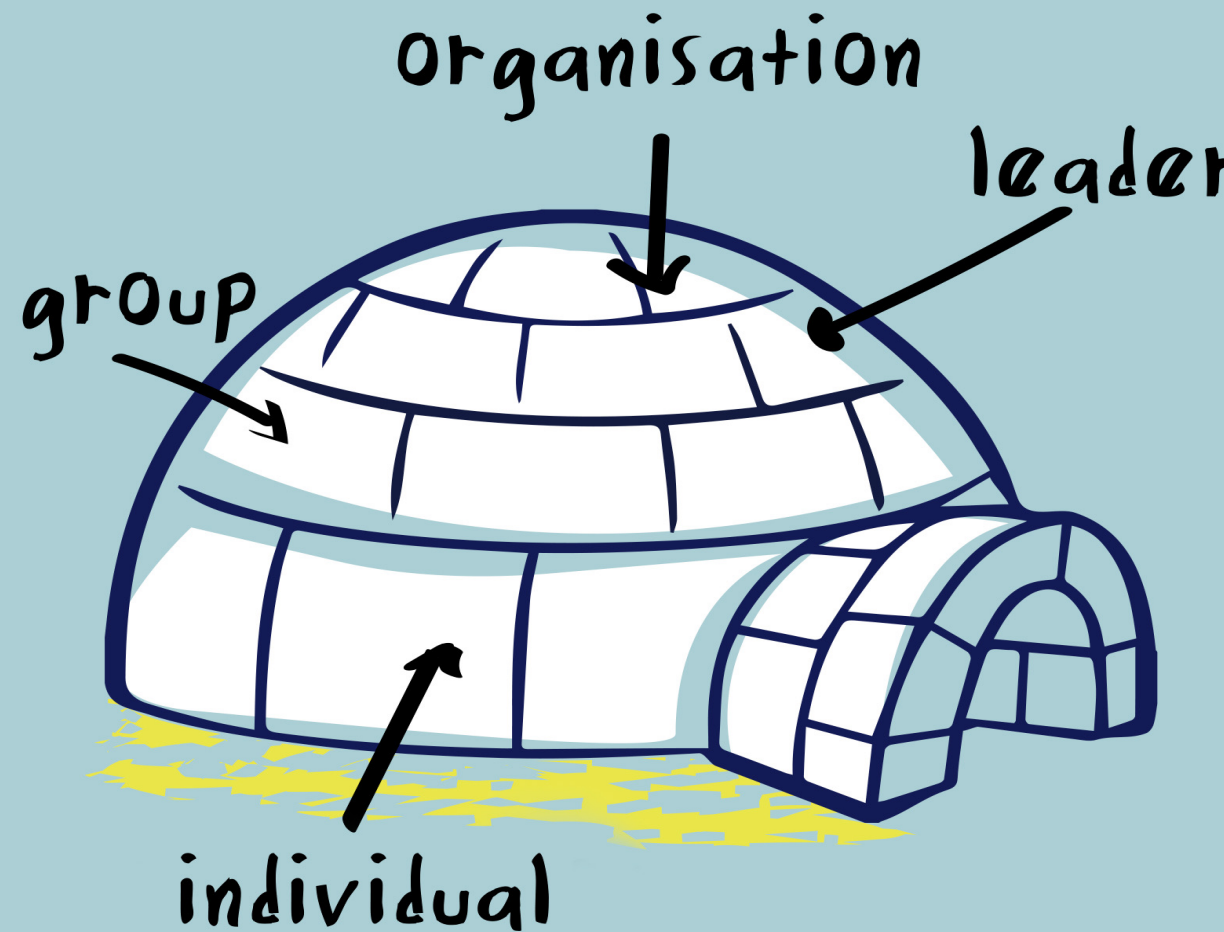# Sustainable return to work following mental health sickness absence

Overview

- Mental health sickness absence
- Introduction to the IGLOo approach
- Building your IGLOo
  - 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 IGLOo approach to managing wellbeing

- Working with Professor Karina Nielsen, University of Sheffield

- Whole systems approach to employee wellbeing

- Draws from the Hofboll'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

your **IGLOo**
staying mentally healthy at work

individual

leader

group

Organisation
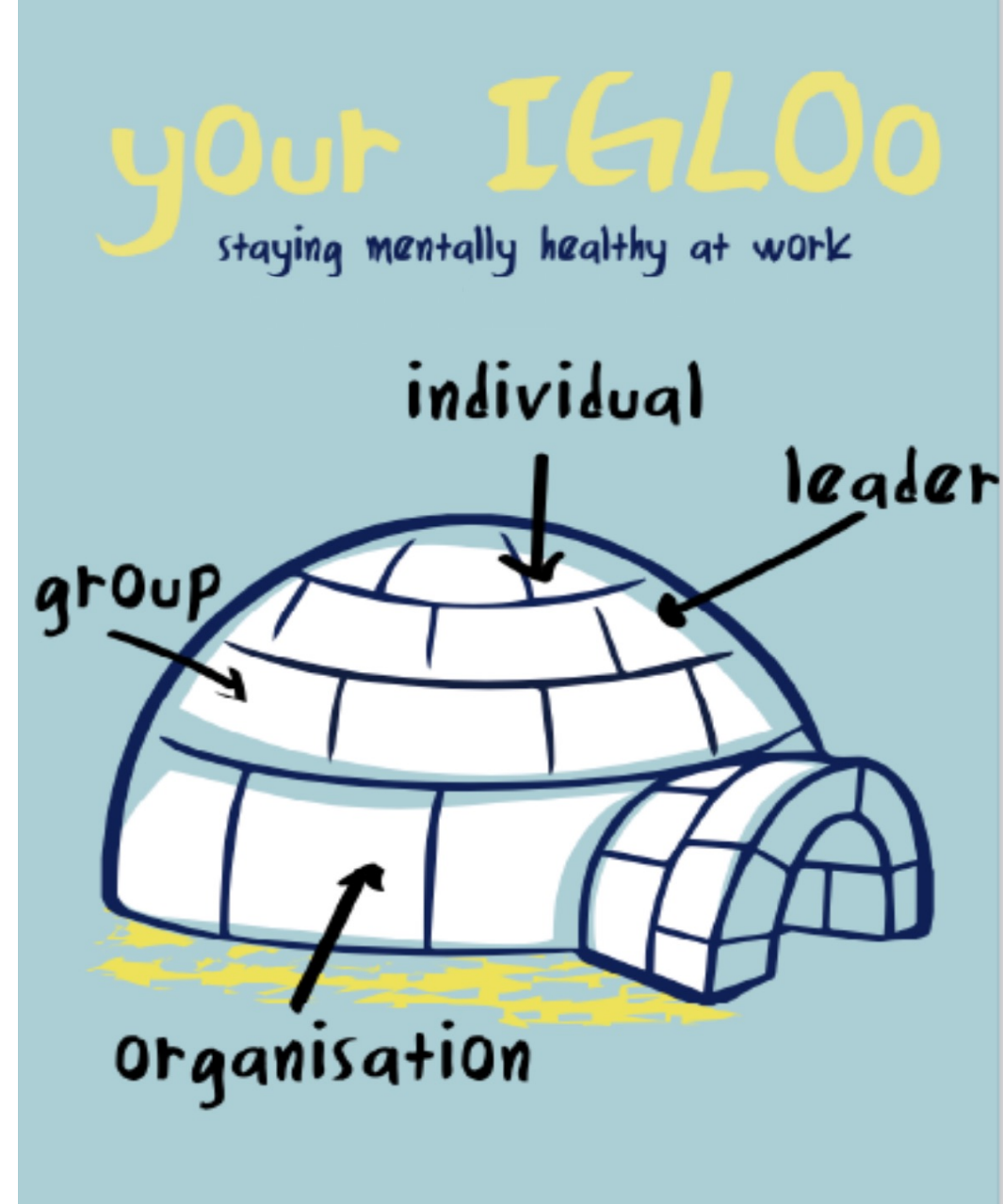
Individual level

Work

Create structure in your working day

Prioritise according to importance vs urgency

....

Non-work

Prioritise self-care

Boundaries between work and home

....

individual
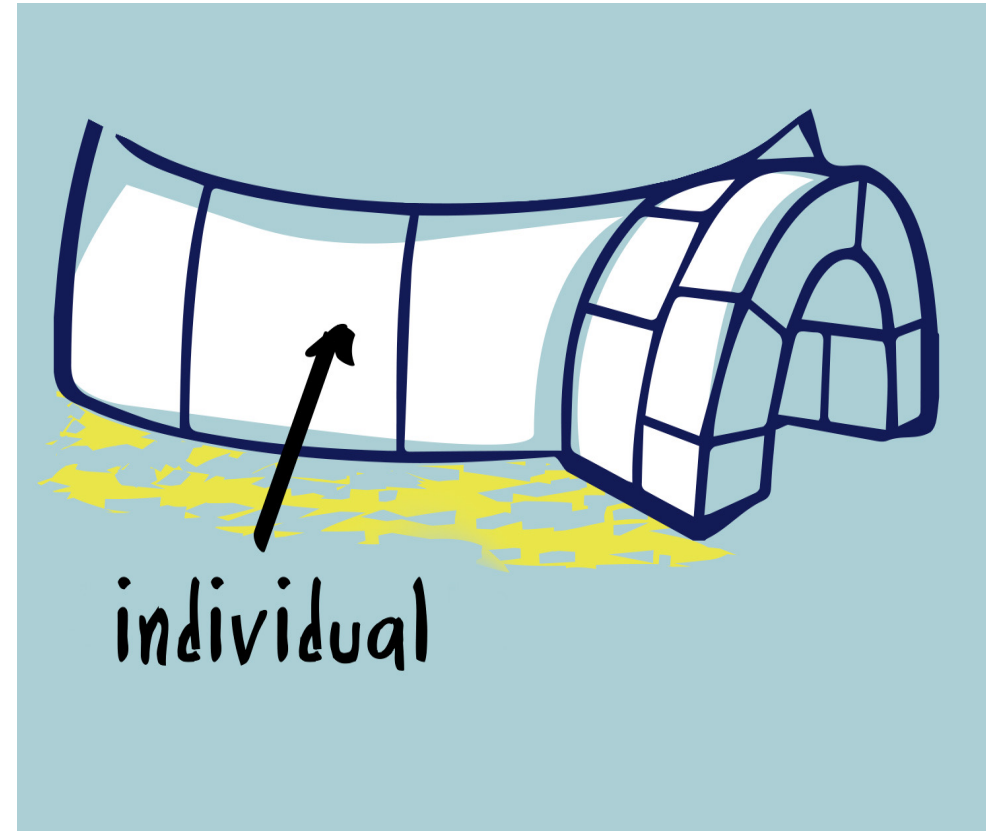
Group level

Work
Ask for and provide feedback
Offering and receiving help when doing challenging work
....

Non-work
Maintaining contact
Receiving non-judgemental support
....

group

individual
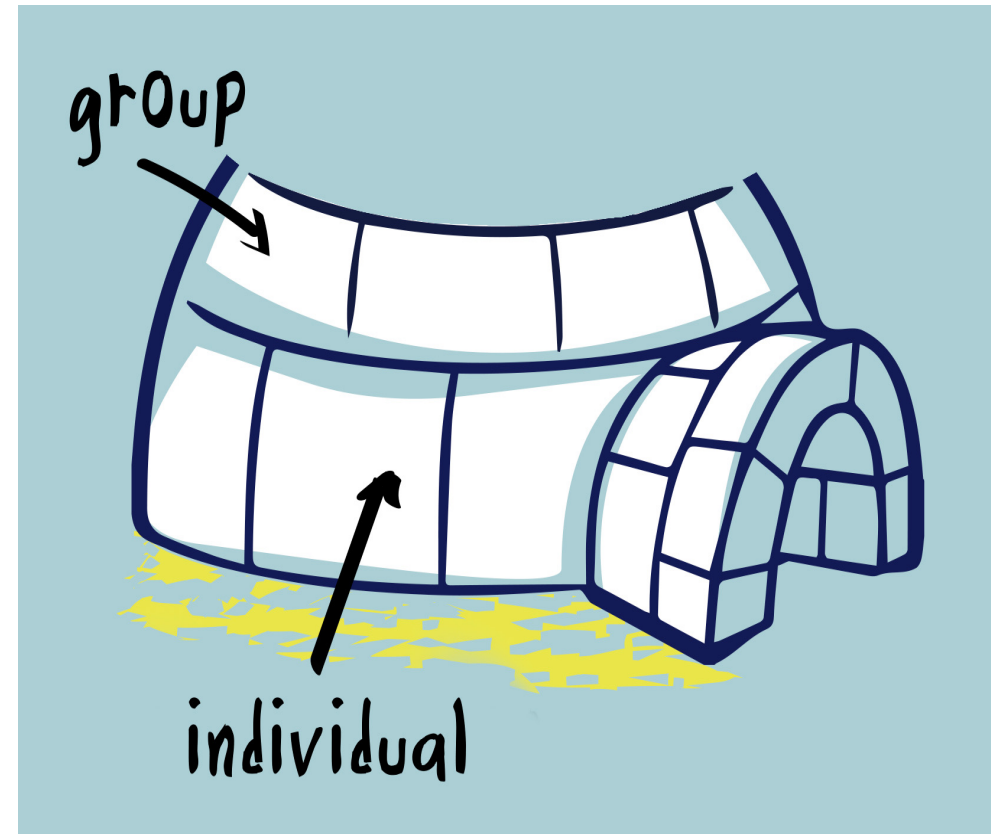
Line manager level

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
....
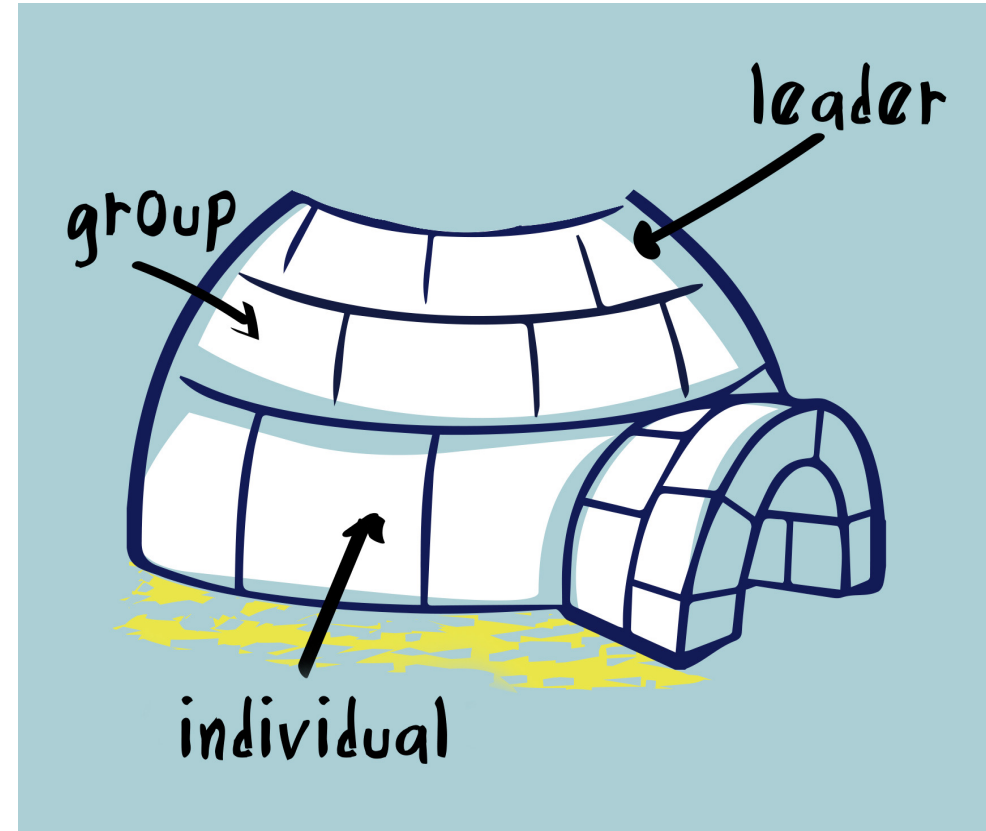
Organisational level

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)

.....
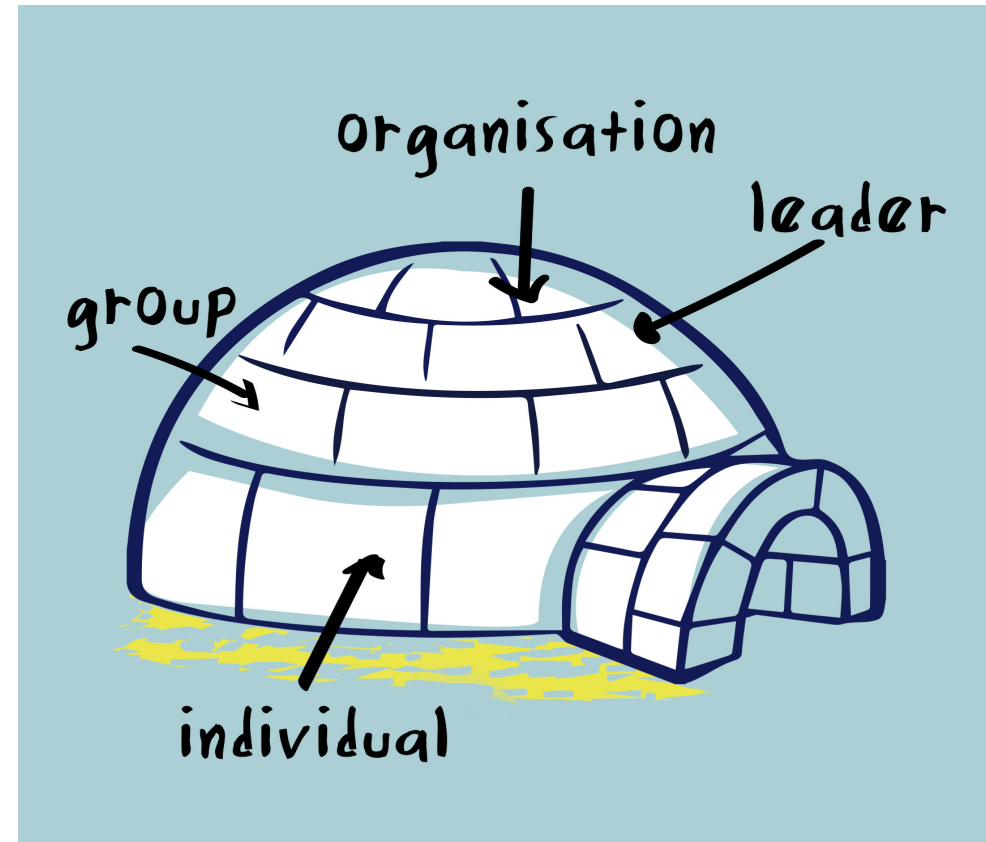
Practical Resource for supporting return to work

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

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Birkbeck UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

productivity insights network

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