

# Perceived employer-related barriers and facilitators for work participation of employees diagnosed with cancer: a systematic review of employers' and employees' perspectives

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No conflict of interest



# 'Building Bridges Between Science and Practice'



Maastricht University



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# Return to work (RTW) of employees diagnosed with cancer

RTW interventions: patient-oriented, inconclusive results<sup>1</sup>

Employer:

- Main stakeholder RTW process
- Express need for support themselves<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup>De Boer et al. 2015

<sup>2</sup>Tiedtke et al. 2017

# Objective

Synthesize qualitative knowledge about work participation of employees diagnosed with cancer and role of employers:

1. Which employer-related barriers and facilitators are perceived by (a) employers and (b) employees diagnosed with cancer?
2. How can these barriers and facilitators be synthesized to understand their perceived consequences for work participation of employees diagnosed with cancer?

# Methods

- Four databases: MEDLINE, EMBASE, PsycINFO, Business Source Premier
  - Jan 2005 – Dec 2016
- Qualitative studies:
  - Employers (line-manager, supervisor, HR manager)
  - Employees diagnosed with cancer
- Data extraction: *behavior / attitude of employer as barrier or facilitator*

# Results

**Employees with cancer: 47 studies included**

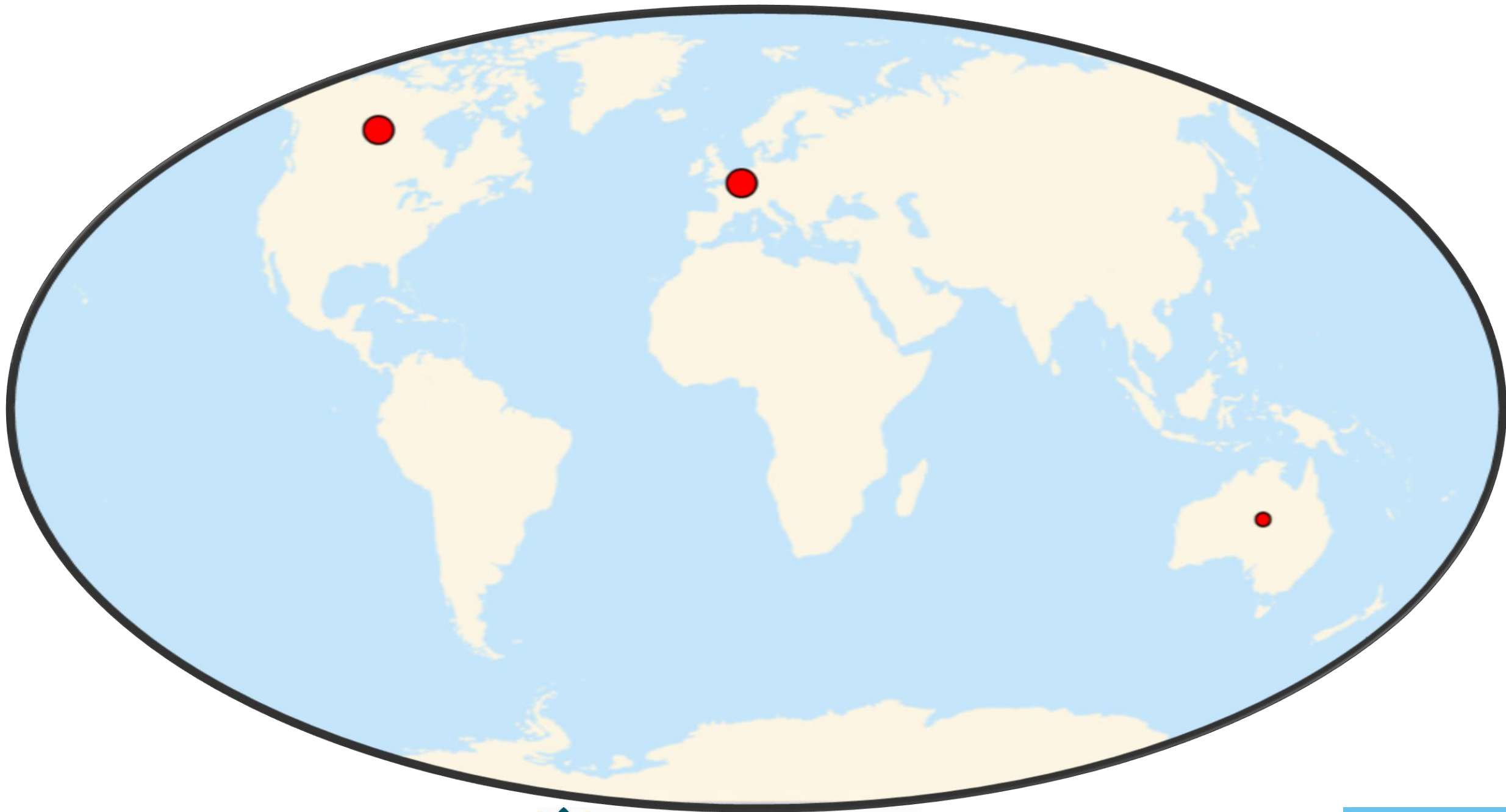




# Results

**Employees with cancer: 47 studies included**

**Employers: 5 studies included**



# Results

**Employees with cancer:** 47 studies included

**Employers:** 5 studies included

**Data extraction:**

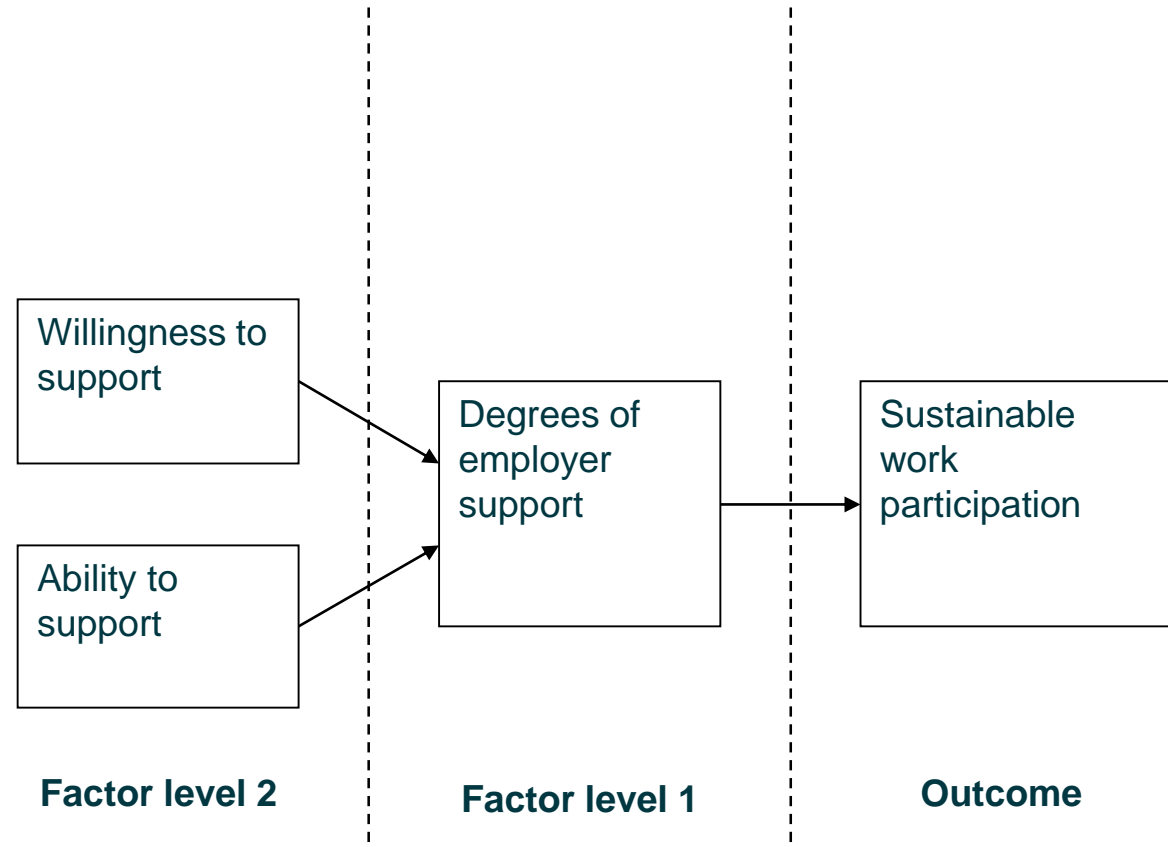
✓ 180 barriers

✓ 236 facilitators

# Synthesis

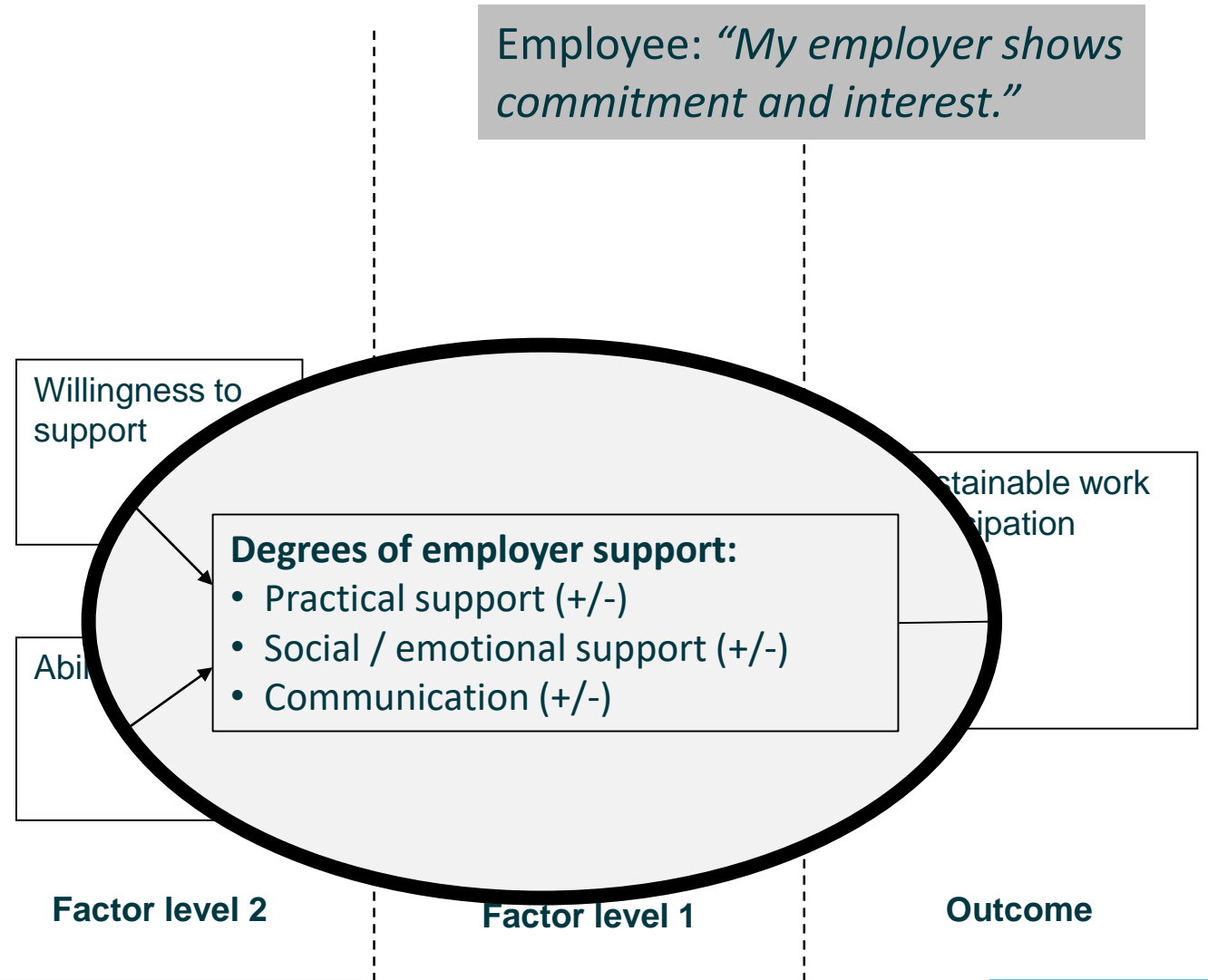
To understand the perceived consequences for work participation of employees with cancer

→ Model for employer support <sup>3</sup>

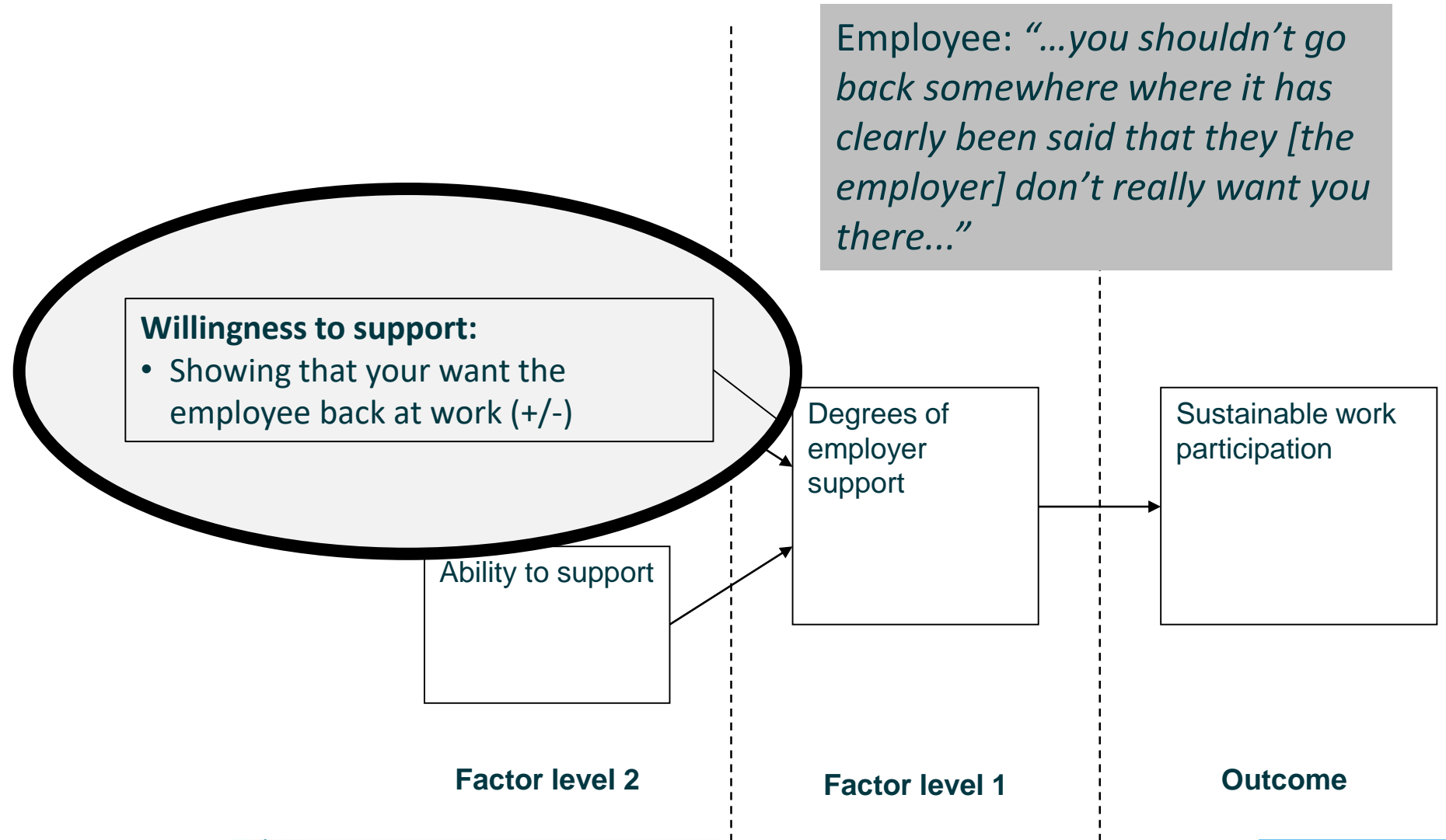


<sup>3</sup>Adjusted from De Rijk et al. 2007

# Synthesis

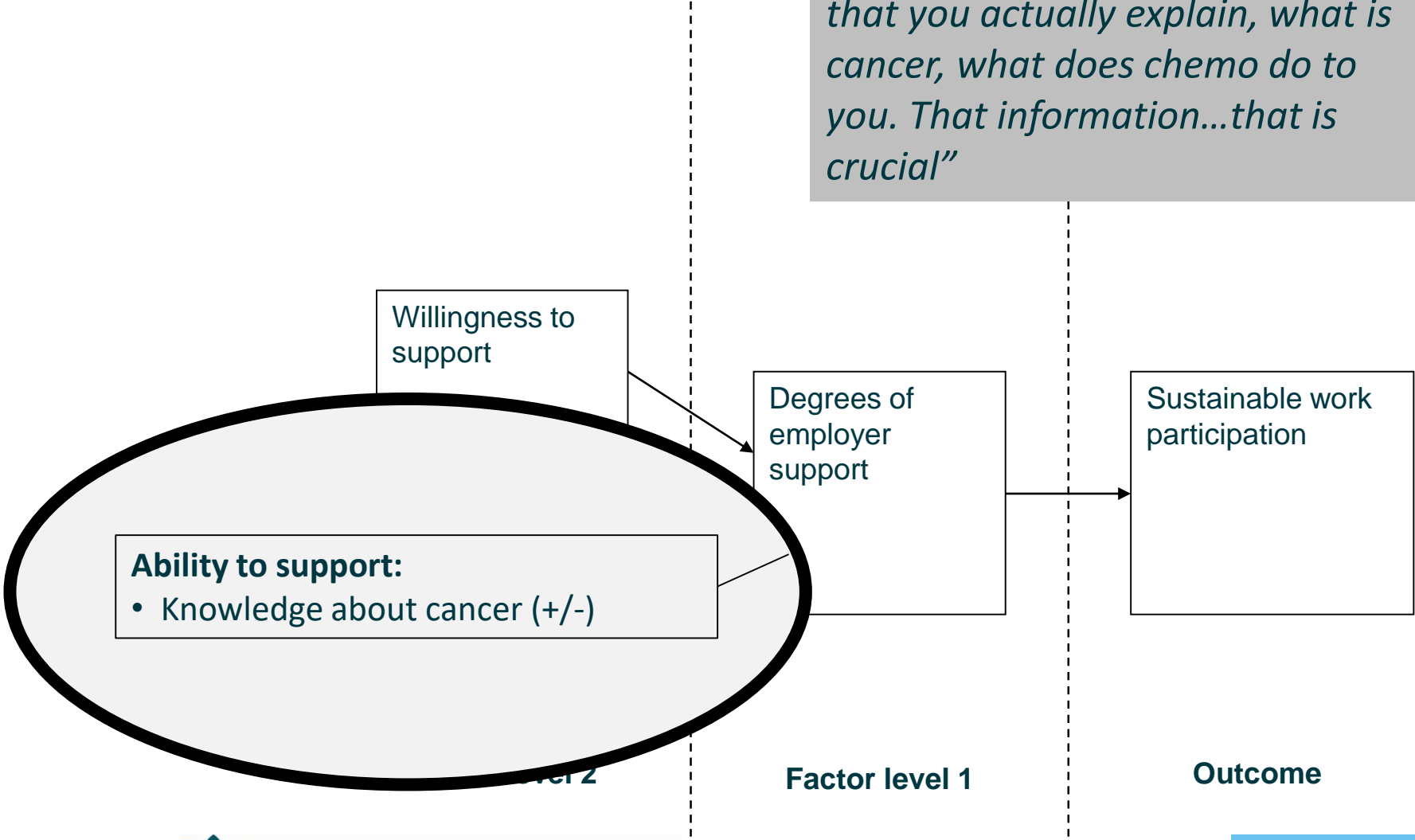


# Synthesis



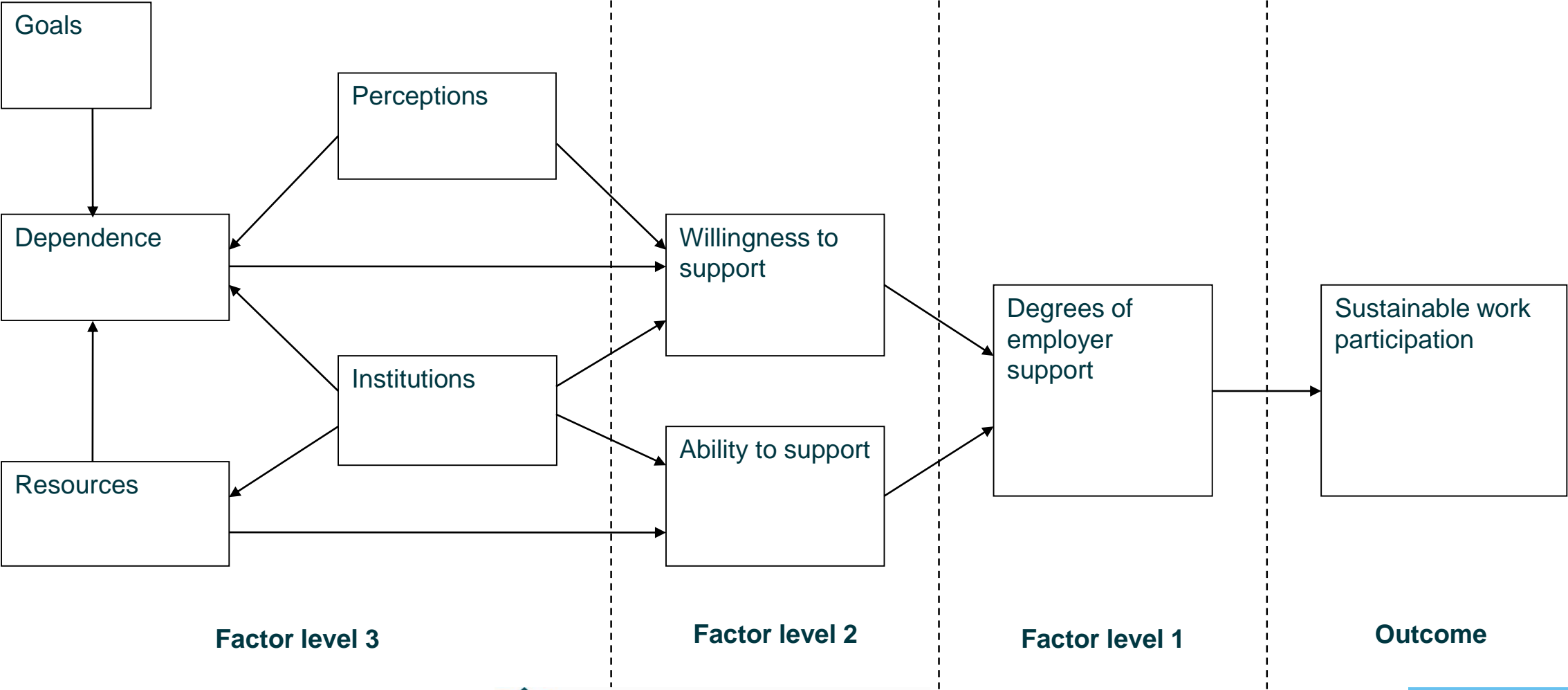
# Synthesis

Employer: *“Without having to reveal your medical secrets. But that you actually explain, what is cancer, what does chemo do to you. That information...that is crucial”*



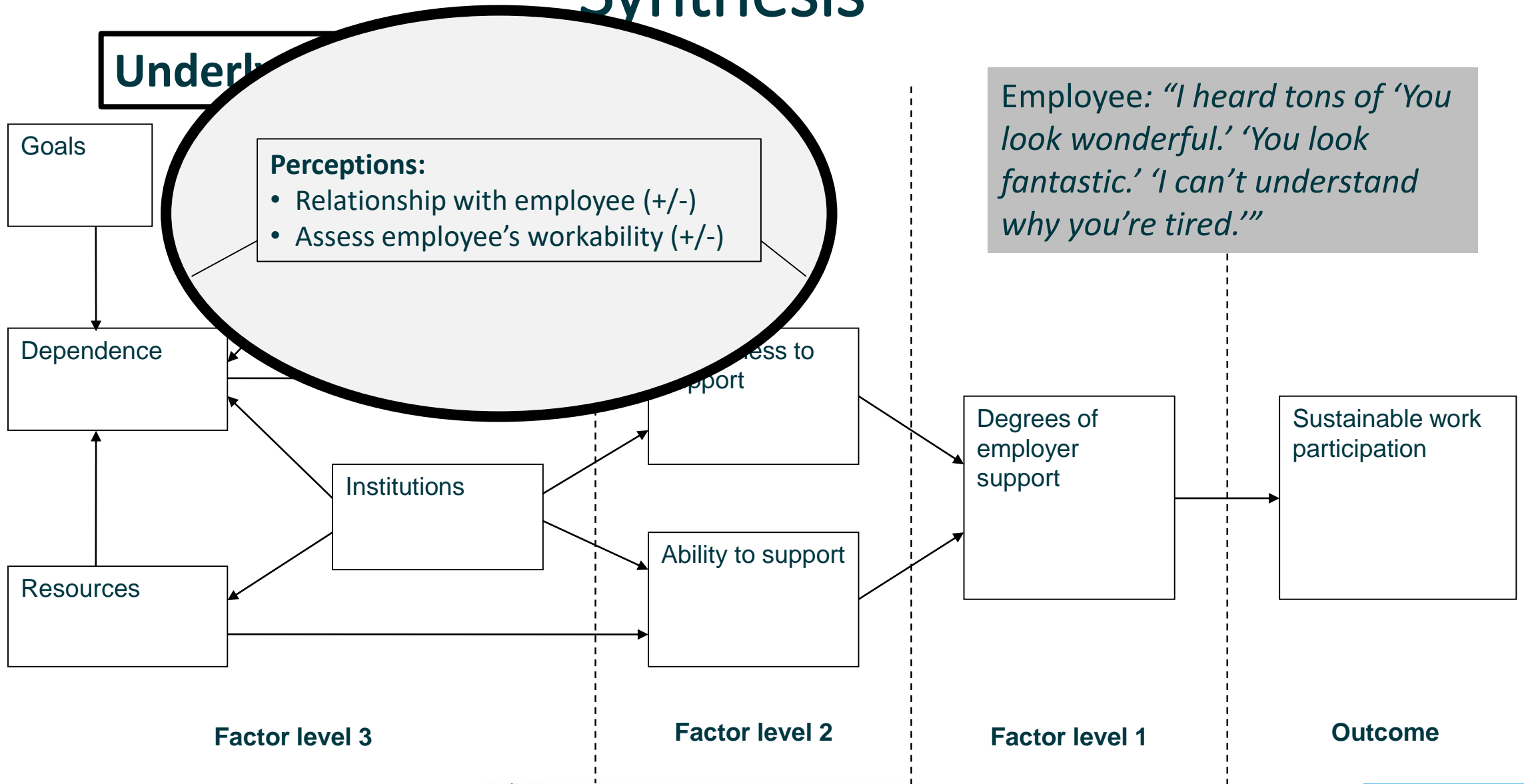
# Synthesis

## Underlying factors



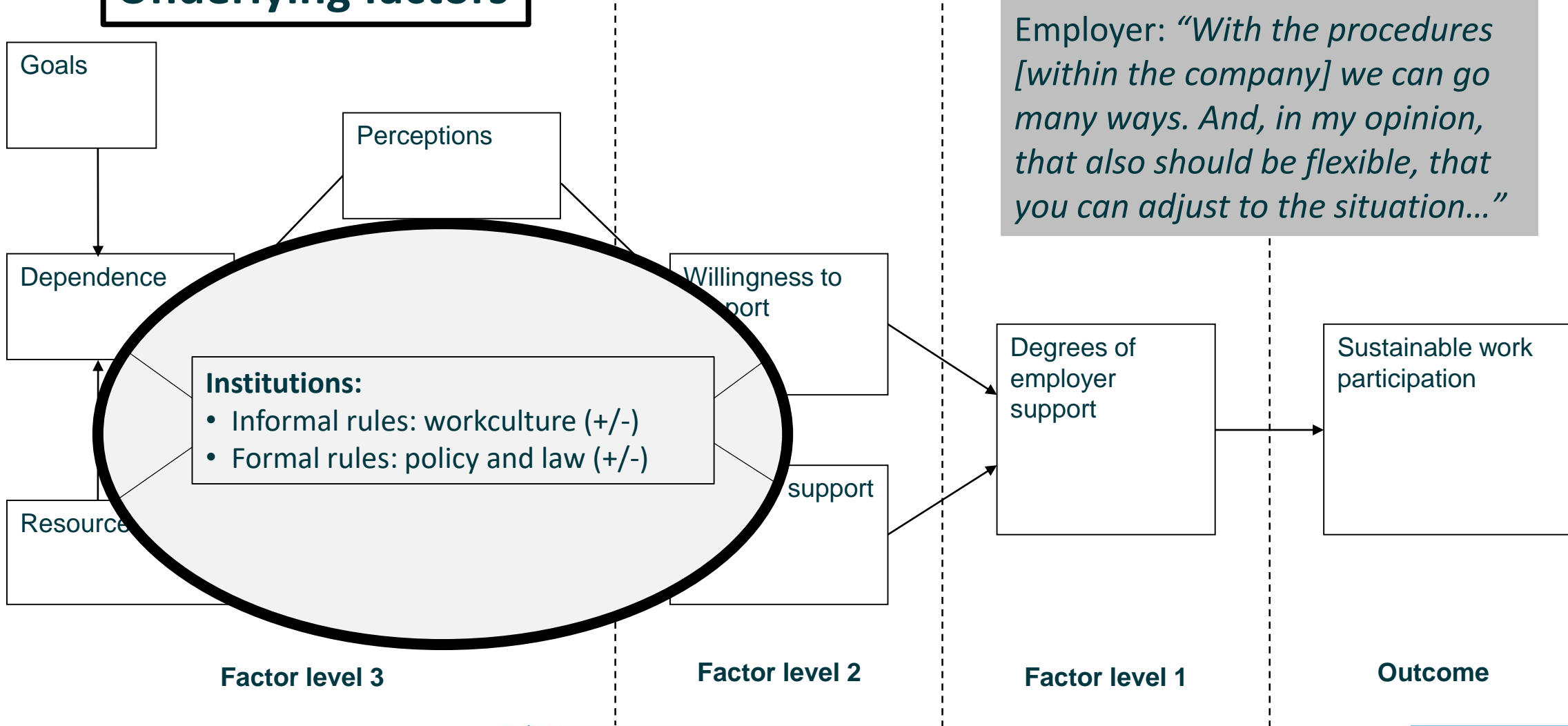


# Synthesis

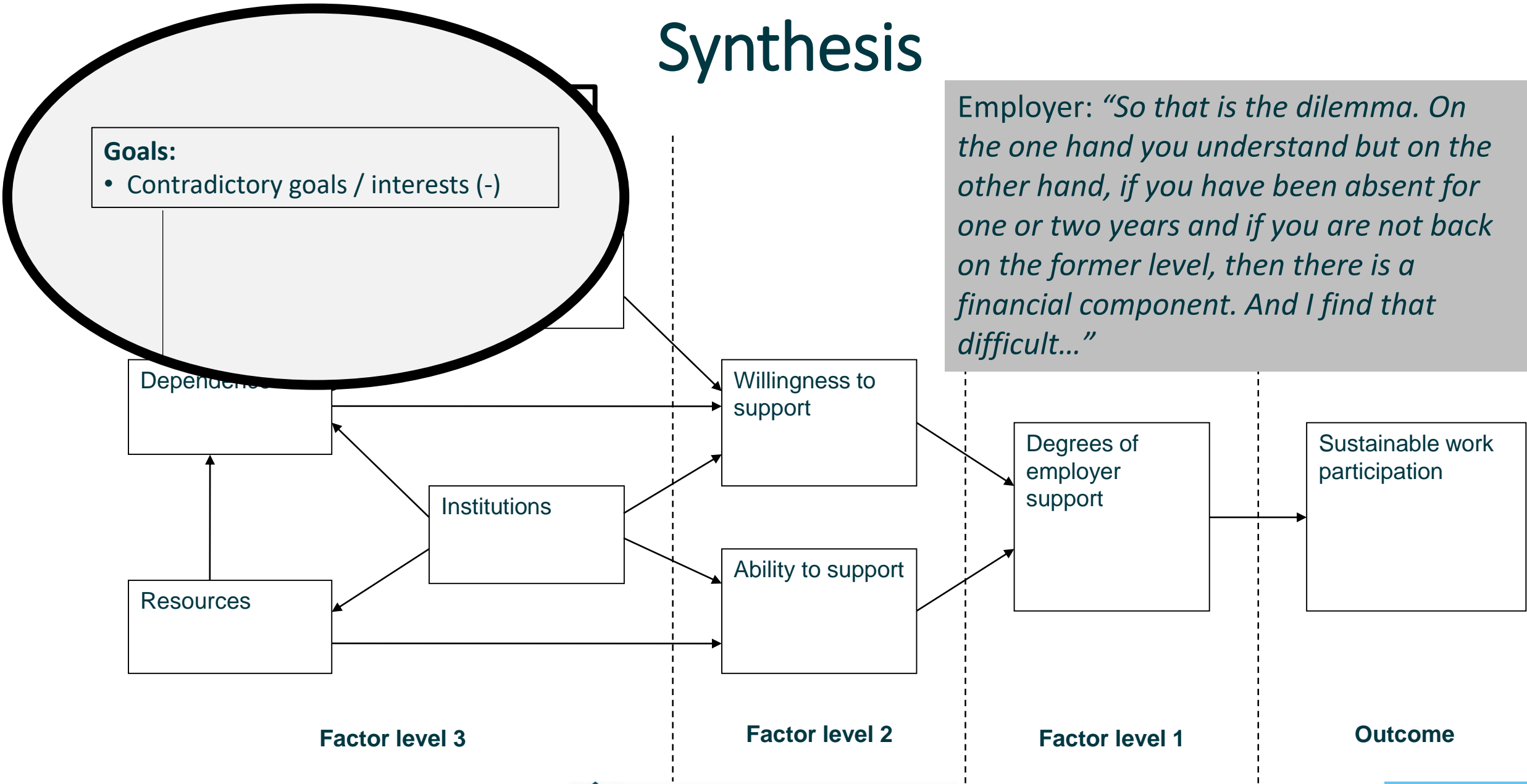


# Synthesis

## Underlying factors

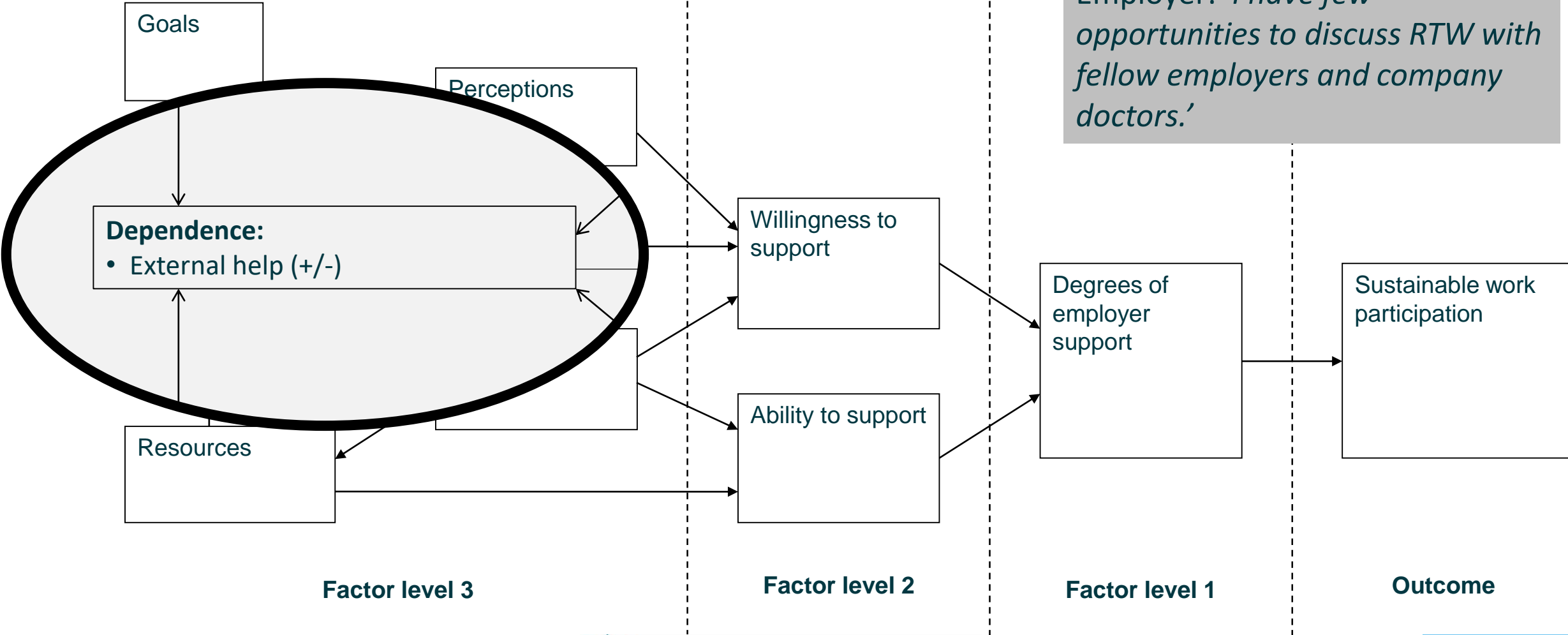


# Synthesis



# Synthesis

## Underlying factors

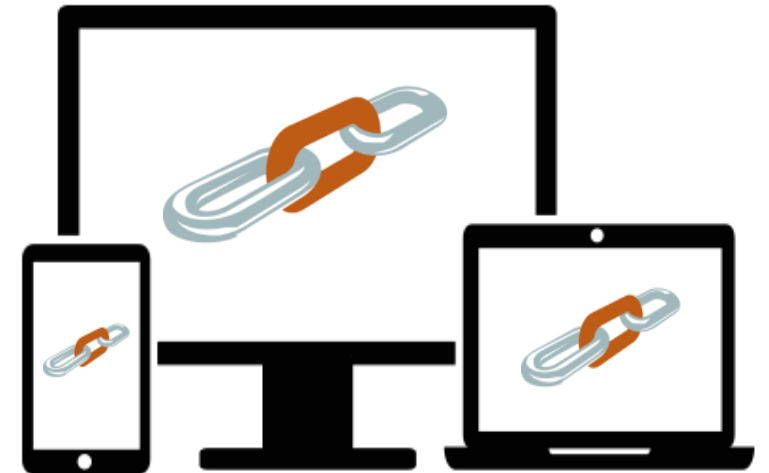


# Discussion

- Outcomes: perceived barriers and facilitators
- Influence of context individual studies
  - National / organisational policies

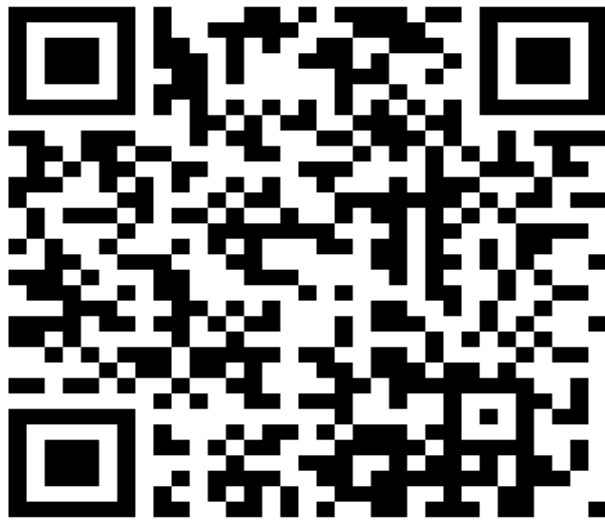
# Conclusions

- Plurality and large variety of underlying factors  
→ Complex for employer
- Contradicting results  
→ No “1-size-fits-all”
- Need for interventions targeting employers



# More info: Psycho-Oncology article

Greidanus, M.A., et al., *Perceived employer-related barriers and facilitators for work participation of cancer survivors: A systematic review of employers' and survivors' perspectives*. *Psychooncology*, 2018. **27**(3): p. 725-733.



## Perceived employer-related barriers and facilitators for work participation of cancer survivors: A systematic review of employers' and survivors' perspectives

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### Funding information

Dutch Cancer Society, Grant/Award Number: UVA 2014-7153

### Abstract

**Objective:** To identify employer-related barriers and facilitators for work participation of cancer survivors from the perspective of both employers and cancer survivors, and to synthesise these perceived barriers and facilitators to understand their perceived consequences.

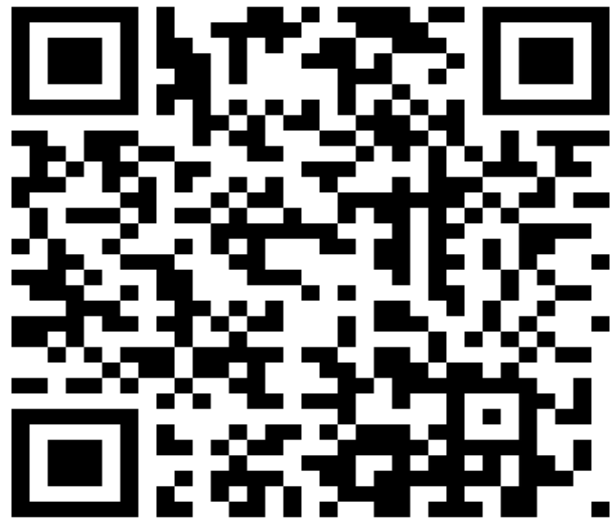
**Methods:** A systematic review of qualitative studies focusing on employers' and cancer survivors' perspectives on the work participation of cancer survivors was performed. Four databases (MEDLINE, EMBASE, PsycINFO, and Business Source Premier) were systematically searched, and the quality of studies included was assessed using the CASP checklist. Perceived barriers and facilitators were extracted and synthesised to conduct a content analysis.

**Results:** Five studies representing the employers' perspectives and 47 studies representing the cancer survivors' perspectives were included. Employers perceived barriers and facilitators related to support, communication, RTW policies, knowledge about cancer, balancing interests and roles, and attitude. Survivors perceived barriers and facilitators related to support, communication, work environment, discrimination, and perception of work ability. The synthesis found that the employers' willingness to support can be understood by perceptions they have of the survivor, goals of the employer, and national or organisational policies. Employers require knowledge about cancer and RTW policies to be able to support survivors.

**Conclusions:** This review identified a plurality of and a large variety in perceived employer-related barriers and facilitators for work participation of cancer survivors, which can be understood to be related to both employers' willingness and ability to support. There is a need for interventions targeting employers, with the aim of enhancing the sustainable work participation of cancer survivors.

# More info: Psycho-Oncology article

Greidanus, M.A., et al., *Perceived employer-related barriers and facilitators for work participation of cancer survivors: A systematic review of employers' and survivors' perspectives*. *Psychooncology*, 2018. **27**(3): p. 725-733.



**Thank you for your  
attention**

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# Results (differences employer vs. employee)

## Employees with cancer:

### Perception work ability:

- ✓ Overestimate work abilities because of invisible physical changes (-)
- ✓ Unrealistic expectations (-)

### Work environment:

- ✓ Normal, stable, caring (+)
- ✓ Rigid, structured, competitive (-)

### Discrimination:

- ✓ Ask to resign (-)
- ✓ Deny deserved promotion (-)

## Employers:

### Policy:

- ✓ Flexible protocol (+)
- ✓ Standard set of principles (-)

### Balancing interests and roles:

- ✓ Balancing interests business, employee, colleagues, replacement (-)
- ✓ Wrestle with human vs. professional role (-)

### Knowledge

- ✓ Lack of knowledge (-)