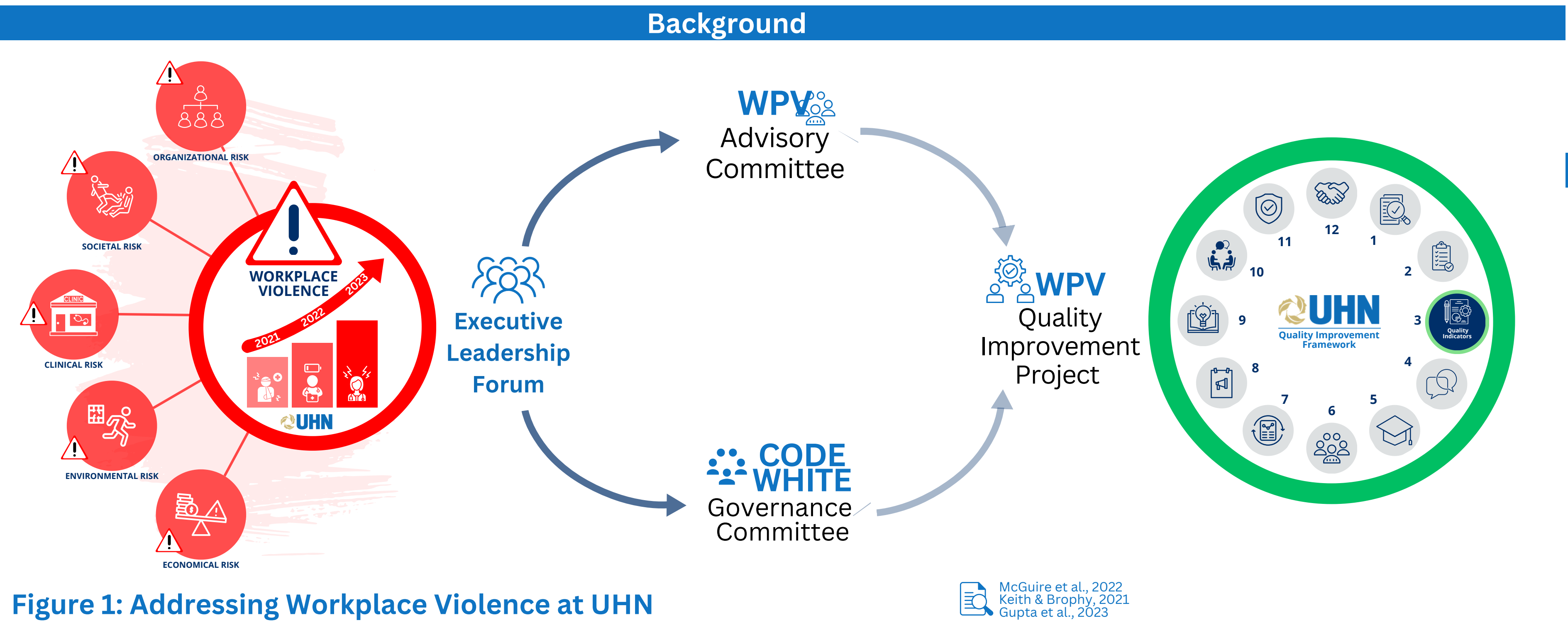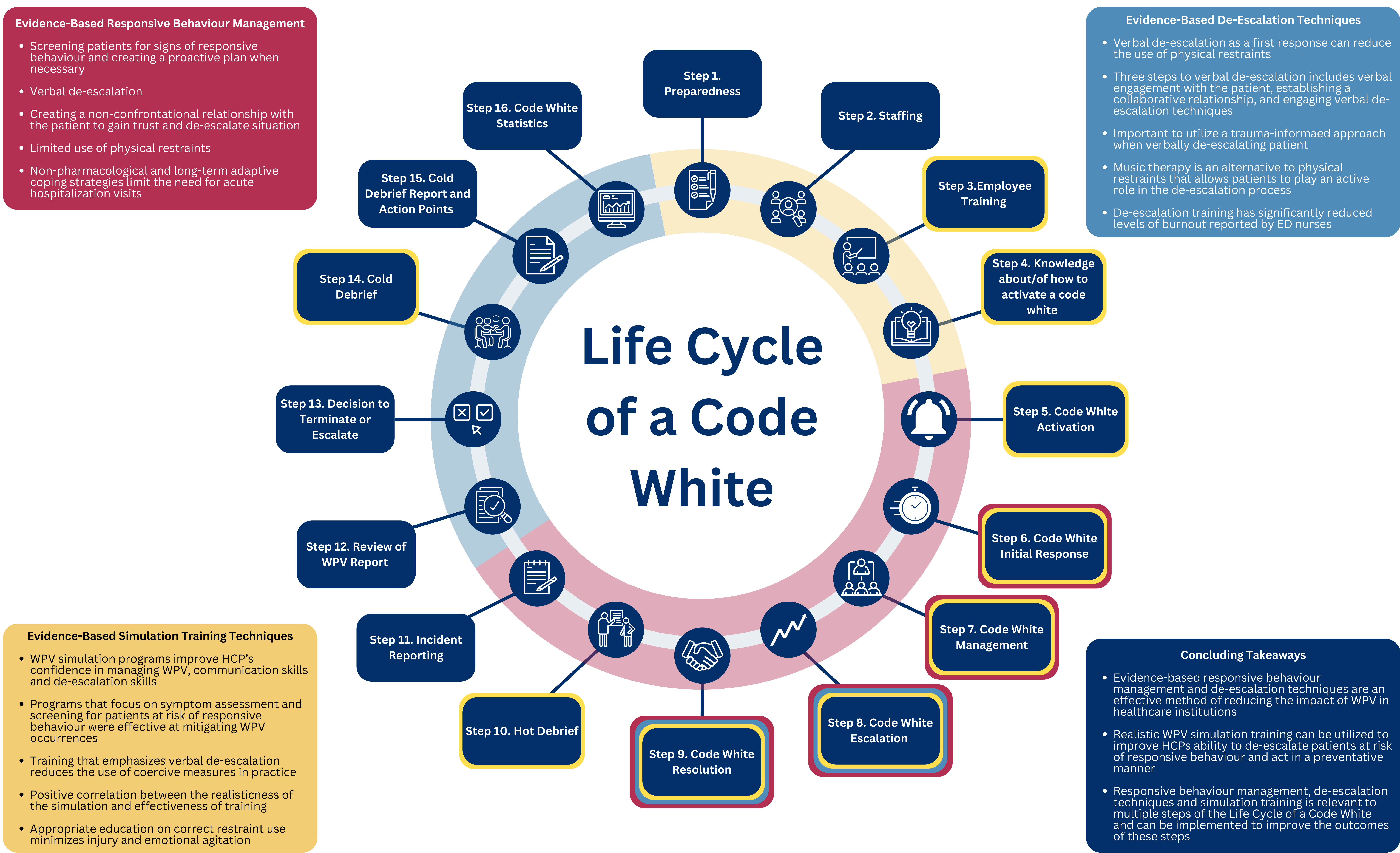# A Literature Review of Workplace Violence in Health Care Settings and Effective Solutions

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Background

Figure 1: Addressing Workplace Violence at UHN

McGuire et al., 2022
Keith & Brophy, 2021
Gupta et al., 2023

Research Question

What are the best-practice methods of preventing workplace violence in healthcare institutions? How can they be applied at a healthcare institution?

Methods

An ongoing literature search of articles related to workplace violence in healthcare, agitation management in healthcare, de-escalation techniques for agitated patients and code white simulation training is underway at the University Health Network. Currently, 41 sources from 2018 to 2023 have been collected and summarized. The key findings from these articles have been compiled and applied to the Life Cycle of a Code White Journey map.

Results and Application

Evidence-Based Responsive Behaviour Management

- Screening patients for signs of responsive behaviour and creating a proactive plan when necessary
- Verbal de-escalation
- Creating a non-confrontational relationship with the patient to gain trust and de-escalate situation
- Limited use of physical restraints
- Non-pharmacological and long-term adaptive coping strategies limit the need for acute hospitalization visits

Evidence-Based De-Escalation Techniques

- Verbal de-escalation as a first response can reduce the use of physical restraints
- Three steps to verbal de-escalation includes verbal engagement with the patient, establishing a collaborative relationship, and engaging verbal de-escalation techniques
- Important to utilize a trauma-informaed approach when verbally de-escalating patient
- Music therapy is an alternative to physical restraints that allows patients to play an active role in the de-escalation process
- De-escalation training has significantly reduced levels of burnout reported by ED nurses

Life Cycle of a Code White

- Step 1. Preparedness
- Step 2. Staffing
- Step 3. Employee Training
- Step 4. Knowledge about/of how to activate a code white
- Step 5. Code White Activation
- Step 6. Code White Initial Response
- Step 7. Code White Management
- Step 8. Code White Escalation
- Step 9. Code White Resolution
- Step 10. Hot Debrief
- Step 11. Incident Reporting
- Step 12. Review of WPV Report
- Step 13. Decision to Terminate or Escalate
- Step 14. Cold Debrief
- Step 15. Cold Debrief Report and Action Points
- Step 16. Code White Statistics

Evidence-Based Simulation Training Techniques

- WPV simulation programs improve HCP's confidence in managing WPV, communication skills and de-escalation skills
- Programs that focus on symptom assessment and screening for patients at risk of responsive behaviour were effective at mitigating WPV occurrences
- Training that emphasizes verbal de-escalation reduces the use of coercive measures in practice
- Positive correlation between the realisticness of the simulation and effectiveness of training
- Appropriate education on correct restraint use minimizes injury and emotional agitation

Concluding Takeaways

- Evidence-based responsive behaviour management and de-escalation techniques are an effective method of reducing the impact of WPV in healthcare institutions
- Realistic WPV simulation training can be utilized to improve HCPs ability to de-escalate patients at risk of responsive behaviour and act in a preventative manner
- Responsive behaviour management, de-escalation techniques and simulation training is relevant to multiple steps of the Life Cycle of a Code White and can be implemented to improve the outcomes of these steps

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