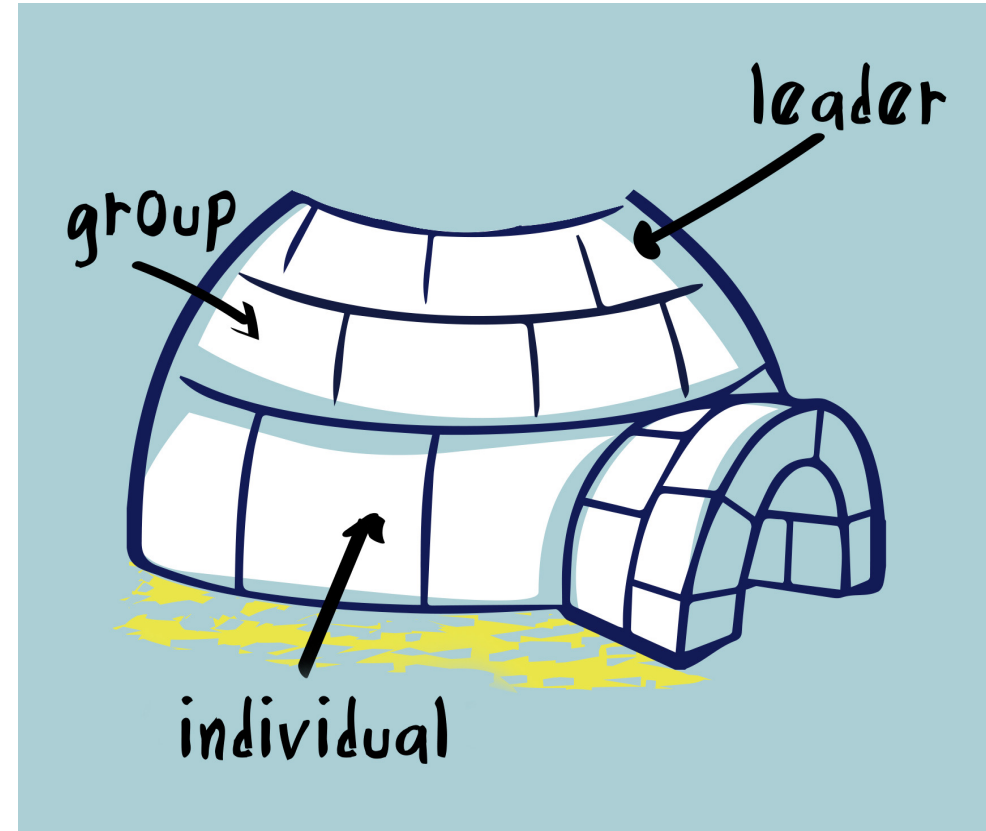
Bending the rules: buffer against inflexible systems

Non-work

Having a consistent point of contact e.g. GP

Seeing a counsellor, therapist or coach

.....



Organisational level

Work

Providing flexible working practices and leave policies

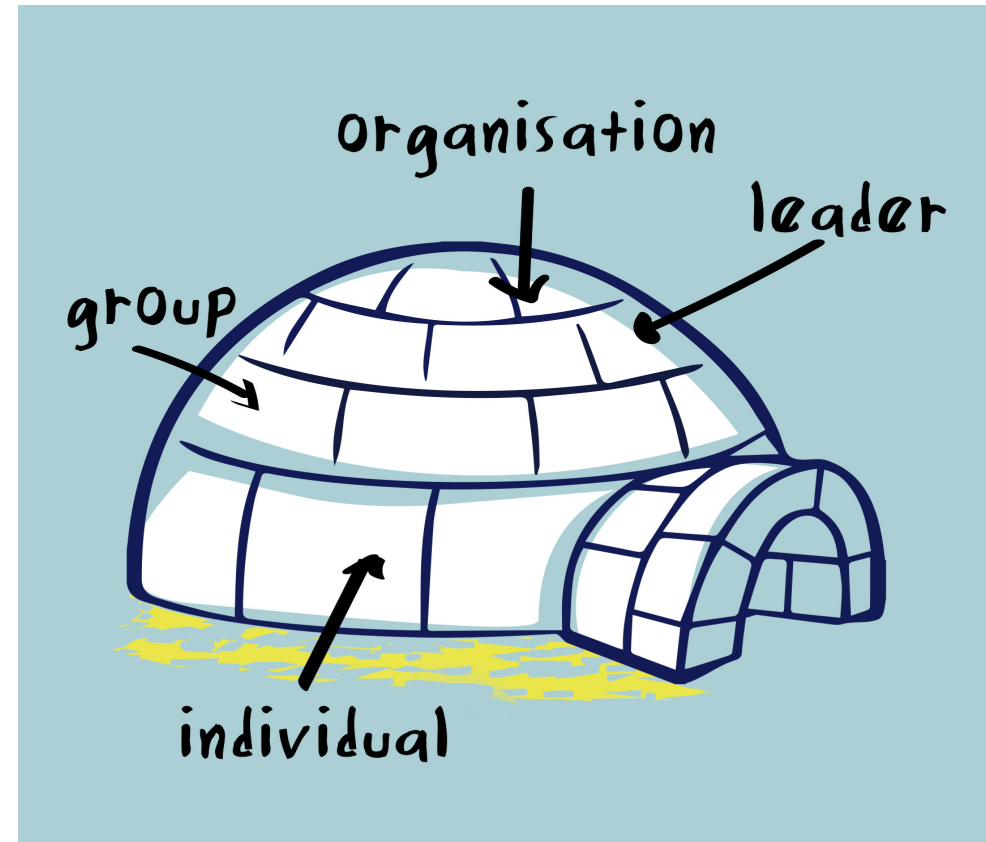
Establishing a culture where mental health and physical health are prioritised

Non-work

Access to health and wellbeing advice and support

Contacting charities (e.g. The Firefighters Charity, Mind, Samaritans)

.....



Practical Resource for supporting return to work

affinity
health at work

News IglOO Contact Account

Welcome to Return to Work

Returning to work after a period of absence can be complicated. But it doesn't have to be, if you are a returning worker or a co-worker, a line manager or a professional working to support someone return to work, this hub is for you.

[Get Started](#)

the IGLOO for returning to work

We all need other people to help us stay happy and healthy. No one can do it on their own. The IGLOO framework promotes a shared responsibility where everyone has a role to play: the Individual employee, the Group, Line manager and the Organisation, and Outside resources.

Drawing on the latest research, the IGLOO for returning to work helps us to identify key roles and responsibilities: returning individuals need to prioritise self-care and self-management to sustain their health and work; groups and co-workers can provide practical and emotional support; line managers need to stay in touch with the individual and provide support.

How can you help your colleague strengthen their IGLOO?

Use the checklist here to see what you can do to help your colleague build their **IGLoo**.

1. Look at the checklist. Read the statements in the 'Do I...?' column. Answer 'yes', 'no' or 'sometimes'. Mark your answer in the column.
2. Use the checklist here to test the strength of your contribution to your colleagues' **IGLoo**. If you answer yes to these questions, you help your colleague build a strong **IGLoo**. If you answer 'sometimes' or 'no' think about whether they might like your help.
3. What else could you do to help? If you answer 'sometimes' or 'no' what could you do to make this part of their **IGLoo** stronger? It may be something you need to do, you need someone else to help you do, or you need to ask for.
4. How do you make this happen? Think about what you can do to make this happen. Need help and advice? Ask friends and family, colleagues, Line manager, GP, Human Resources, Occupational Health, charities/ support groups, union reps

Remember...

Returning to work is not always easy, but having support can make a huge difference. If you are not sure what your colleague would find helpful, ask them. Talk through the checklist with them and identify some concrete actions that you can take to help them build their **IGLoo**.

Resources	Location	Do I...?
Individual	Work	Help the employee create structure in the workday. E.g. divide up tasks in to smaller components in meetings.
	Home	Enable the employee to prioritise self-care by the employee leaves work on time and by all flexibility for exercise, appointments etc? Ensure the employee has clear boundaries between work and home?
Group	Work	Provide feedback on tasks to build confidence Help out when doing challenging tasks? Treat the employee the same as before, not as different or who is experiencing mental ill-health.
	Home	** While you can't influence how friends and behave, if you know that the returning employee experiencing difficulties outside work, this could be the group support in work even more important than them.
Leader	Work	Check in with my line manager about what the employee wants us to know, and accept that they may not want me to know everything about absence? Accept that my line manager may put in place work adjustments, even beyond the first help the returning employee? Look out to ensure that my returning colleague has access to our line manager?
	Home	** While you cannot influence the support the employee is able to access from their GP, if you know that the employee is finding access to support it might be appropriate to direct them to occupational health support.
Organisational	Work	Know what the policies are for flexible working/absence so that I can share them if needed? Support the employee to access flexible working adjustments that are outlined in the organisation's policy?
	Home	** While you cannot influence the support of the employee outside of work, if you know that but are not able to access support it may be appropriate to direct them to Occupational Health, HR or workplace EAP.

your IGLOO

for returning to work following mental ill-health

individual

leader

group

organisation

Implications for research, policy and practice

Research:

- We need **research** to help us understand what works, for whom, under what circumstances. Advances could be made with better data access and data collection; and exploring across resource levels rather than in silos.

Policy:

- Urgent need for Statutory Sick Pay review, Occupational Health provision and timely access to primary care

Practice:

- Everyone has a role to play: Returning individuals, groups, line managers, organisational professionals.
- Need to increase knowledge, skills and confidence in supporting return to work.



Thank you!

To find out more about our research:

- To read the full *Thriving at work* (IGLOo) report and guidance visit: <https://productivityinsightsnetwork.co.uk>
- To read the acas *Work adjustments for mental ill-health* report visit: <https://www.acas.org.uk/work-adjustments-for-mental-health-a-review-of-the-evidence-and-guidance-html>
- CIPD guidance: <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/absence/support-long-term-health-conditions>
- CIPD guidance: <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/absence/managing-return-to-work-after-long-term-absence#gref>
- If you would like to know more about our work or get involved in our research please contact us! Jo@affinityhealthatwork.com

