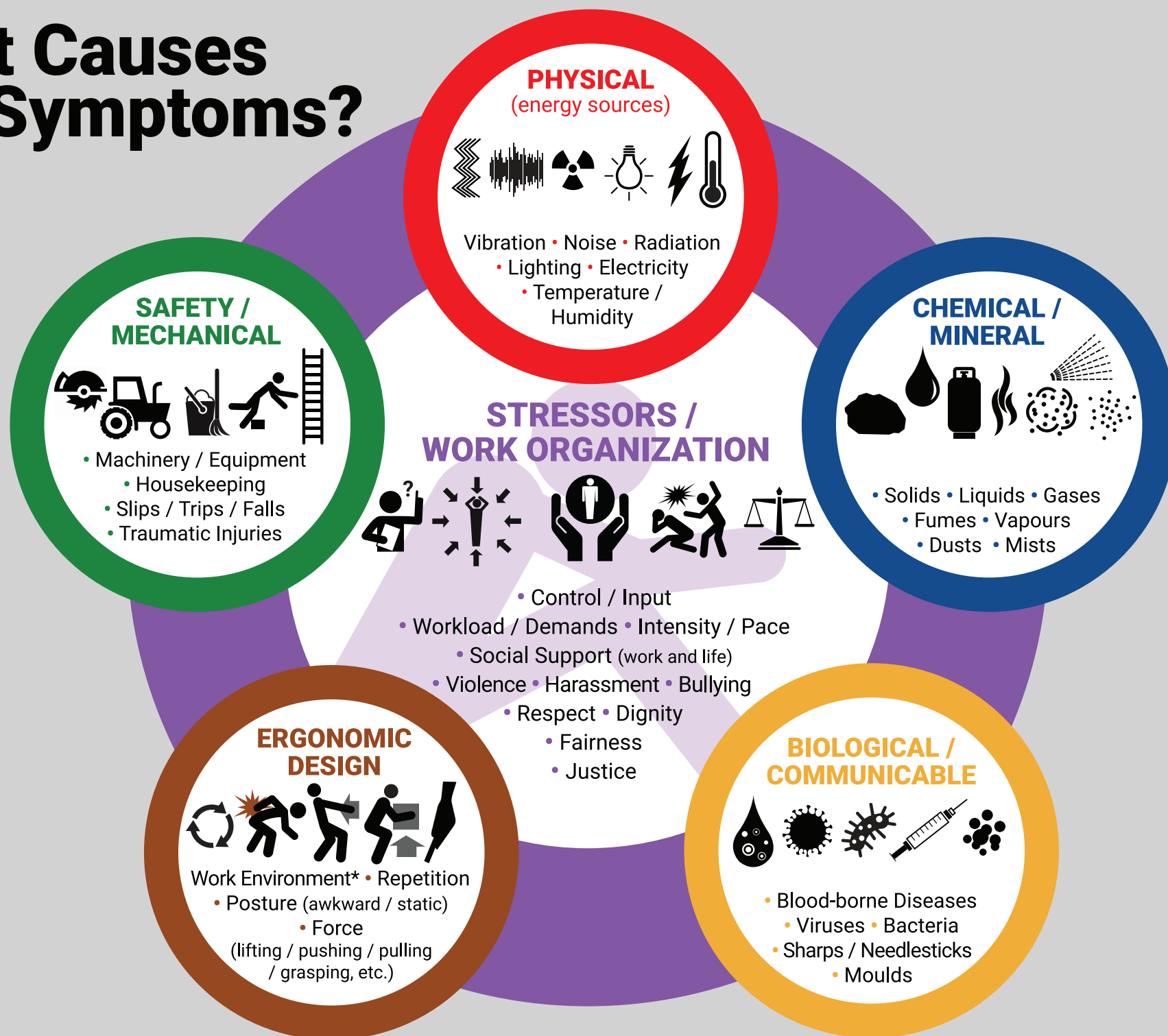


What Causes Our Symptoms?

HAZARDS



*see **PHYSICAL** above

HAZARD CATEGORIES

WORK ORGANIZATION HAZARDS / STRESSORS

cause us stress (short-term effects) and strain (long-term or chronic effects). The hazards are related to how much say we have about our work, how hard we work, how much we have to do (workload), what kind of social relationships there are at work, what kinds of rewards we get for our efforts, the threat of violence, lack of respect, etc.

PHYSICAL HAZARDS are *not* the physical symptoms of an illness or injury or something that is visible. They are hazards from **energy sources**. Compare them with **safety / mechanical** hazards. These include hazards associated with indoor air problems.

CHEMICAL HAZARDS include gases, liquids and solids, and the things into which they can be changed. Note that vapours are the gaseous form of liquids, and fumes are very small, airborne, solid particles formed by the cooling of a very hot vapour. Smaller than dusts, they are more easily breathed into the lungs. Therefore there are paint vapours and welding fumes. It matters when you use respirators or design ventilation systems.

BIOLOGICAL / COMMUNICABLE hazards aren't just found in hospitals or personal care homes. They're the "bugs" we have to deal with when we come in contact with others, moulds, sharps (also found in other jobs than health care), etc.

ERGONOMIC DESIGN hazards, sometimes called biomechanical hazards, involve problems with the design and organisation of work.

Ergonomics can be defined as the "law of work", in which the key is to **fit the job to the worker** – not the other way around. It's about how much people are expected to do with their bodies and brains. As a Canadian ergonomist says, workers are expected to do things on the job that robots don't do.

Ergonomic hazards usually affect our musculoskeletal system – they cause aches and pains. However, they also include such things as the design of equipment controls or operating systems. This design affects our ability to see, concentrate and use operating equipment, computers, etc. Some ergonomic hazards are considered physical hazards in other circumstances.

SAFETY / MECHANICAL hazards are the slip, trip, fall type of hazards. They include machinery with moving parts. They are not physical hazards.



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