



**Institute  
for Work &  
Health**

Research Excellence  
Advancing Employee  
Health

**1990-2015: Celebrating 25 years of research on preventing  
work injury and disability**

# **Work-focused interventions that promote the labour market participation of young adults with chronic disabling health conditions**

## **A systematic review**

**Arif Jetha PhD**

**Associate Scientist**

**Institute for Work & Health**

**Speaker Series, Fall 2018**



**@ArifJetha**



**cdpp**

Canadian Disability Participation Project  
Le projet canadien sur la participation sociale  
des personnes en situation de handicap



## Take home points

- Young adults (18-35 years) living with chronic disabling health conditions experience difficulties entering and advancing within the labour market
- Systematic review of work-focused interventions that promote the employment participation of young adults with disabling health conditions
- Tailored supported employment interventions were effective in preparation and entry into employment
- Few other interventions existed that address the support needs of young adults with chronic disabling health conditions







## What is the young adult life phase?

- Spans approximately 18 to 35 years of age
- Transitional period; educational roles to full-time employment
- Employment experiences during this period shape career trajectory; scarring effect



**Preparing to enter the  
labour market**

**Beginning paid work**

**Sustaining employment  
and moving up**





## Millennials: a generational context<sup>5</sup>

Largest share of the Canadian labour market



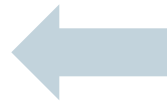
**Born 1982 - 2004**



Technological literacy  
and education



**Less likely** to be  
engaged in full-time and  
permanent jobs



- Absence of employment opportunities
- Job mobility to gain knowledge and skills
- Greater preference for jobs with scheduling flexibility, organizational culture or training opportunities



Survey of 1,189 millennials in Hamilton, ON

# Job precarity + Millennials

- **9/10** preferred full-time permanent jobs
- **44%** millennials *have* permanent full-time employment
- **47%** working at jobs with some degree of insecurity



# Changing nature of work

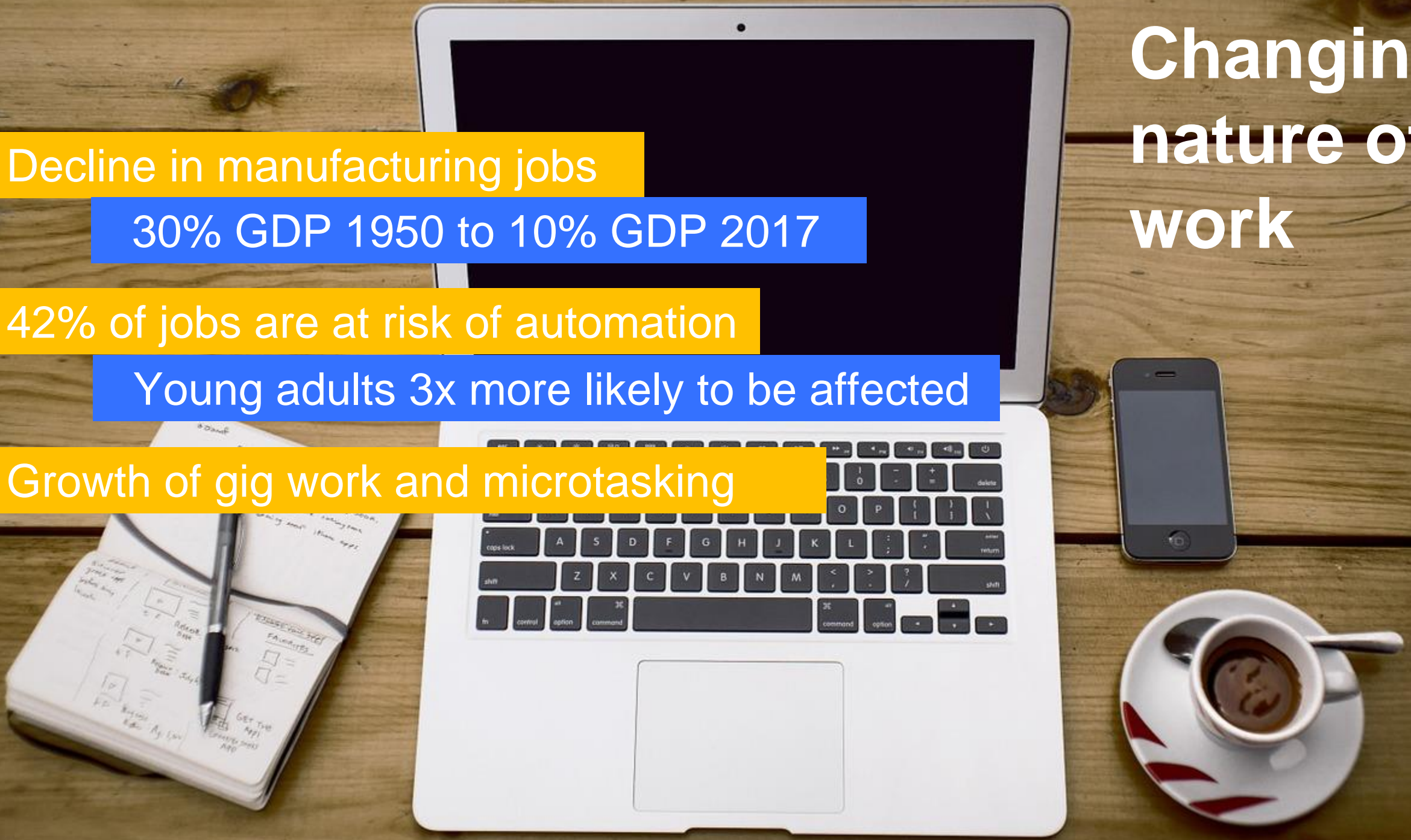
Decline in manufacturing jobs

30% GDP 1950 to 10% GDP 2017

42% of jobs are at risk of automation

Young adults 3x more likely to be affected

Growth of gig work and microtasking





# Work + Health

- Social determinant of health
- Access to social networks
- Contribute to identity
- Happiness

Risk of mental health condition greater among millennials (63%) than baby boomers (13%)

Millennials with poor/fair mental health

**39%** precarious work

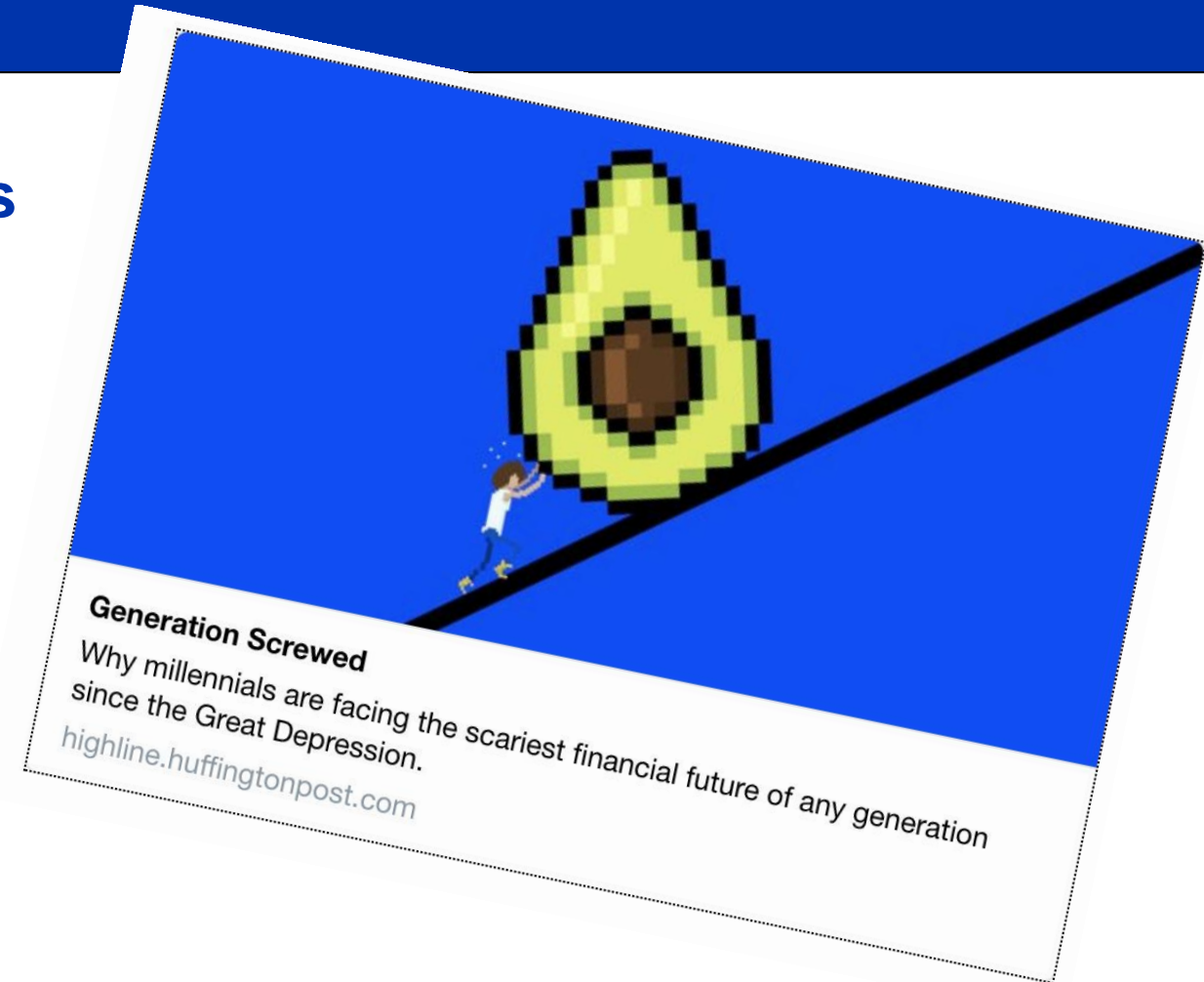
**13%** secure employment



## Millennials face unique social conditions

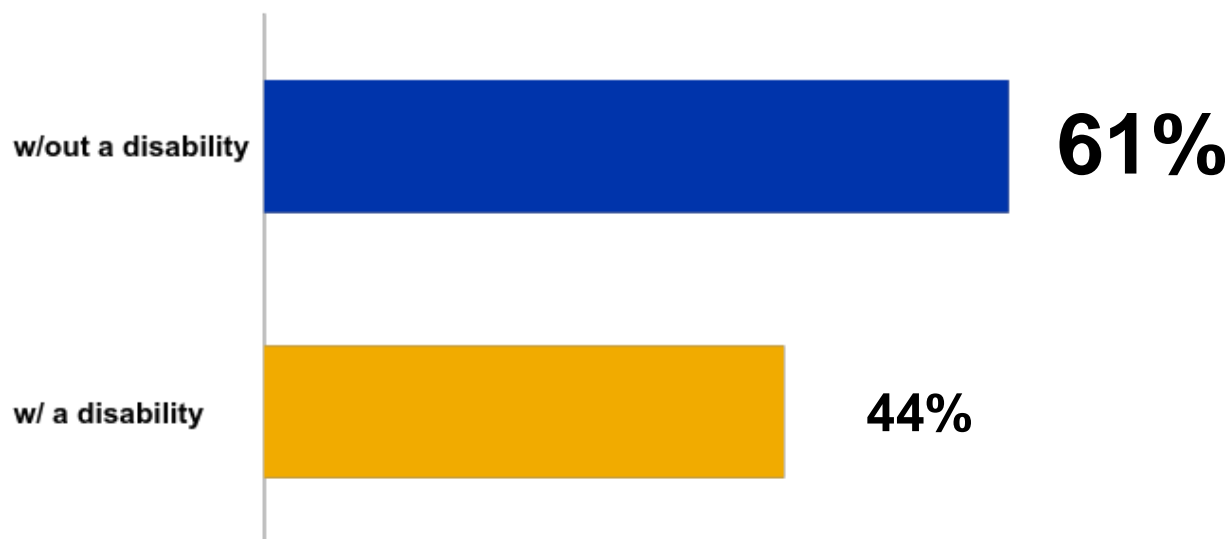
Millennials are more likely to...

- Facing higher costs of living with less wage growth
- More likely to live at home
- Higher student debt
- Less likely to have retirement savings or collect a pension
- Rising health care costs



## Employment and disability in young adulthood

### Labour force participation of young adults



**Young adults employed  
w/ a disability**



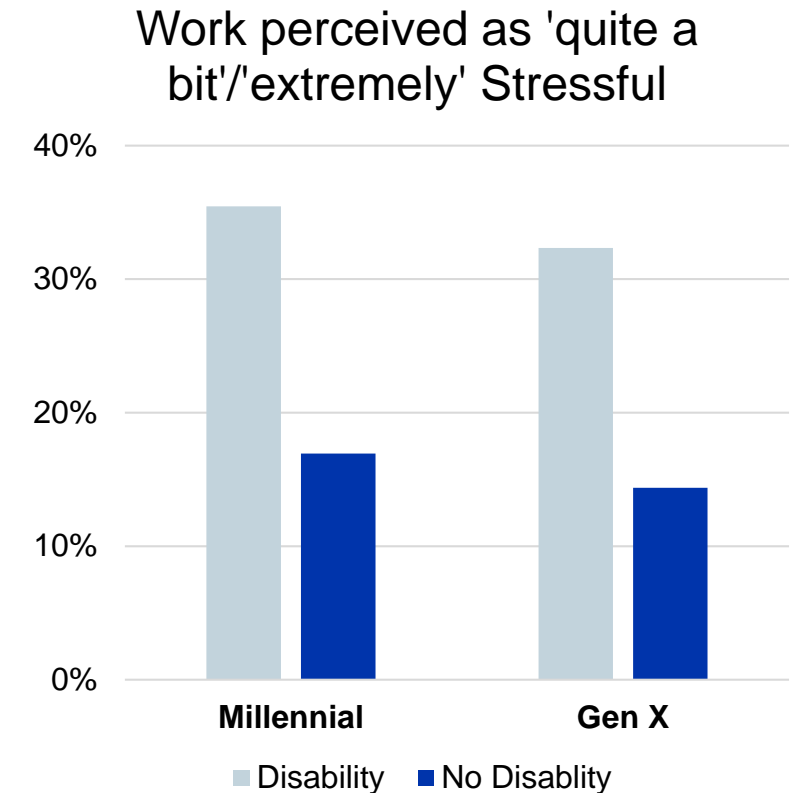
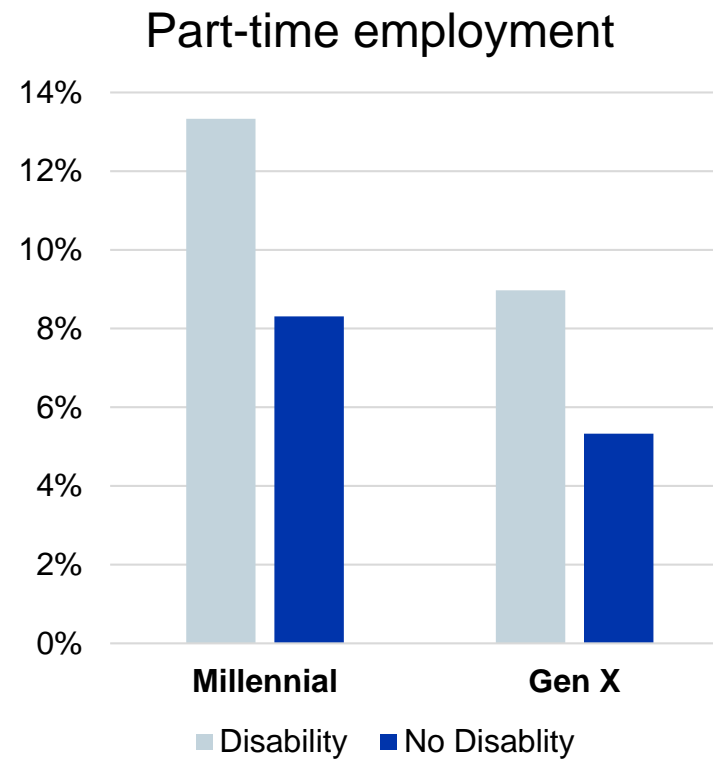
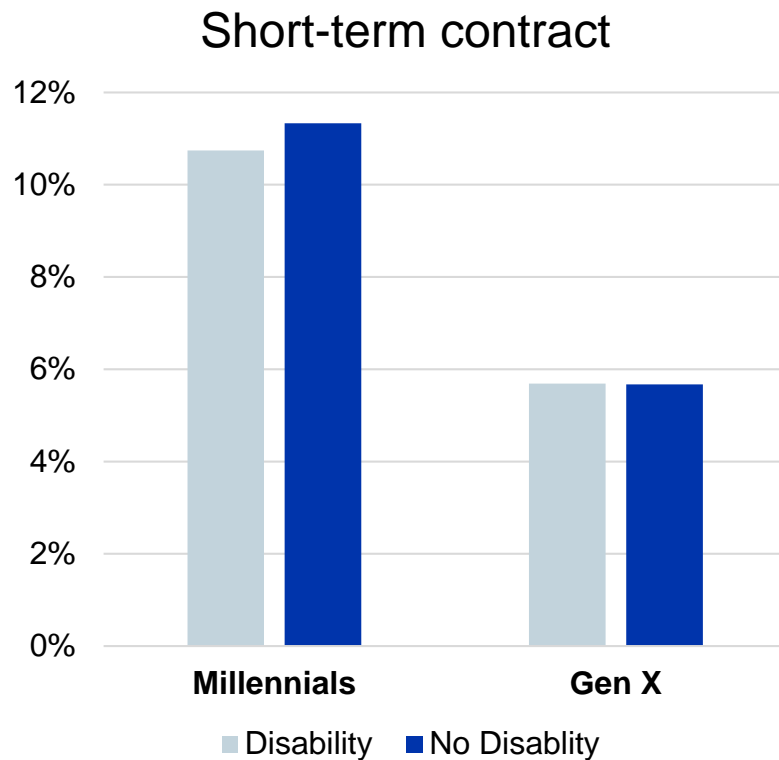
- Productivity loss
- Denial of a promotion
- Earning less income
- Allocated fewer job responsibilities
- Difficulties talking about their needs and requesting accommodations





## New Data! Survey of 1,800 employed adults

- 50% sampled had a disabling health condition
- Compared millennials to Gen X (1961-1981)





# What types of workplace supports do young adults with disabling health needs?

- 155 young adults with disabilities
- Average age 26 years
- 68% >1 disability
- ><sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> worked in non-standard employment contracts

Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10926-018-9772-z>



## Supporting the Transition into Employment: A Study of Canadian Young Adults Living with Disabilities

Arif Jetha<sup>1,2</sup> · Julie Bowring<sup>1</sup> · Adele Furrle<sup>3</sup> · Frank Smith<sup>4</sup> · Curtis Breslin<sup>1,2,5</sup>

© Springer Science+Business Media, LLC, part of Springer Nature 2018

### Abstract

**Objective** To examine the job accommodation and benefit needs of young adults with disabilities as they transition into employment, and their perceived barriers to meeting support needs. **Methods** An online survey was conducted of 155 Canadian young adults with disabilities (mean age = 25.8 years). Respondents were either employed or seeking employment, and were asked about their need for health benefits, and soft (e.g., flexible scheduling) and hard accommodations (e.g., ergonomic interventions), and perceived accommodation barriers. Disability characteristics (e.g., disability type), demographic details and work context information were collected. Multivariable logistic analyses were conducted to examine the factors associated with a greater need for health benefits and hard and soft accommodations. **Results** Participants reported having a physical (79%), psychological (79%) or cognitive/learning disability (77%); 68% had > 1 disability. Over half (55%) were employed. Health benefits and soft accommodations were most needed by participants. Also, an average of six perceived accommodation barriers were indicated; difficulty with disability disclosure was most frequently reported. More perceived accommodation barriers were associated with a greater need for health benefits (OR 1.17, 95% CI 1.04–1.31) and soft accommodations (OR 1.13, 95% CI 1.01–1.27). A psychological disability was associated with a greater need for health benefits (OR 2.91, 95% CI 1.09–7.43) and soft accommodations (OR 3.83, 95% CI 1.41–10.42). **Discussion** Employers can support the employment of young adults with disabilities through provision of extended health benefits and soft accommodations. Addressing accommodation barriers could minimize unmet workplace need, and improve employment outcomes for young adults with disabilities as they begin their career and across the life course.

**Keywords** Disability · Young adult · Accommodation · Work · School-to-work transition · Health benefits

### Introduction

For young adults, a disability can impact the transition into the labour market and shape work and health outcomes across the life course. Through the provision of job accommodations and benefits, workplaces play an important role

in meeting specialized employment needs of people with disabilities and enhancing the working lives of their employees. To date, little research has examined the specific job accommodations and benefits required by young adults living with different disabilities as they enter the workforce. It is also unclear to what extent young adults with disabilities perceive barriers to accessing accommodations and benefits as they start their careers. This study offers insights for the development and tailoring of organizational policies and practices that foster early success as a young adult with a disability transitions from school to work.

Young adulthood, a period spanning 18–35 years, represents a critical transitional life phase where a person tends to establish themselves within the labour market and may report occupational changes (e.g., employment in multiple part-time or entry level jobs) that contribute to the attainment of full-time/full-year work [1, 2]. Research indicates that increasing numbers of young adults with disabilities,

✉ Arif Jetha  
Ajetha@iwh.on.ca

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Work & Health, 481 University Avenue, Toronto, ON M5G 3E9, Canada

<sup>2</sup> Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

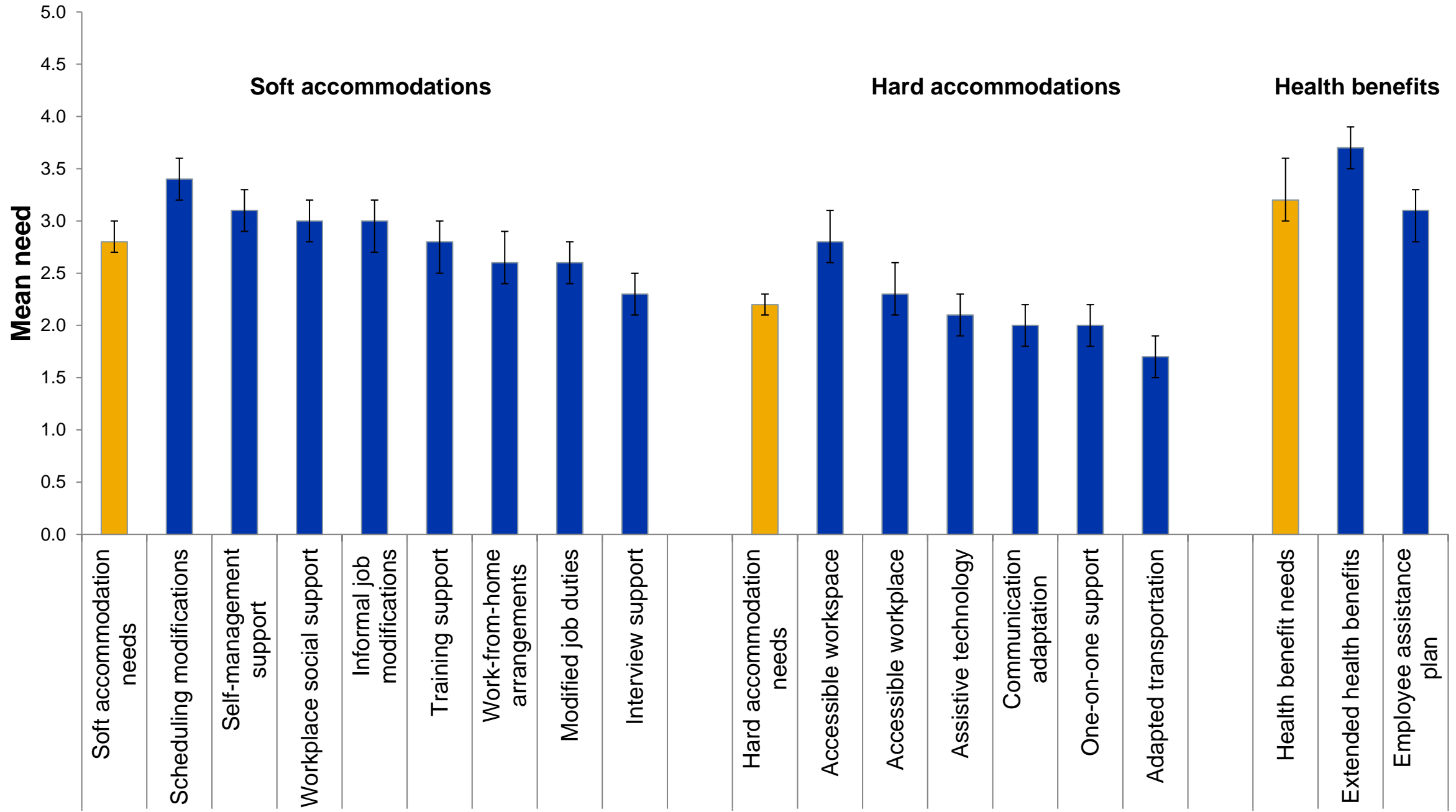
<sup>3</sup> Adele Furrle Consulting Inc., Ottawa, Canada

<sup>4</sup> National Educational Association for Disabled Students, Ottawa, Canada

<sup>5</sup> Seneca College, Toronto, Canada

Published online: 25 April 2018

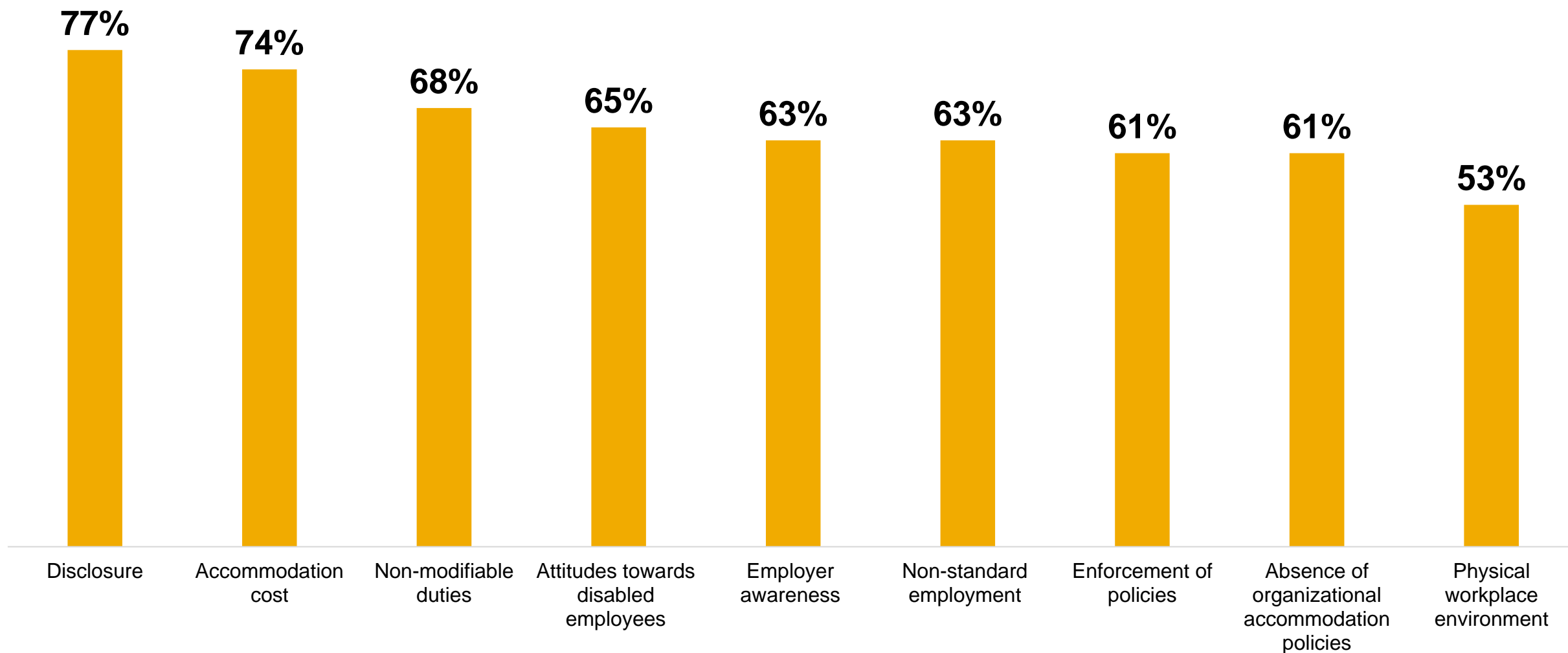
Springer







## Perceived barriers to accessing workplace supports





## **Work-focused interventions: address needs and perceived barriers**

### **Work-focused interventions**

Explicit intention is to promote employment participation; includes finding and sustaining paid work or enhancing productivity

### **Previous systematic reviews of general adult samples with disabling health conditions**

- Multidimensional work-focused interventions can be effective
- Workplace modifications, health/rehabilitation care, supported job placements and work-related training

**Unclear what work-focused interventions would be beneficial to young adults with different disabling health conditions**

# **Work-focused interventions for young adults**

A systematic review





## Research questions

- Q1** What work-focused interventions are most effective in supporting the employment of young adults with chronic disabling health conditions?
- Q2** Does the effectiveness of work-focused interventions differ for young adults living with different chronic disabling health conditions?
- Q3** Do interventions and their effectiveness differ across phases of the transition into the labour market?

## Systematic review

A systematic review is a literature review that answers a research question by:



**Identifying  
primary**



**Appraising  
methodological  
quality**

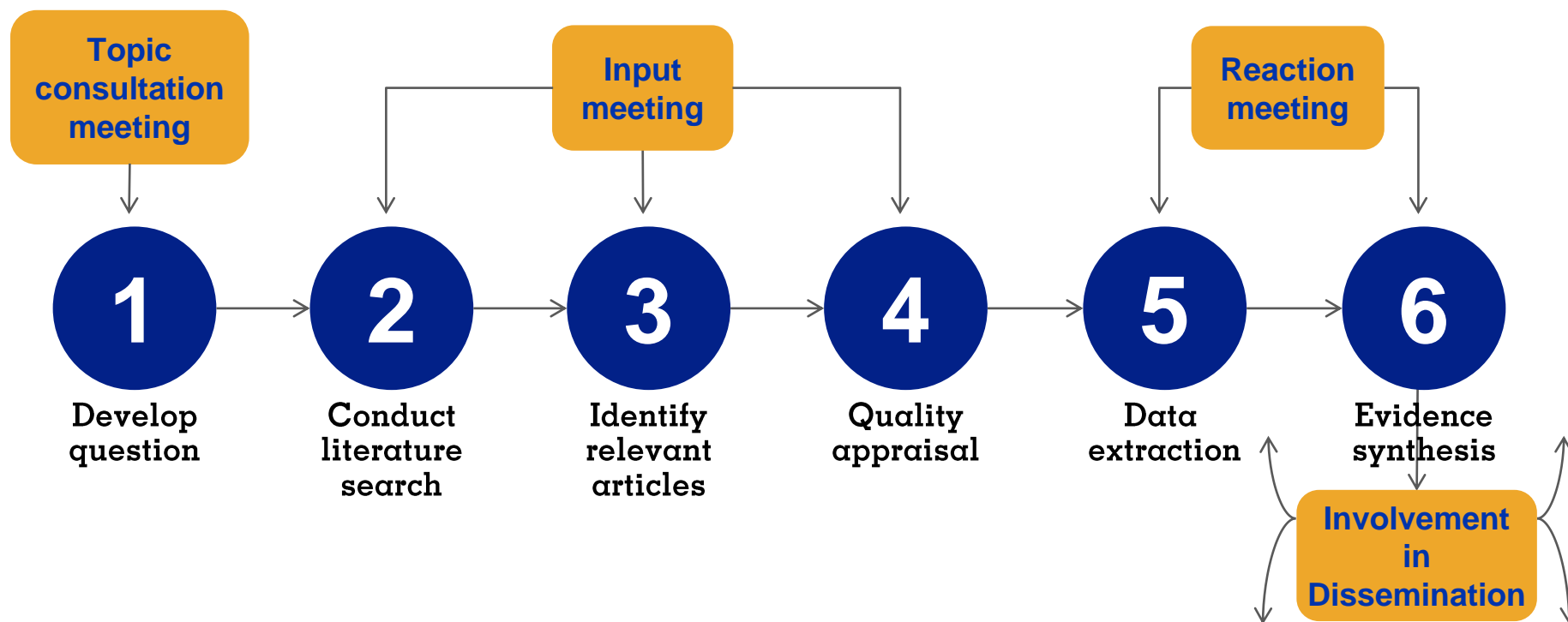


**Summarizing  
findings**

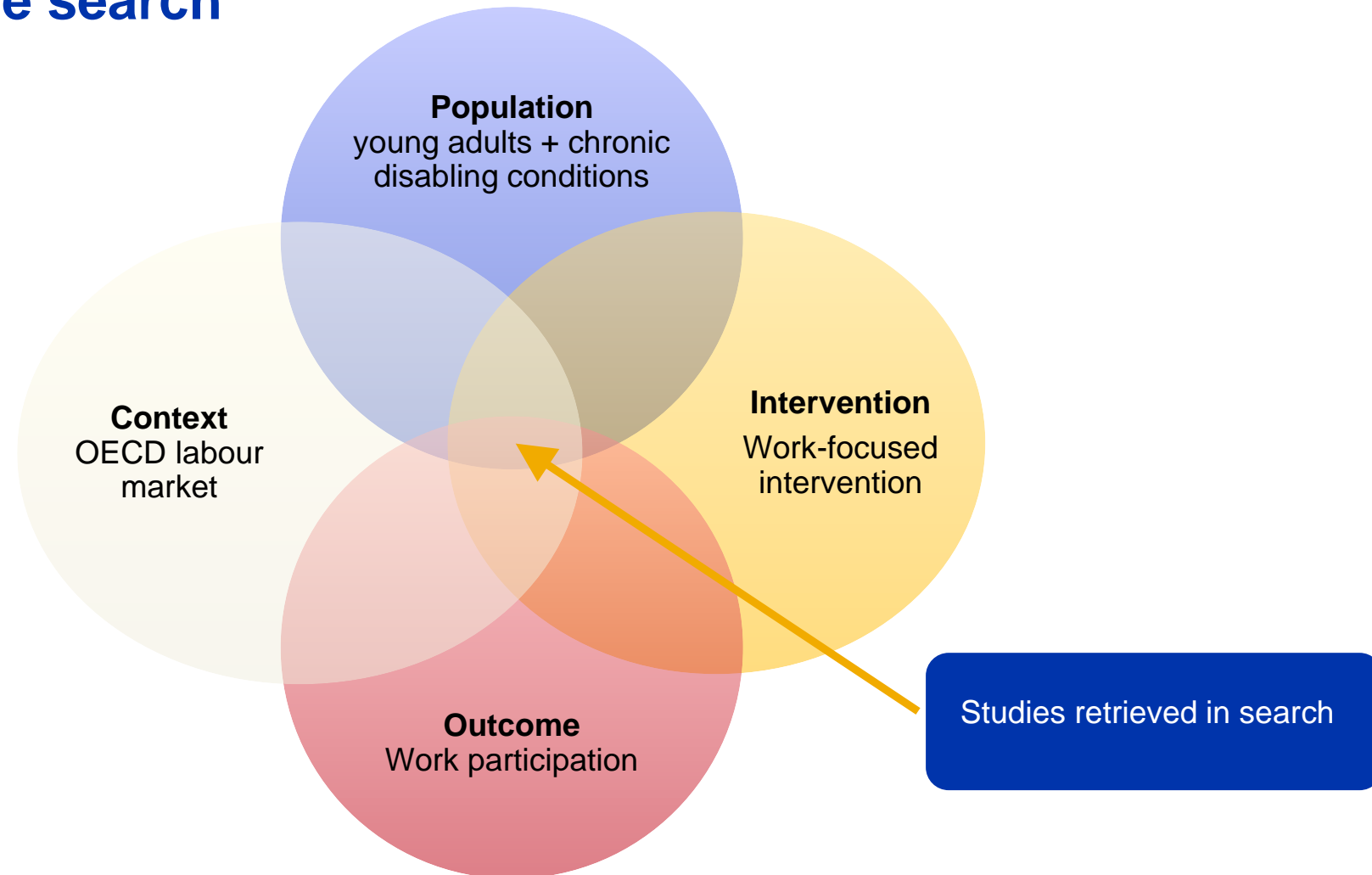
Develop specific recommendations for decision makers



## IWH Systematic Review Steps



## Step 2: Literature search





## Step 3: Identify relevant studies through title/abstract and full-text reviews

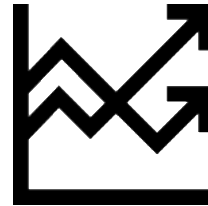
Inclusion



Work-focused



Young adults



Comparison  
group



Work  
participation

Exclusion



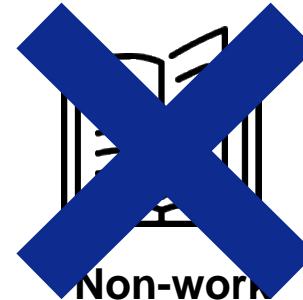
Clinical  
interventions



Focus on adults



Focus on  
adolescents



Non-work  
outcomes



## Steps 4-6: Quality assessment and evidence synthesis

### Quality appraisal tool

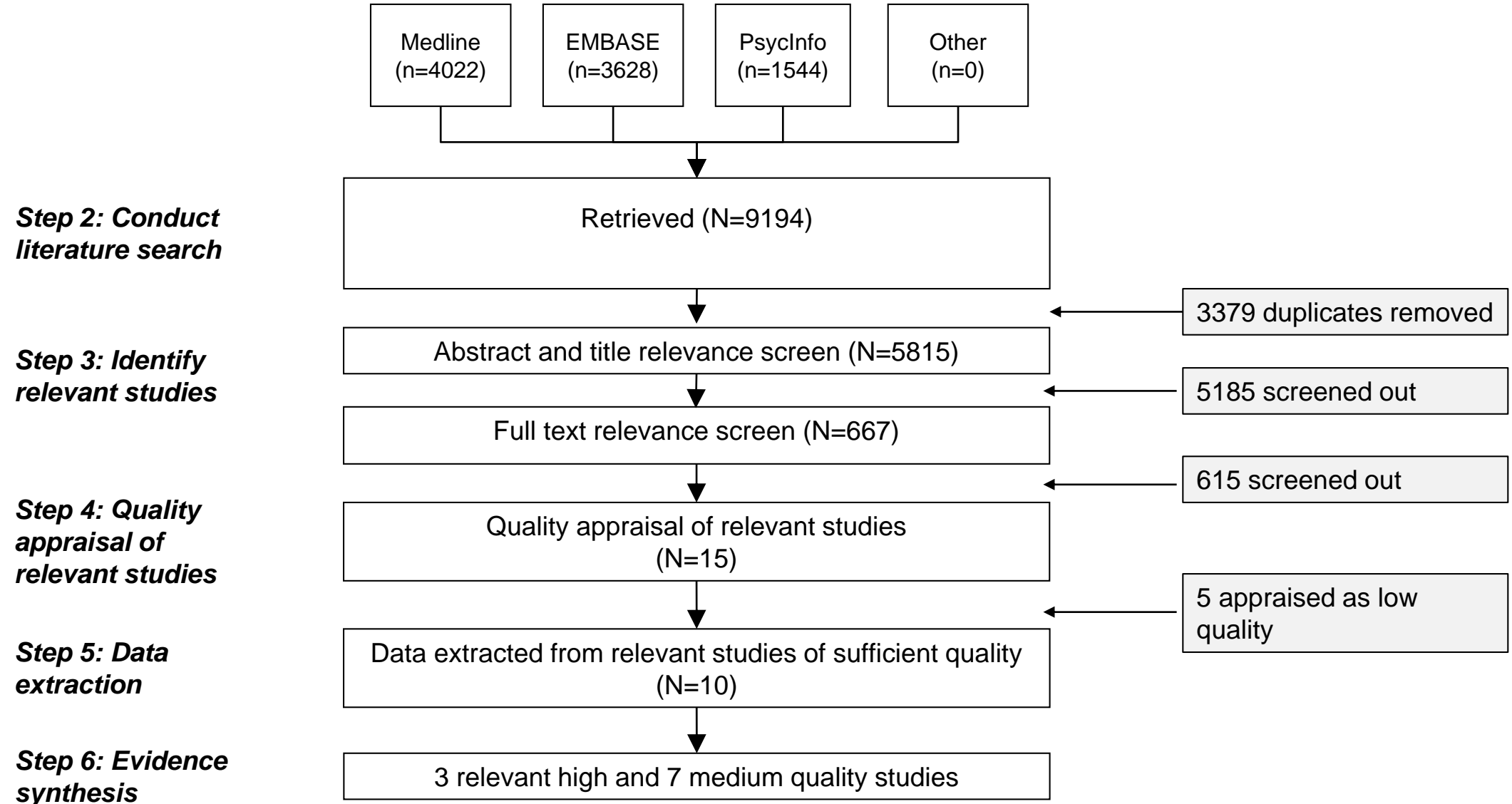
- Study design/objectives
- Recruitment
- Intervention
- Outcome and analysis

Level of Evidence	Minimum Quality	Minimum Quantity	Consistency	Strength of Messages
Strong	High (H)	3	3H studies agree; If >3 studies, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the M + H agree	Recommendations
Moderate	Medium (M)	2H or 2M + 1H	2H studies agree or 2M + 1H agree; If >3 studies, $> \frac{2}{3}$ of the M + H agree	Practice Considerations
Limited	Medium (M)	1H or 2M or 1M + 1H	1 H or 2 (M and/or H) studies agree; If >2 studies, $> \frac{1}{2}$ of the M + H agree	Not enough evidence to make recommendations or practice considerations
Mixed	Medium (M)	2	Findings from M + H are contradictory	
Insufficient	No high quality studies. Only medium quality studies that do not meet the above criteria			

\*High = >85% in quality assessment; Medium = 50-85% in quality assessment

# Results

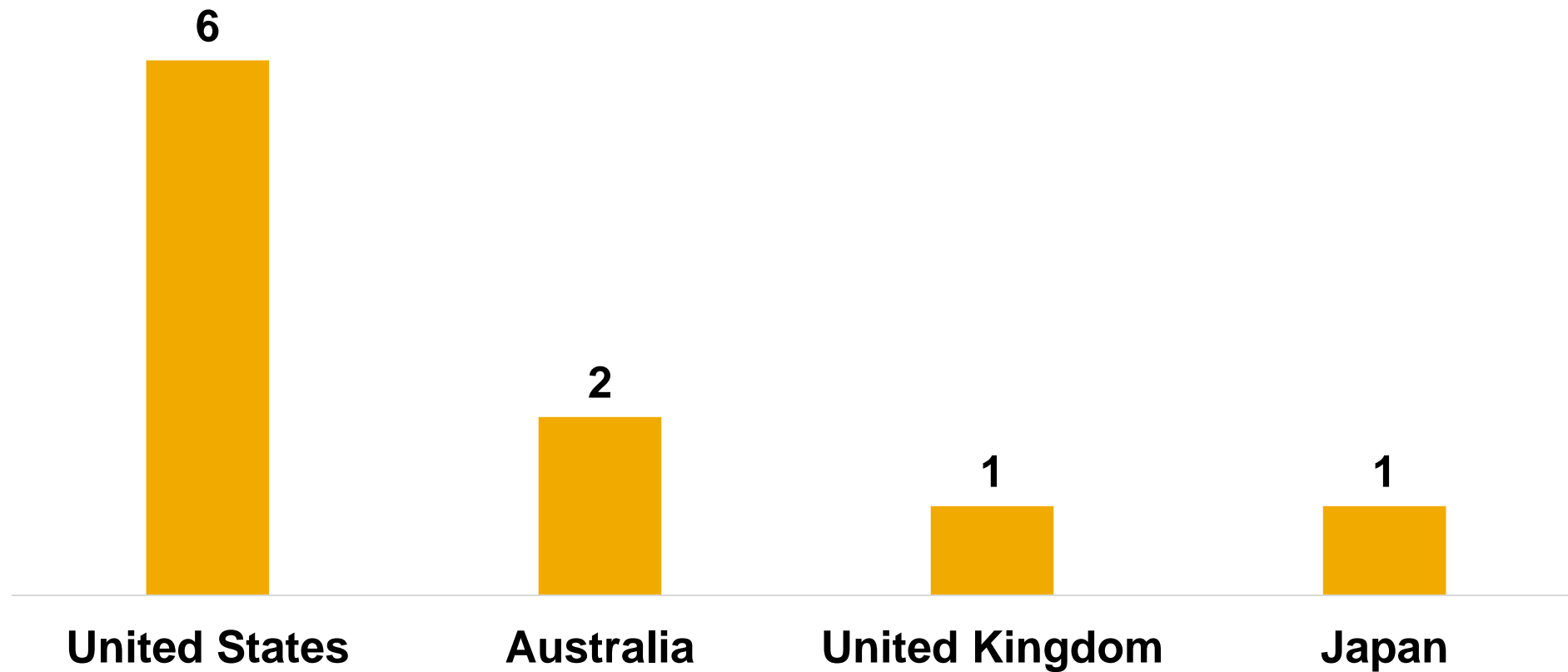
# Review Flowchart





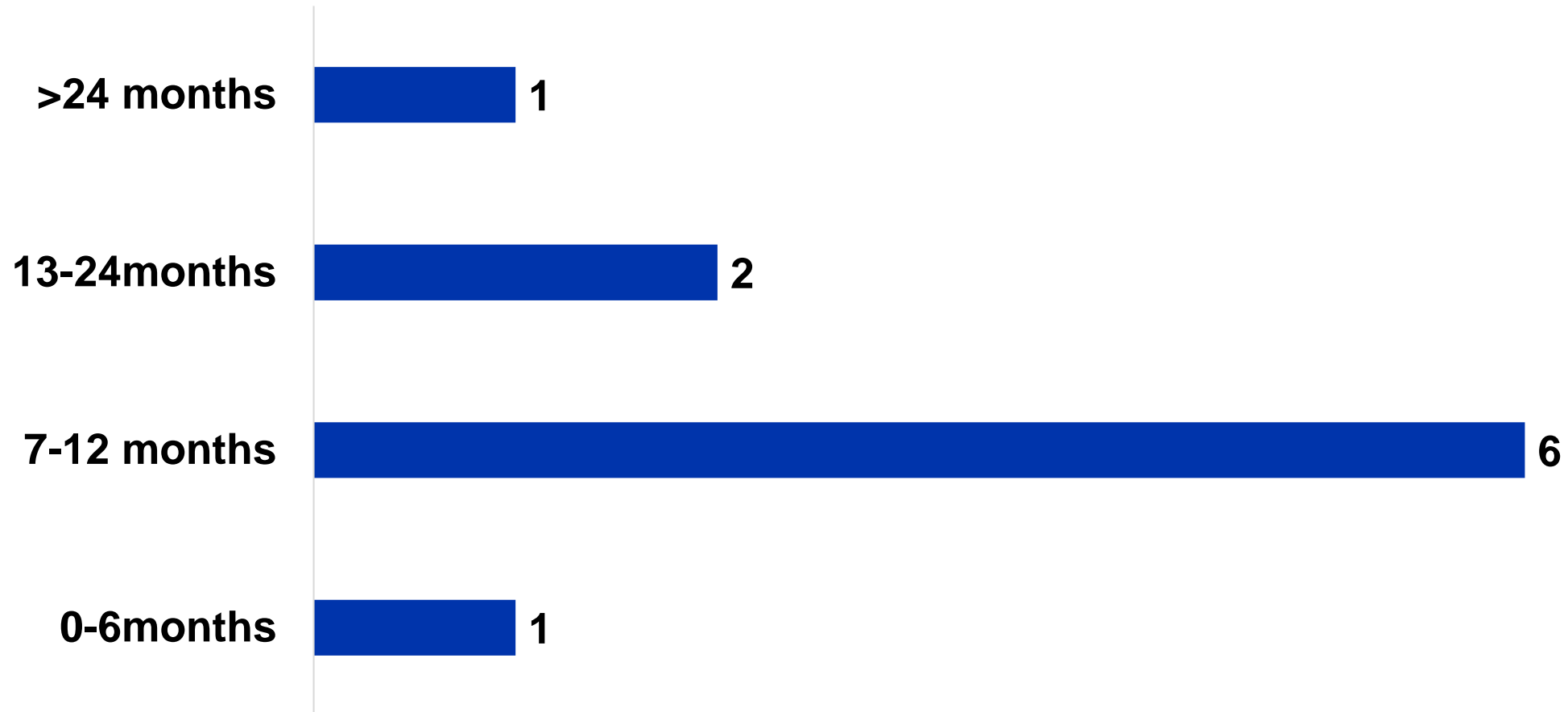


## Location of work-focused intervention



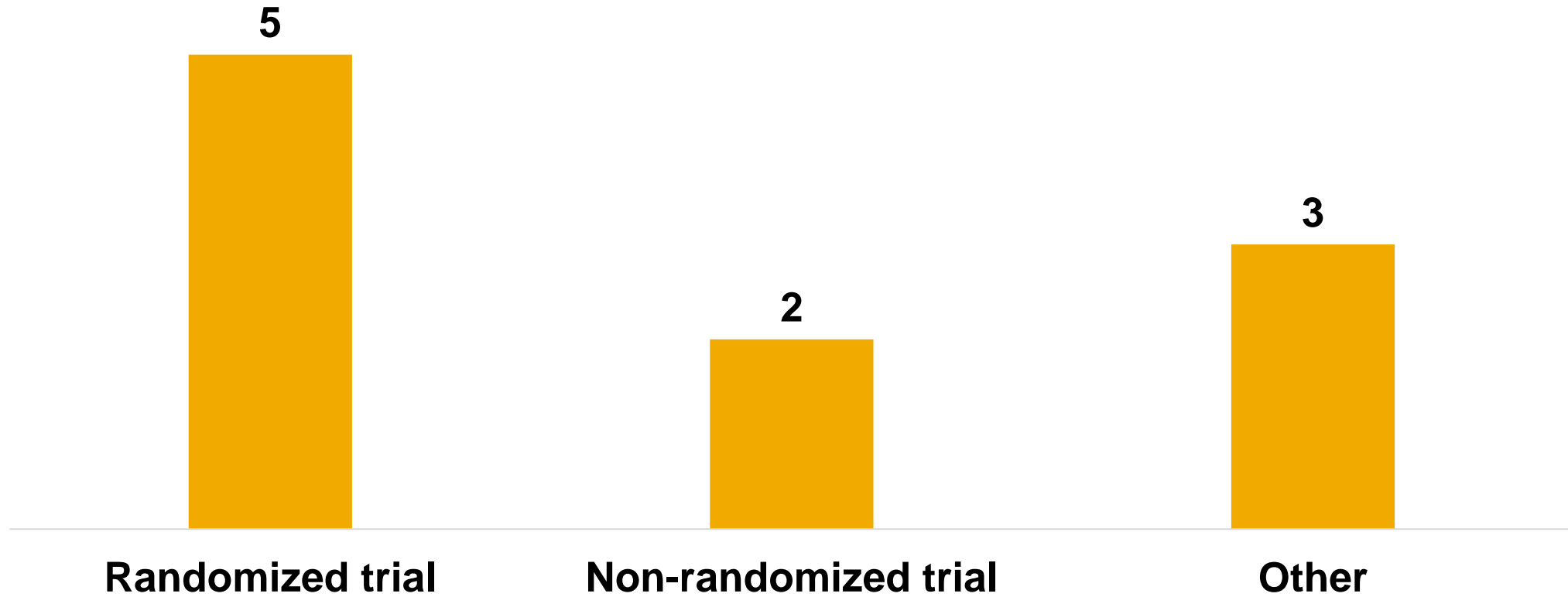


## Duration of observation



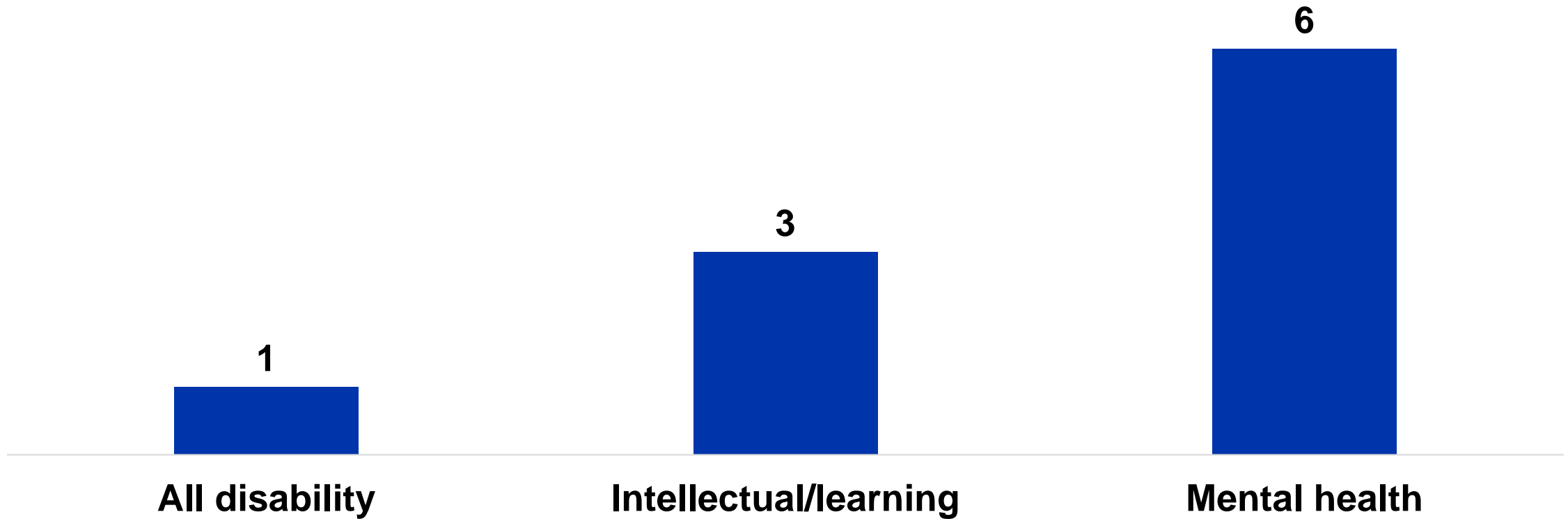


## Study design





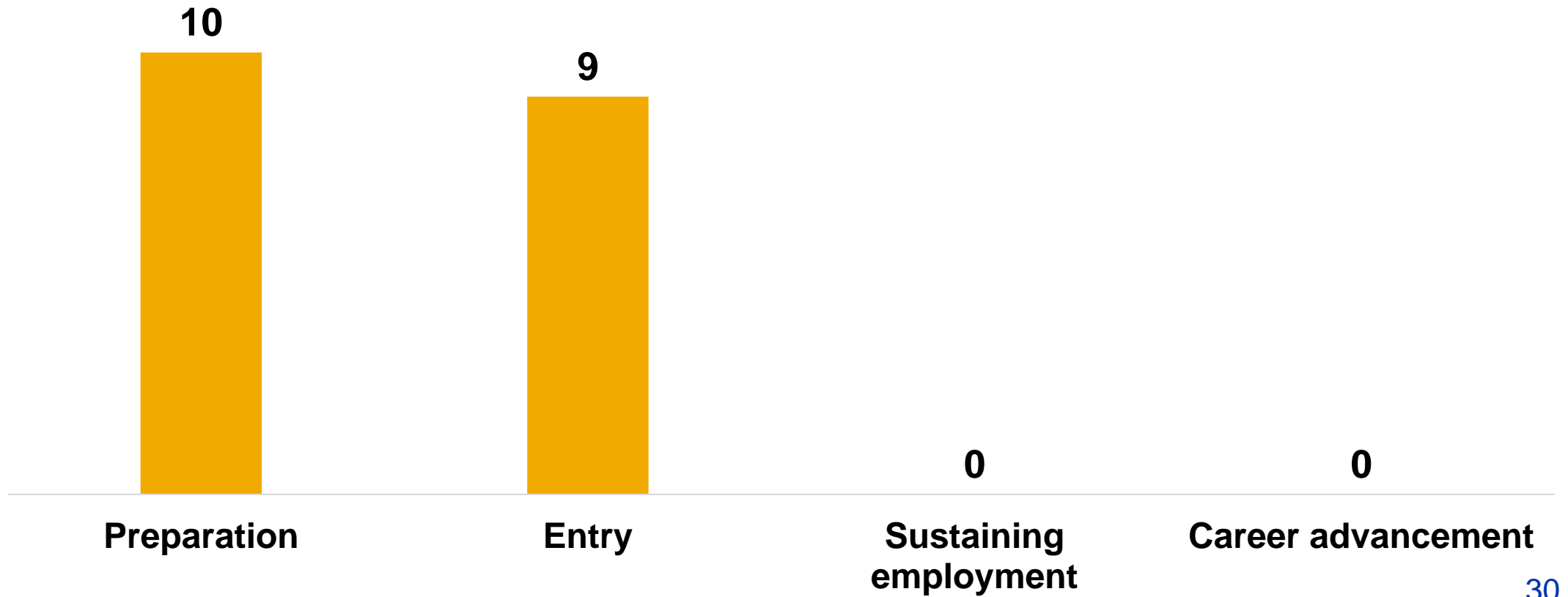
## Disability type





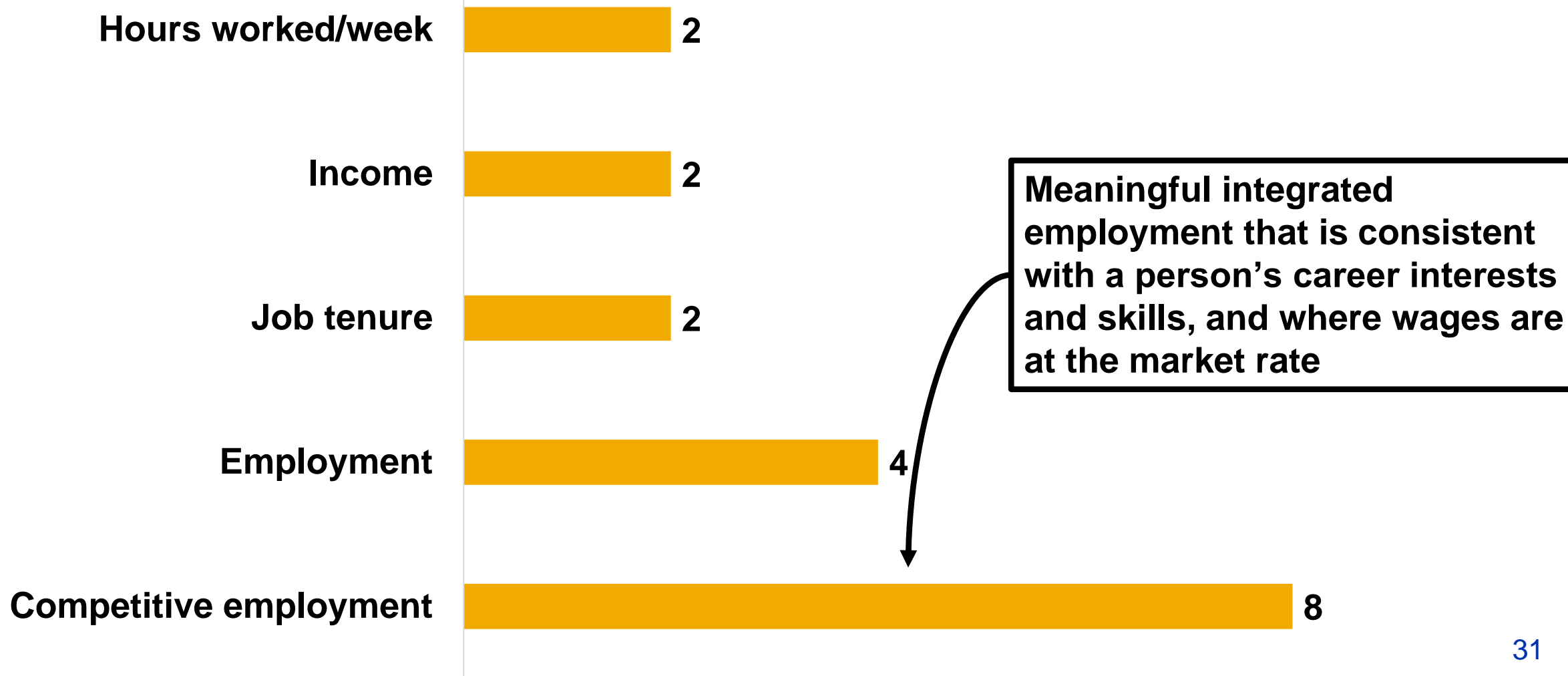


## Phase of employment transition





## Intervention outcomes





### **Tailored supported employment**

**n = 8**

- Workplace placement
- Tailored vocational coaching
- Multidisciplinary support team
- Workplace disability awareness
- Individualized placement and support

**Tailored supported employment +  
disease-specific workplace intervention**

**n = 2**

**Tailored supported employment +  
self-disclosure training**

**n = 1**



## Youth Transition Demonstration enhanced employment service

**n = 1**

- Individualized work-based experiences, empowerment building, family support, connection to a range of service providers (e.g., health care, assistive devices, transportation)
- Policy intervention; retain income support while engaging in the labour market

## Technology-based job interview training

**n = 1**

- Virtual reality simulation of a job interview with a virtual organizational human resource representative
- Mimic real-life interview to develop comfort and confidence in the interview process





Intervention	Work outcome	Level of evidence
Tailored supported employment	Competitive employment	<b>Strong (+)</b> 3 high quality and 4 medium quality
Tailored supported employment	Employment	<b>Moderate (+)</b> 2 high quality and 1 medium quality

**Q1** What work-focused policies and programs are most effective?

**Q2** Does the effectiveness of work-focused policies and programs vary for different disabling conditions?

	Intervention	Work outcome	Level of evidence
Mental health	Tailored supported employment	Competitive employment	<b>Moderate (+)</b> 2 high quality and 3 medium quality
Intellectual and learning disability	Tailored supported employment	Competitive employment	<b>Limited (+)</b> 1 high quality and 1 medium quality



**Q3.** Do interventions and their effectiveness differ across phases of the transition into the labour market?

No evidence to answer the research question

# Discussion

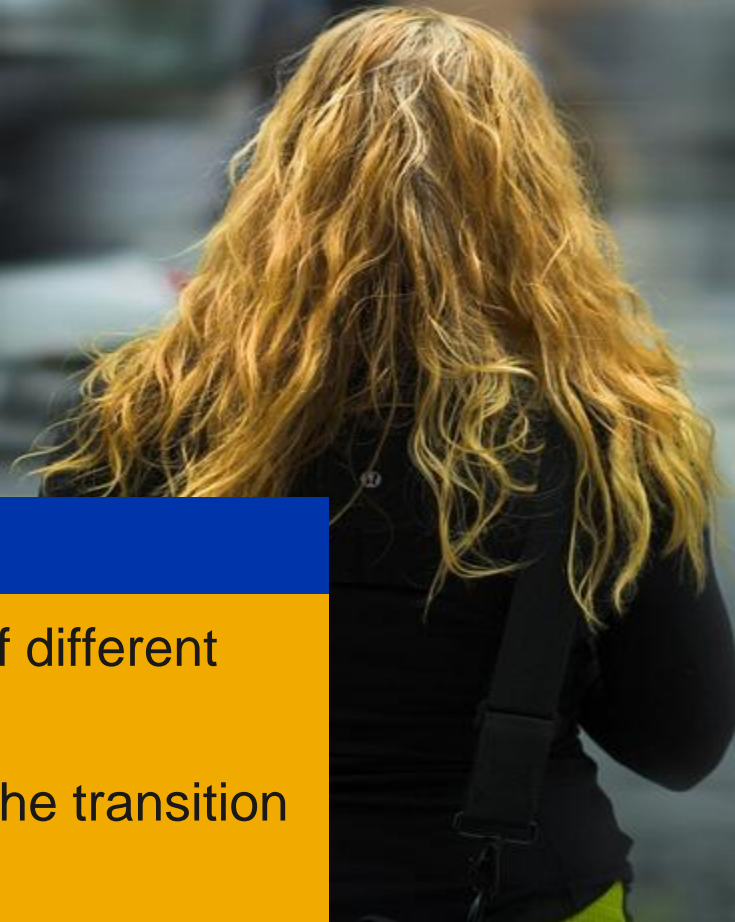
For young adults with disabling health conditions...

## Practice messages

- Tailored supported employment interventions are recommended
- Particularly effective for young adults with mental health conditions

## Insufficient evidence

- Interventions to address needs of different disabling health conditions
- Interventions at other phases of the transition into employment





## Reflections on tailored supported employment

**Multidimensional nature;** access competitive employment, health-care management, work environment intervention

- Address psychosocial and physical workplace barriers

Research is needed to examine the efficacy of tailored supported employment...

- Longer-term studies to examine if tailored supported employment interventions are effective in enhancing productivity and sustained work
- Tailored supported employment along with disability-specific interventions and/or disclosure training can potentially address barriers to accessing workplace supports

## What's missing in the literature?



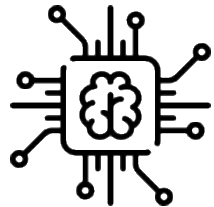
### Policy level interventions

- Use of policy tools as a population-level intervention
- Youth Transition Demonstration; income support waivers



### At-work experiences and career advancement

- Sustained employment
- Productivity
- Career growth



### Changing nature of work

- Precarious labour market
- Knowledge-based economy



### Other commonly reported chronic conditions

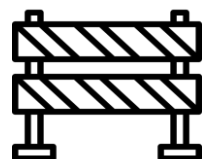
- Juvenile arthritis, diabetes

## What is missing (continued)?



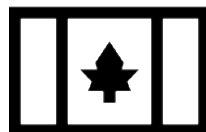
### **Addressing workplace support needs**

- Extended health benefits
- Soft accommodations



### **Addressing perceived barriers**

- Communication at work
- Employer perceptions regarding the cost/feasibility of accommodations



### **Canadian-focused interventions**





Young adults with chronic disabling conditions are a vulnerable labour market subgroup

Tailored supported employment interventions are recommended

We know little about the interventions that foster the employment

Research is needed

- Development of interventions with wide reach
- Address at-work experiences and needs
- Changing labour market and how it influences early work experiences

Conclusions



## Research + Stakeholder involvement

### Research team

**Arif Jetha (IWH)**

**Rob Shaw (UBC) Co-PI**

Quenby Mahood (IWH)

Monique Gignac (IWH)

Adrienne Sinden (McMaster U)

Mary Ann McColl (Queens U)

Kathleen Martin Ginis (UBC)

### Stakeholders

Canadian Disability Policy Alliance

March of Dimes

Neil Squire Society

Canadian Canadian Council on Rehabilitation  
and Work

Guelph University Disability Services



## Acknowledgements

### Project funding



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada



The Institute for Work & Health operates with the support of the Province of Ontario. The views expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province of Ontario.

### **Systematic review methodological support**

Emma Irvin, Kim Cullen and Dwayne Van Eerd



## Works cited

1. Arnett JJ. *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from late teens through the twenties*. New York, NY.: Oxford University Press, 2004.
2. Scarpetta S, Sonnet A, Manfredi T. Rising Youth Unemployment During The Crisis: How to Prevent Negative Long-term Consequences on a Generation? In: Development OfEC-oa, ed. OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers,. Paris, France, 2010.
3. Twenge J, Campbell S. Who are the Millennials? In: Ng E, Lyons S, Schweitzer L, eds. *Managing the new workforce: International perspectives on the Millennial generation*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing LTD, 2012:1-19.
4. Deloitte. The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2016: Winning over the next generation of leaders. Secondary The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2016: Winning over the next generation of leaders 2016. <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/millennialsurvey.html>.
5. Martin JC, Lewchuk W. The generation effect: Millennials, employment precarity and the 21st century workplace. Hamilton, ON: Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario, 2018:1-99.
6. Lamb C, Doyle S. Future-proof: Preparing young Canadians for the future of work. Toronto, ON: Brookfield Institute, 2017:1-24.
7. IPSOS. 3rd annual mental health check-up. Public Perspectives, 2017:1-11.
8. Hobbes M. Generation screwed. Secondary Generation screwed 2017. <https://highline.huffingtonpost.com/articles/en/poor-millennials/>.
9. Statistics Canada. A profile of persons with disabilities among Canadians aged 15 years or older, 2012. Ottawa, ON. , 2017.
10. Jetha A, Bowring J, Furrie A, Smith F, Breslin C. Supporting the Transition into Employment: A Study of Canadian Young Adults Living with Disabilities. *Journal of occupational rehabilitation* 2018:1-10
11. Statistics Canada. Manufacturing. Ottawa, ON, 2018.
12. Irvin E, Van Eerd D, Amick III BC, Brewer S. Introduction to special section: systematic reviews for prevention and management of musculoskeletal disorders. *Journal of occupational rehabilitation* 2010;**20**(2):123-26
13. Institute for Work & Health. How we do systematic reviews. Secondary How we do systematic reviews 2018. <https://www.iwh.on.ca/systematic-review-program/methods>.
14. Slavin RE. Best-evidence synthesis: An alternative to meta-analytic and traditional reviews. *Educational researcher* 1986;**15**(9):5-11
15. Bond GR, Drake RE. Making the case for IPS supported employment. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research* 2014;**41**(1):69-73
16. Drake RE, Bond GR. The future of supported employment for people with severe mental illness. *Psychiatric rehabilitation journal* 2008;**31**(4):367
17. Cullen K, Irvin E, Collie A, et al. Effectiveness of workplace interventions in return-to-work for musculoskeletal, pain-related and mental health conditions: an update of the evidence and messages for practitioners. *Journal of occupational rehabilitation* 2017:1-15



## Keep up on research and evidence-based practices from IWH



[AJetha@iwh.on.ca](mailto:AJetha@iwh.on.ca)



@ArifJetha



Sign up online for our monthly e-alerts, newsletters, event notifications and more: [www.iwh.on.ca/e-alerts](http://www.iwh.on.ca/e-alerts)



Follow @iwhresearch on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/iwhresearch](http://www.twitter.com/iwhresearch)



Connect with us on LinkedIn:  
[www.linkedin.com/company/institute-for-work-and-health](http://www.linkedin.com/company/institute-for-work-and-health)



Subscribe to our YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/iwhresearch](http://www.youtube.com/iwhresearch)





**Institute  
for Work &  
Health**

Research Excellence  
Advancing Employee  
Health

[www.iwh.on.ca](http://www.iwh.on.ca)