

Building the foundations for impact: Establishing a practice-based research network of physiotherapists and collaborative research question design.

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Background

The disconnect between research and clinical practice hampers behavioural research impact. There is a lack of information to guide researchers and clinicians on how to meaningfully collaborate.

Objective

To describe key learnings from establishing a practice-based research network of physiotherapists in the Hunter region of Australia.

Methods

We used program logic and theory of change to design establishment activities (Figure 1). We did a formative evaluation. We held a problem mapping workshop with local stakeholders and did an online poll to prioritise research areas.

Figure 1: Program logic for network establishment

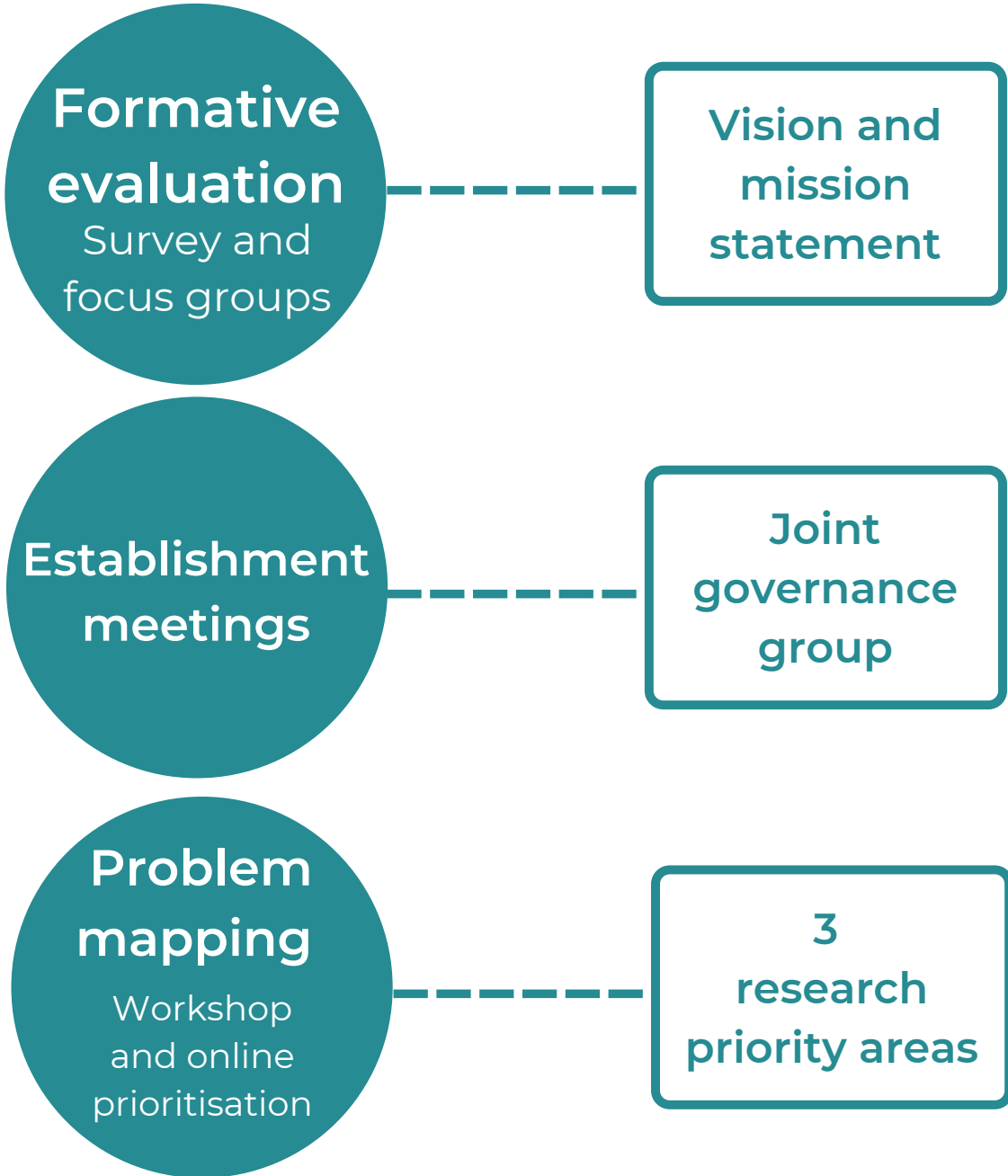
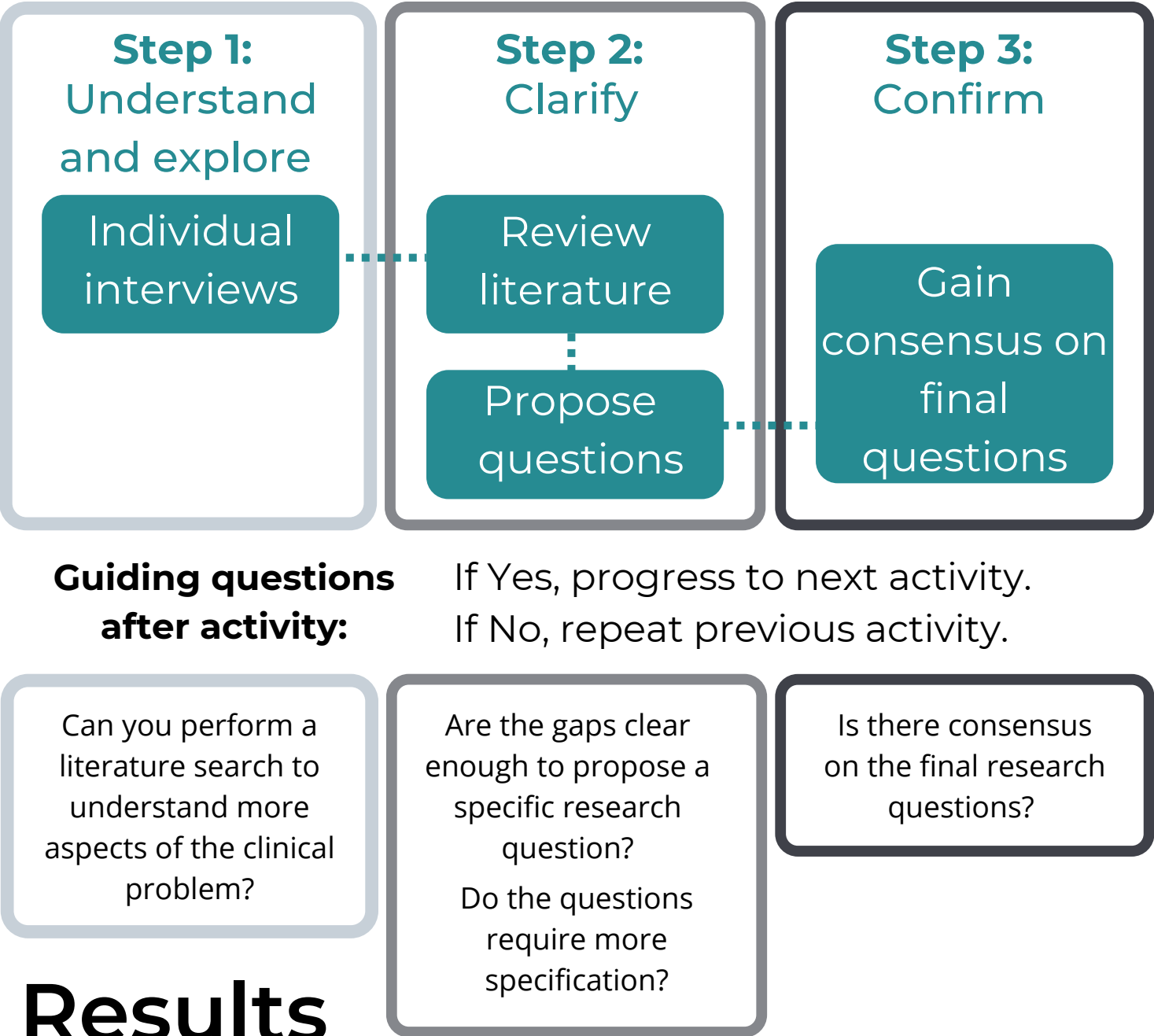


Figure 2: Collaborative research question development



Results

Key lessons

- A vision and mission statement was key to harness physiotherapists' motivations
- 'Time crunched' and pragmatic ways of doing things (for example, research prioritisation online) enabled better engagement.
- A joint governance group has ensured meaningful collaboration

Our research question development process minimised information loss in tackling our 3 priority research areas:

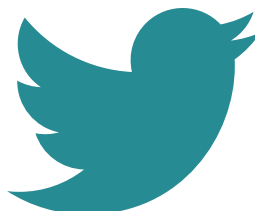
- i) preventing lifestyle risk factors;
- ii) improving care standards;
- iii) understanding patient's perceptions of pain

Conclusion

This description of network establishment is a resource for those who want to optimise behavioural trial impact through collaboration. More work is needed to adapt our learnings and models to other contexts.

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