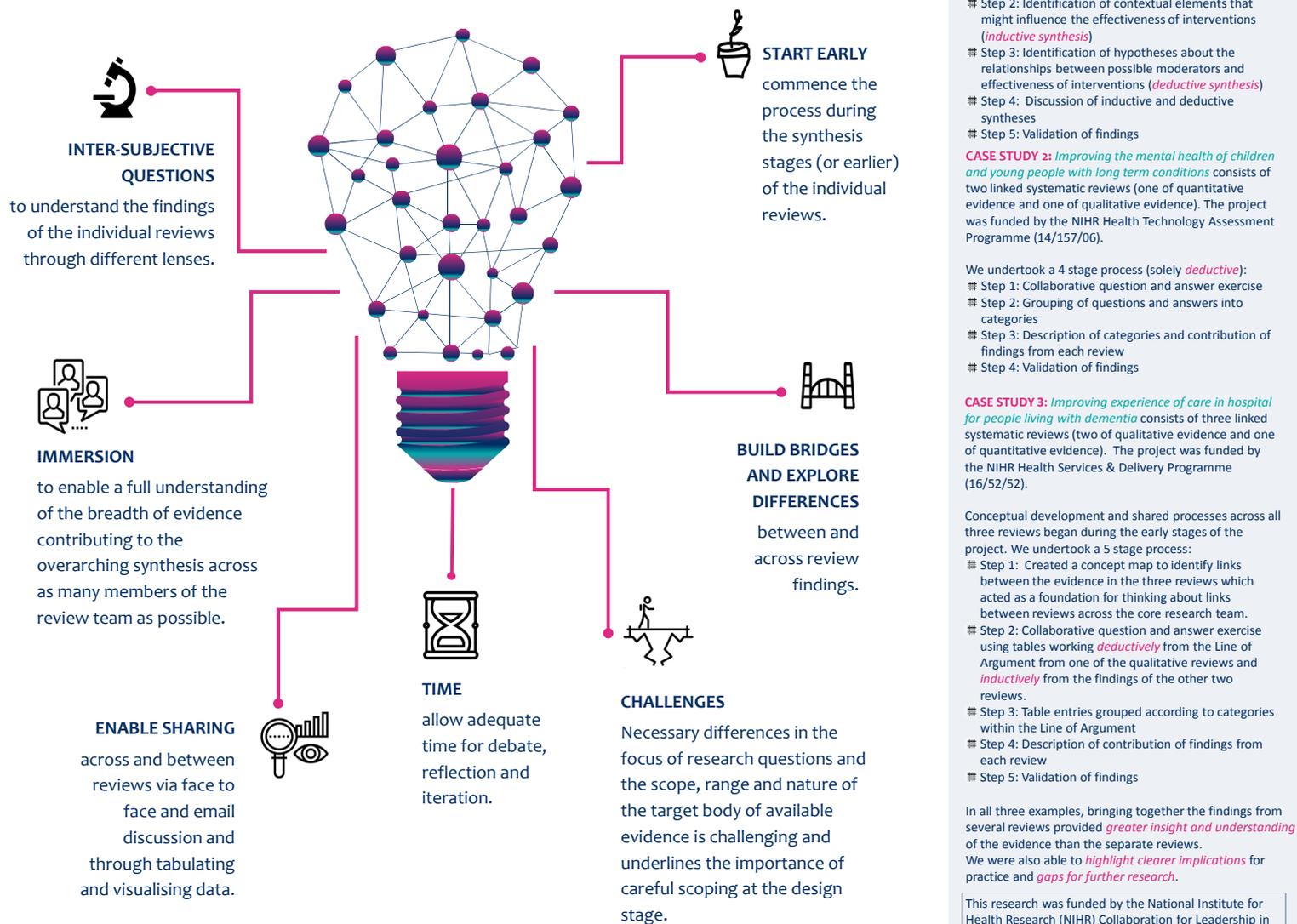


Adapting methods for **exploring and identifying patterns and links** between and across individual studies to **interweave the findings** between and across reviews is a **valuable addition** to mixed-methods synthesis methods

- Decision makers are increasingly unlikely to be interested in understanding whether something works without considerations of context, accessibility and feasibility.
- How do we ensure that evidence synthesis products meet their needs?
- We have been developing methods for the overarching synthesis of quantitative and qualitative evidence - the **interweave synthesis approach** over the past 5 years.



CASE STUDY 1: *Non-pharmacological interventions for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) delivered in school settings* consists of a series of four linked systematic reviews (two of quantitative evidence and two of qualitative evidence). The project was funded by the NIHR Health Technology Assessment Programme (10/140/02).

We undertook a 5 stage process:

- Step 1: Collaborative question and answer exercise
- Step 2: Identification of contextual elements that might influence the effectiveness of interventions (**inductive synthesis**)
- Step 3: Identification of hypotheses about the relationships between possible moderators and effectiveness of interventions (**deductive synthesis**)
- Step 4: Discussion of inductive and deductive syntheses
- Step 5: Validation of findings

CASE STUDY 2: *Improving the mental health of children and young people with long term conditions* consists of two linked systematic reviews (one of quantitative evidence and one of qualitative evidence). The project was funded by the NIHR Health Technology Assessment Programme (14/157/06).

We undertook a 4 stage process (solely **deductive**):

- Step 1: Collaborative question and answer exercise
- Step 2: Grouping of questions and answers into categories
- Step 3: Description of categories and contribution of findings from each review
- Step 4: Validation of findings

CASE STUDY 3: *Improving experience of care in hospital for people living with dementia* consists of three linked systematic reviews (two of qualitative evidence and one of quantitative evidence). The project was funded by the NIHR Health Services & Delivery Programme (16/52/52).

Conceptual development and shared processes across all three reviews began during the early stages of the project. We undertook a 5 stage process:

- Step 1: Created a concept map to identify links between the evidence in the three reviews which acted as a foundation for thinking about links between reviews across the core research team.
- Step 2: Collaborative question and answer exercise using tables working **deductively** from the Line of Argument from one of the qualitative reviews and **inductively** from the findings of the other two reviews.
- Step 3: Table entries grouped according to categories within the Line of Argument
- Step 4: Description of contribution of findings from each review
- Step 5: Validation of findings

In all three examples, bringing together the findings from several reviews provided **greater insight and understanding** of the evidence than the separate reviews. We were also able to **highlight clearer implications** for practice and **gaps for further research**.

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Making sense of diverse research evidence: reflections on the use of the interweave synthesis approach to mixed-methods synthesis

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