



# LEADING HEALTHY ORGANIZATIONAL INTERVENTIONS: THE ROLE OF LINE MANAGERS IN MAKING INTERVENTIONS WORK

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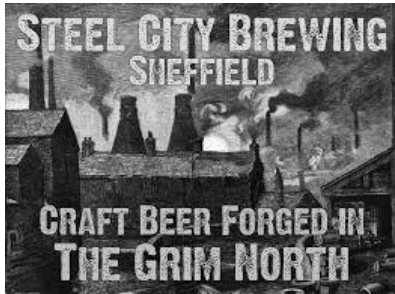


Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019, 9.00-9.45



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# Sheffield – steel city





# Agenda

What is an organizational intervention (OI)?

Challenges in organizational intervention research

Line managers can make or break an intervention

What do line managers need to do?

What do line managers need for them to do?

How can we integrate knowledge into future research?



# Organizational interventions

Focus on improving the psychosocial working environment and health and well-being of organizational members

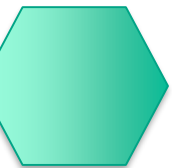
Through changing work is designed, organized and managed (Nielsen, 2013)

Four focus areas (Semmer, 2011)

- Tasks
- Work context (workload and working time)
- Role clarity
- Social relationships
- Most often a mixture

Participation often a key element

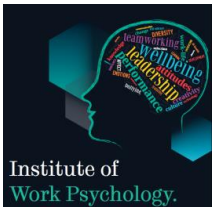
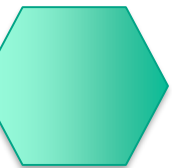
Recommended as they tackle the stressor at source (ETUC, 2004; EU-OSHA, 2010; ILO, 2001)





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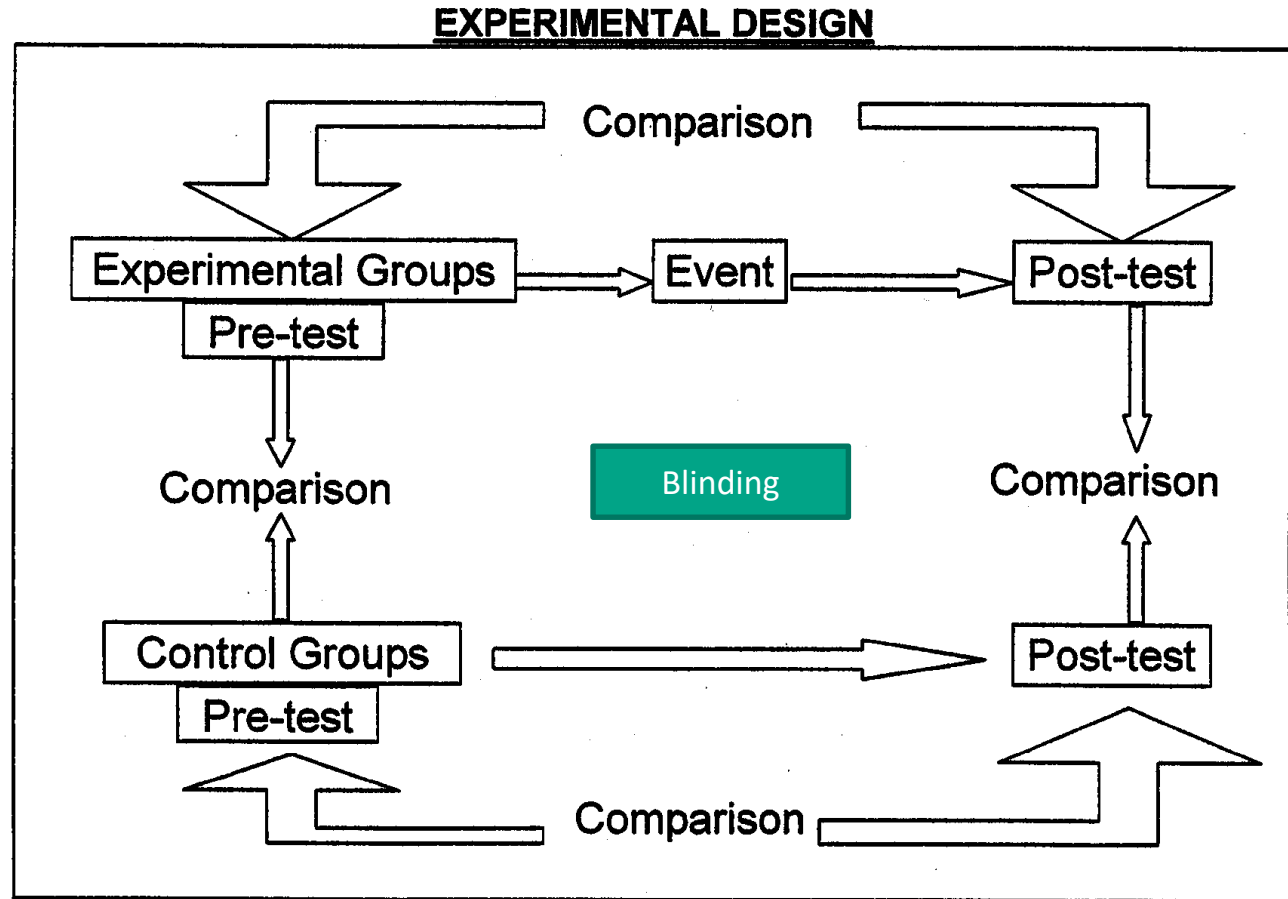
# Challenges in organizational intervention evaluation designs



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# The randomised, controlled design



Treatment



Control

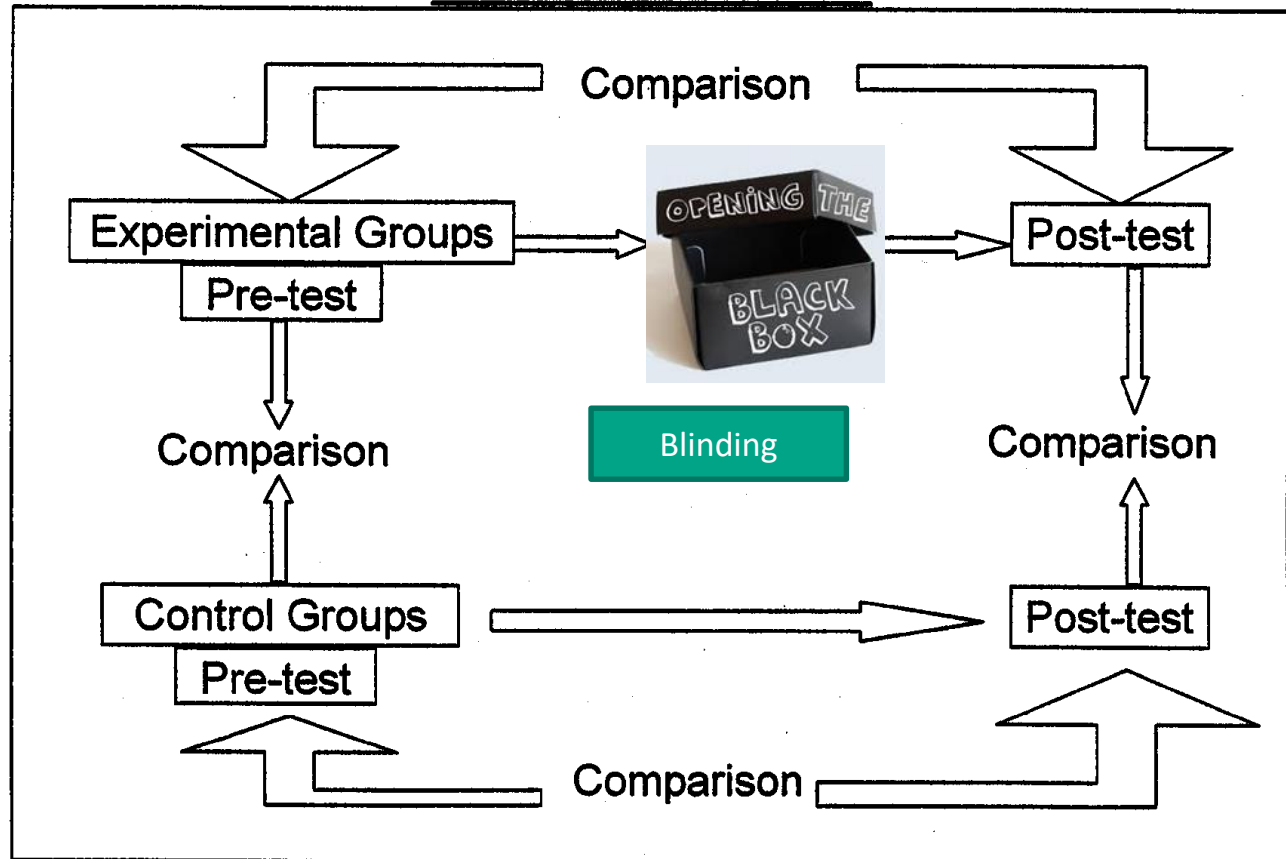




# The randomised, controlled design



## EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN



Treatment



Control



# Organizational interventions

Focus on the work environment and health  
and well-being

**RCT – the golden standard?**

The changing work is designed, organized and managed (2013)

Four focus areas (Summer, 2011)

- Workload (workload and working time)
- Role clarity
- Social relationships

Management interventions

No easy implementation strategy

Participation often a key element

Recommended as a key element in the stressor at source (ETUC, 2004; EU-OSHA, 2010; ILO, 2001)

Participation and joint behaviour change

Cluster randomization

Concurrent events

Control groups a challenge

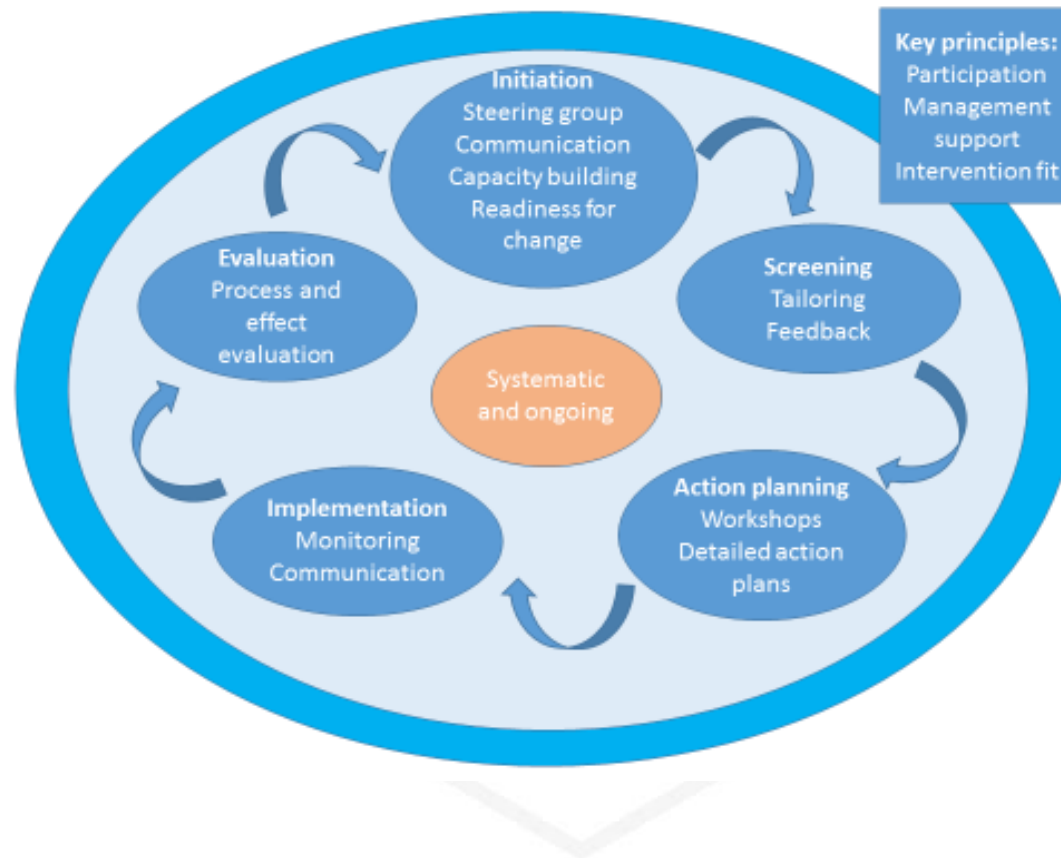
**Many stakeholders**

Not one treatment or pill

Diverse group of employees



# Five phases of organizational interventions



Nielsen, K., Noblet, A. (2018). Organizational interventions: where we are, where we go from here? In K. Nielsen and A. Noblet: Designing, implementing and evaluating organizational interventions. Routledge.



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# Line managers can break an intervention





# Line managers breaking an intervention

Railway station managers

Intervention: Change in responsibility: repair of faulty station equipment returned to station line managers

Means: Communication via written memos from senior management and information at individual and team meetings

Adapted study design: Awareness of change (Intervention group)  
– 68% of sample

Effect evaluation. Change in exhaustion level





# Results

Adapted study design

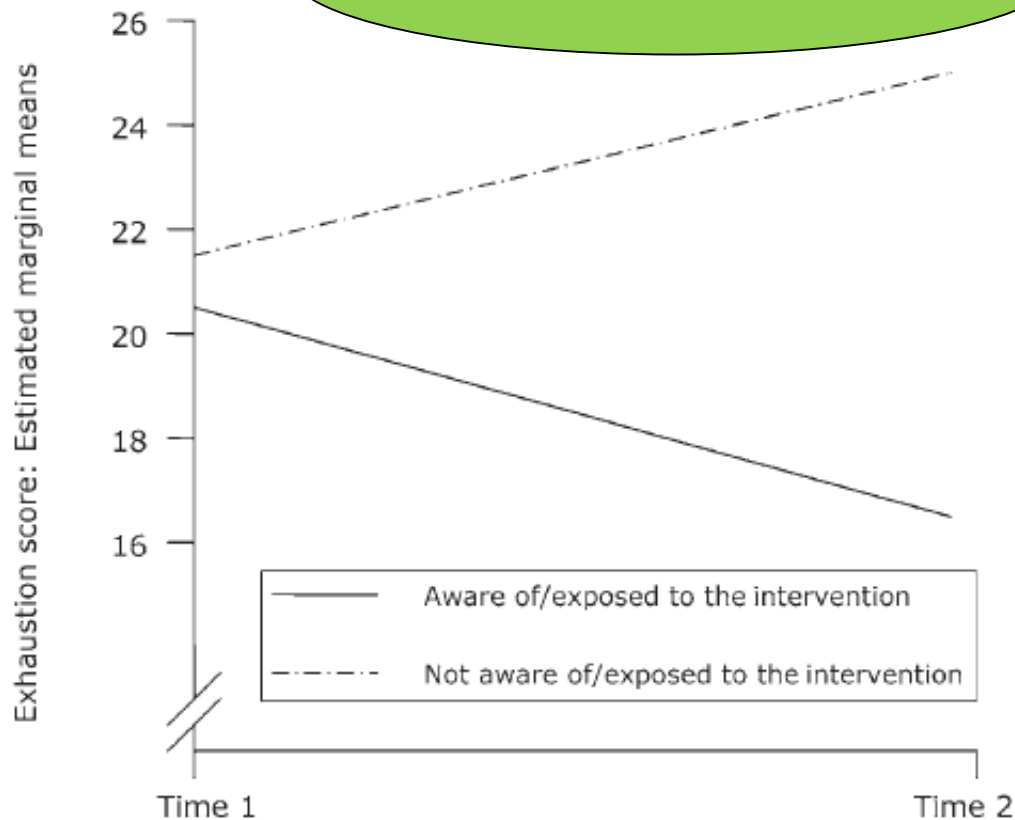


Figure 1. Interaction effect (Study 1: Railway staff).

Randall, R., Griffiths, A., & Cox, T. (2005). Evaluating organizational stress-management interventions using adapted study designs. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 14, 23-41.



# Qualitative process evaluation

Minutes from meetings: No communication about responsibilities being reversed

Those unaware of changes had the same manager

Stakeholder interviews: Station managers reluctant to report changes due to budgetary restraints

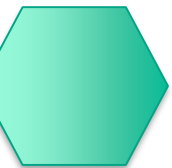
Line managers had good reasons to resist!





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# Line managers can make an intervention





## Line managers and team implementation

Two elderly care centres

Problems: Turnover and absenteeism

Solution: Team implementation to ensure making use of employees' skills and provide them with a challenging job

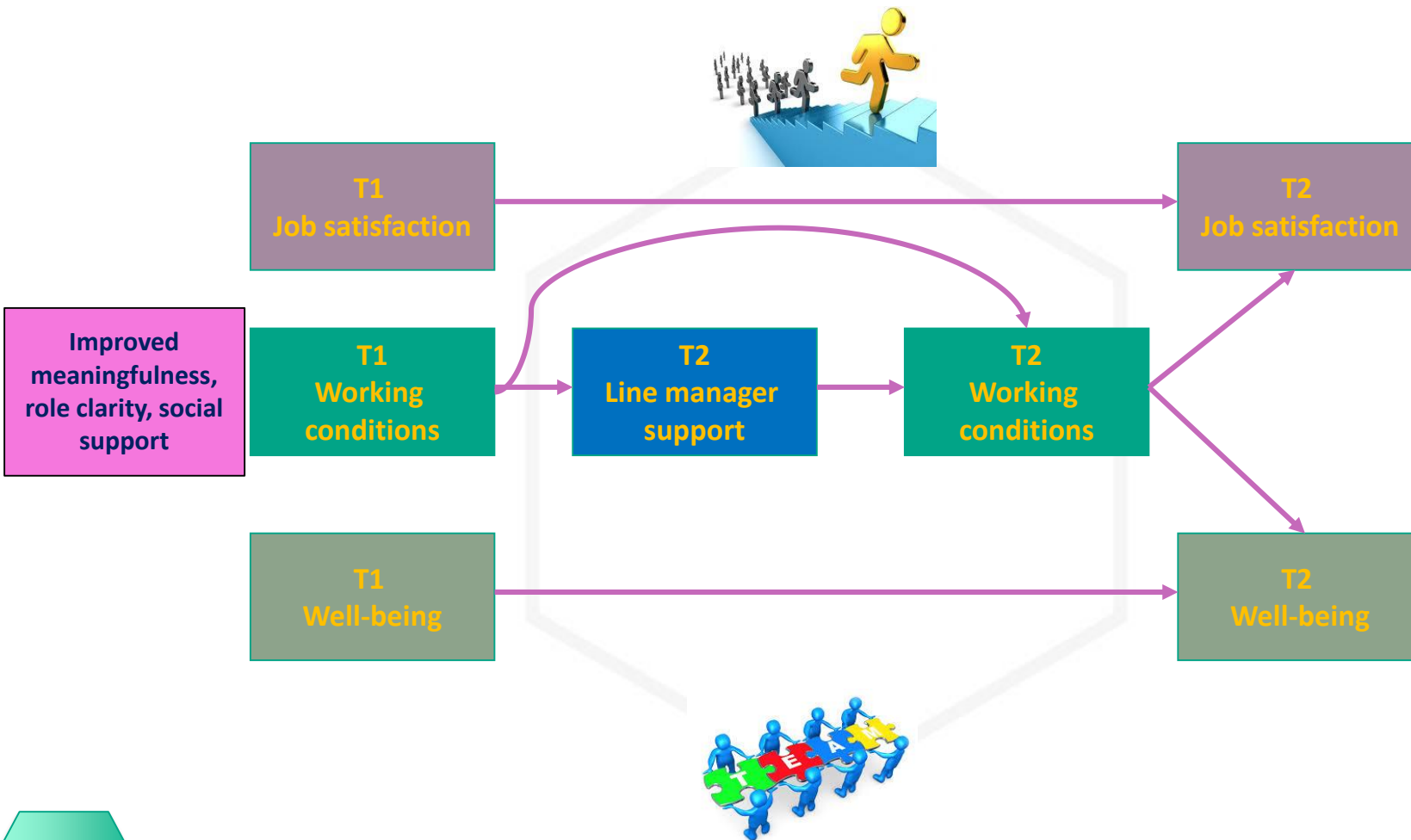
Line managers are often drivers of change (Nielsen & Randall, 2009)

- Communication
- Role model positive expectations
- Developing a clear vision and strategy for change
- Involve employees

My immediate superior has actively worked towards the implementation of the intervention"; "My immediate superior was positive about the implementation of the intervention"; "My immediate superior has informed me about everything she/he knew about the implementation of the intervention



# Line managers making an intervention



The secret of leadership is simple: Do what you believe in. Paint a picture of the future. Go there. People will follow. Seth Godin



# Line managers' role during intervention

Hospital using Lean management principles

Kaizen considering health and wellbeing at the same time as streamlining processes for performance

What is the role of the line manager over time?

Does s/he encourage participatory process? Improvement in job satisfaction?

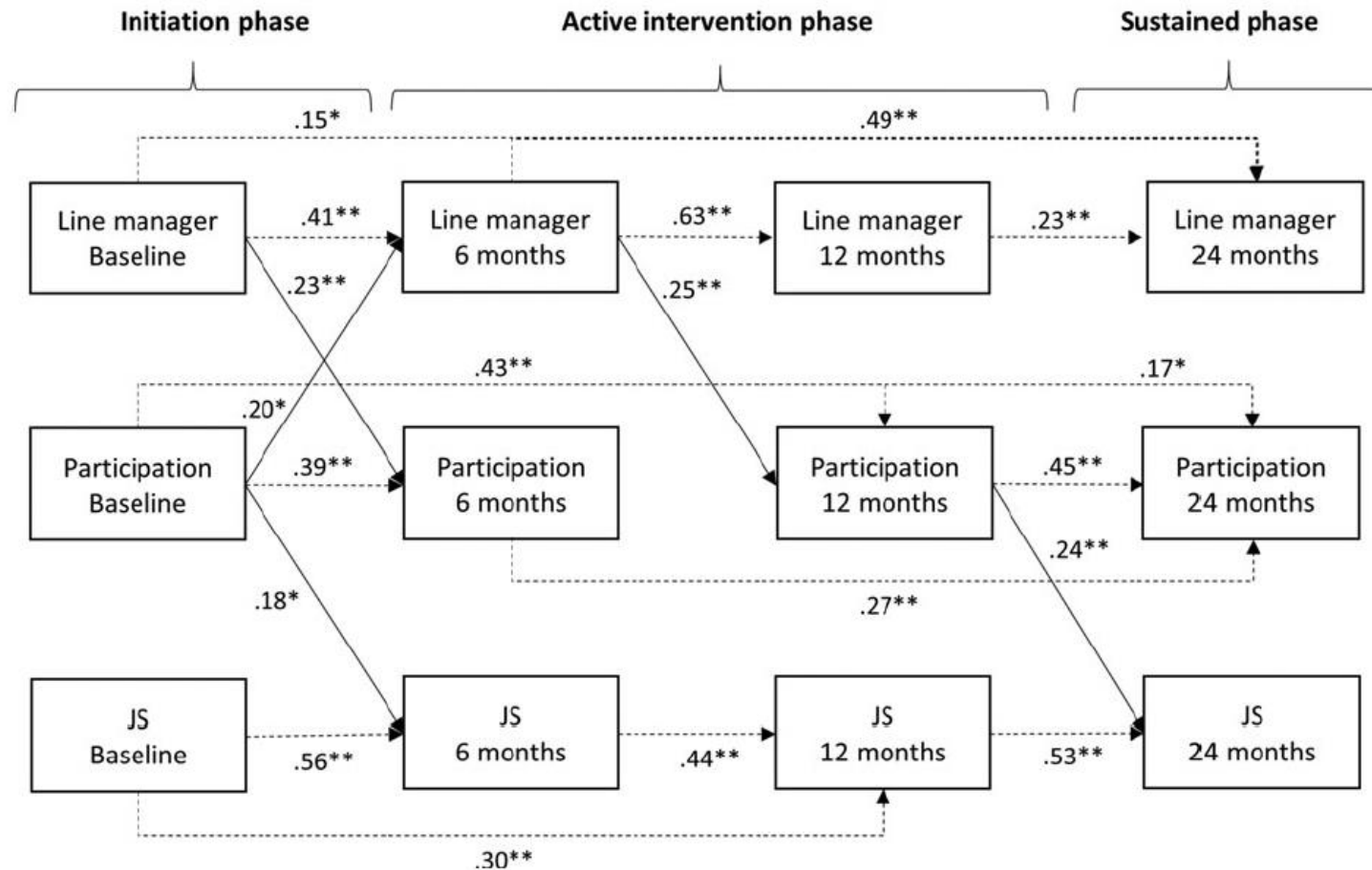
I feel that I am an important part of how we approach health promotion at my workplace

I believe that my closest manager encourages us to use Kaizen to develop our work





# The role of line managers over time





# The role of line manager during phases

Norwegian university

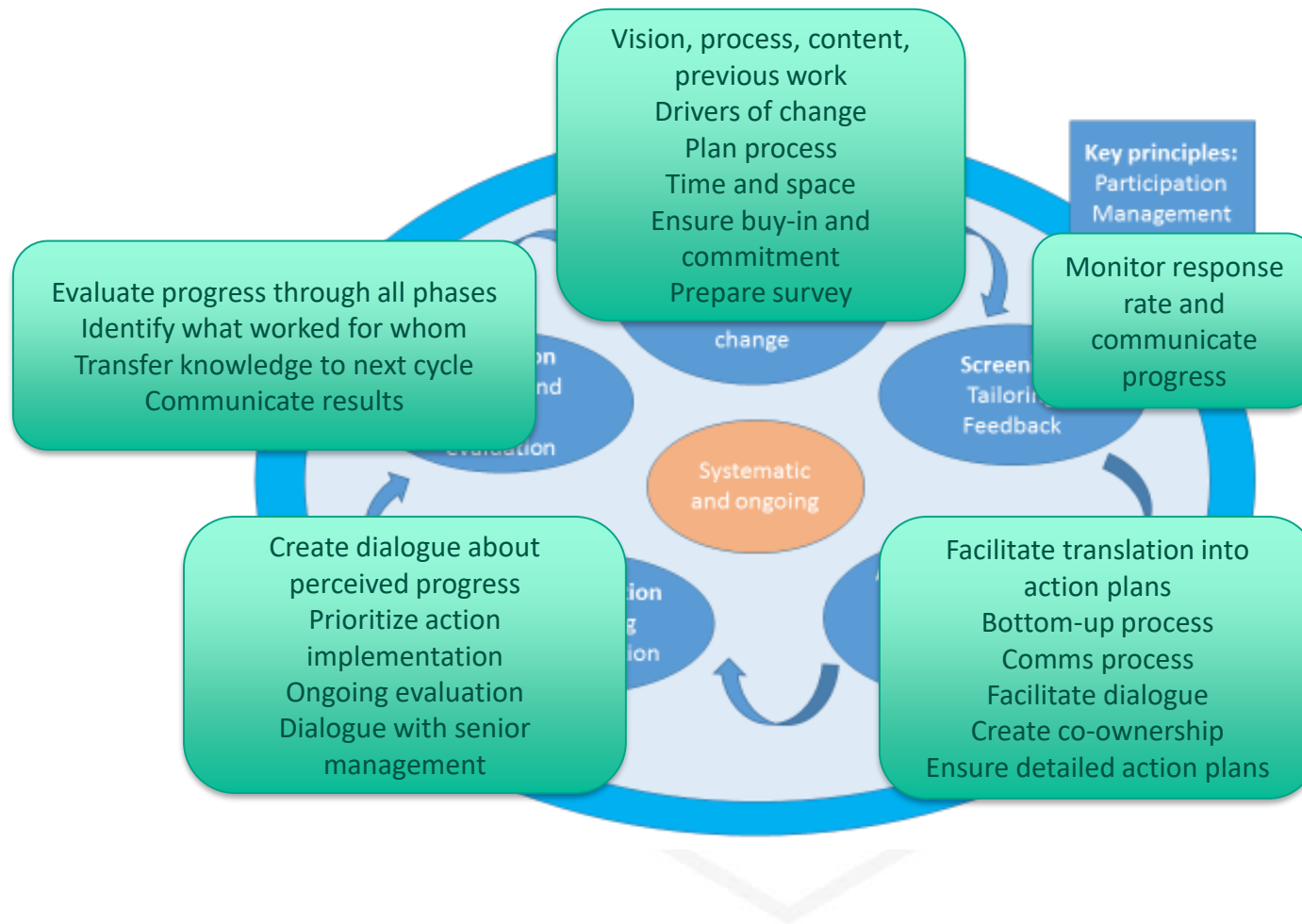
Interviews with line managers (heads of department)

What do line managers need to do in each phase?

What support do they need?



# What do line managers need to do?



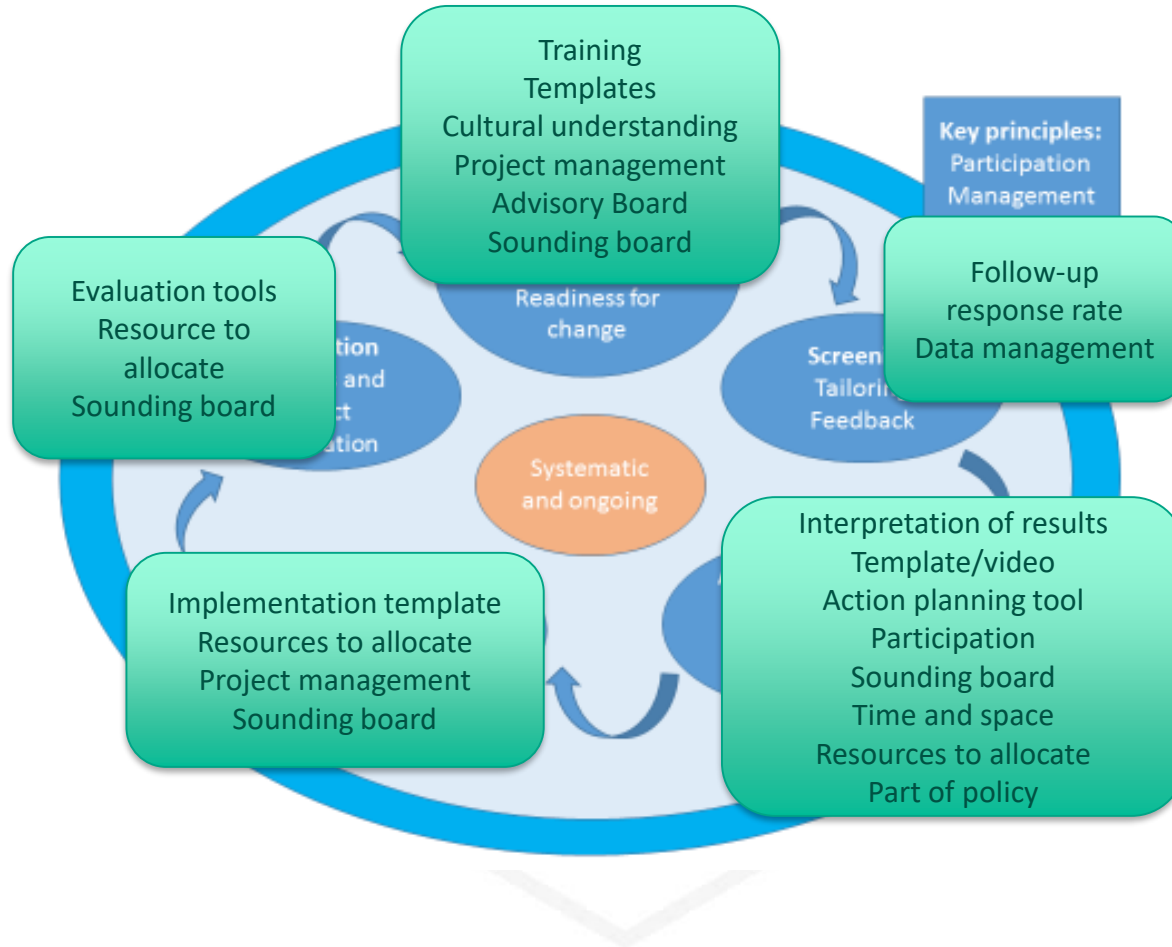
Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them. John C. Maxwell

Nielsen, K., Noblet, A. (2018). Organizational interventions: where we are, where we go from here? In K. Nielsen and A. Noblet: Designing, implementing and evaluating organizational interventions. Routledge.

Christensen, M., Innstrand, S.T., Saksvik, P.O., & Nielsen, K. (2019). The Line Manager's Role in Implementing Successful Organizational Interventions –ARK as a Case Study. The Spanish Journal of Psychology. Doi:10.1017/SJP.2019.4



# What support do line managers need?



Be strong enough to stand alone, smart enough to know when you need help, and brave enough to ask for it. Unknown

Nielsen, K., Noblet, A. (2018). Organizational interventions: where we are, where we go from here? In K. Nielsen and A. Noblet: Designing, implementing and evaluating organizational interventions. Routledge.

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## Methodological implications

### Quantitative process evaluation

- Line managers' role in ensuring change happens (Randall, Nielsen & Tvedt, 2009)

### Qualitative process evaluation

- Document analysis: Action plans and meeting minutes
- Interviews: Line managers and employees (Nielsen & Randall, 2013)





## Future intervention designs

Assess line managers' context pre-intervention

Prepare and train line managers for intervention

Provide opportunities for network and knowledge exchange

Integrate into existing procedures and policies

OI interventions part of line manager responsibilities

Multi-level intervention designs





# Conclusions

RCT does not provide us with the answers we need!

Line managers can make or break an intervention!

Sometimes they break an intervention for good reason

They do not have the resources

They cannot make sense of the intervention

**Line managers need support**

Through training (benefits for employees and leaders)

Clarity of intervention

Integration into context





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