



Extended version

Inter-generational contact: An introduction

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Inter-group contact hypothesis



Allport's intergroup contact Hypothesis
(1954)



Based on idea that main driver of
prejudice is lack of opportunity to get to
know, have relationships with members
of groups different to our own



Robust evidence that contact between
members of groups reduce prejudice.

The importance of direct contact



Contact in childhood & adolescence particularly important



Critical age for formation of attitudes that continue into adulthood



Cross-group *friendship* especially effective



CG friendships are one of the most **powerful prejudice-reduction tools available** (Wölfer et al., 2016).



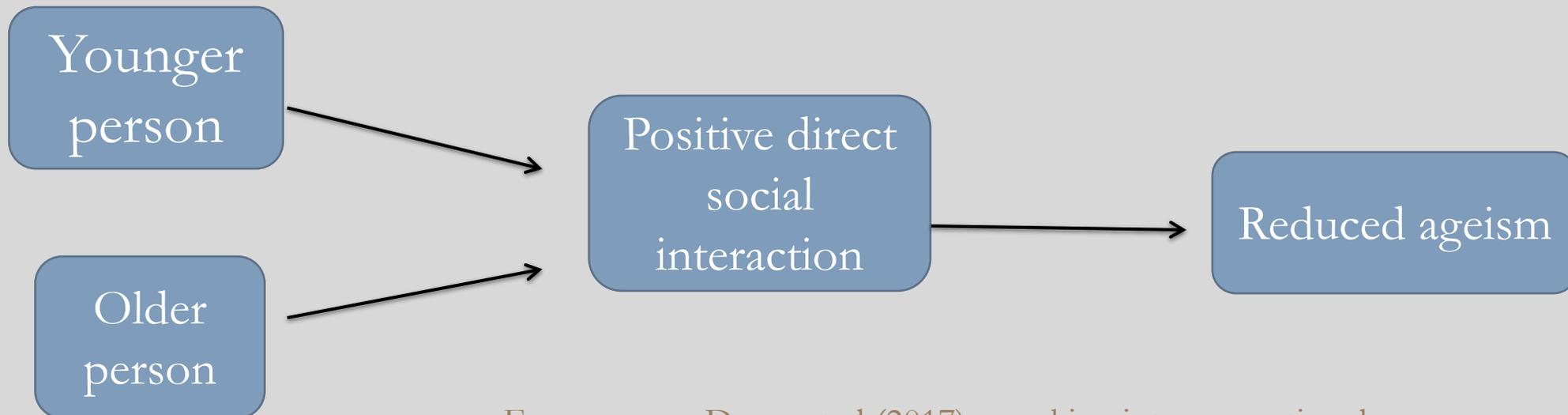
Intergroup contact interventions provide contact opportunities

Why do we need inter-generational contact?

- Ageism is a problem and starts early
- Stereotypes of older people are on 2 dimensions:
warmth and *incompetence*
- Stereotypes and attitudes linked to behaviours
- Negative impact on older people's physical and mental health
- [See Burnes et al,](#)

What is Inter-generational contact?

Inter-generational contact, bringing together older and younger people together, can improve attitudes and break down stereotypes



[For more see Drury et al \(2017\) – making intergenerational connections – an evidence review.](#)

Example: Intergenerational Outdoor Classroom Project *(Cummings, Williams et al. (2002))*

- Intergenerational program
- 4TH graders matched with senior citizens
- Seniors support the young people in completing series of challenges
- Cooperation required as elders have some pieces of information necessary/interaction necessary to complete task

Session One:
Interview elder
about gardening/
outdoor life

Session Two: Draw
a landscape
picture, seniors
explain aspects of
garden

Session Three: chart
plants and their
characteristics,
seniors assist.

Example 2: Volunteering programmes

Volunteering to bring older and younger participants together

Typically younger helping the older participants e.g. chores or housework

Regular basis

Mixed findings

Volunteering contact programmes

*Chapman & Neal
(1990)*

Younger helping older

Older helping younger

Younger helping older positive impact: attitudes
and social distancing

Older helping younger less impactful

Volunteering schemes potentially bigger impact on
younger

Christian et al (2014)

Does intergenerational contact work?

Reduces ageist attitudes

Better communication

Breaks down stereotypes and assumptions

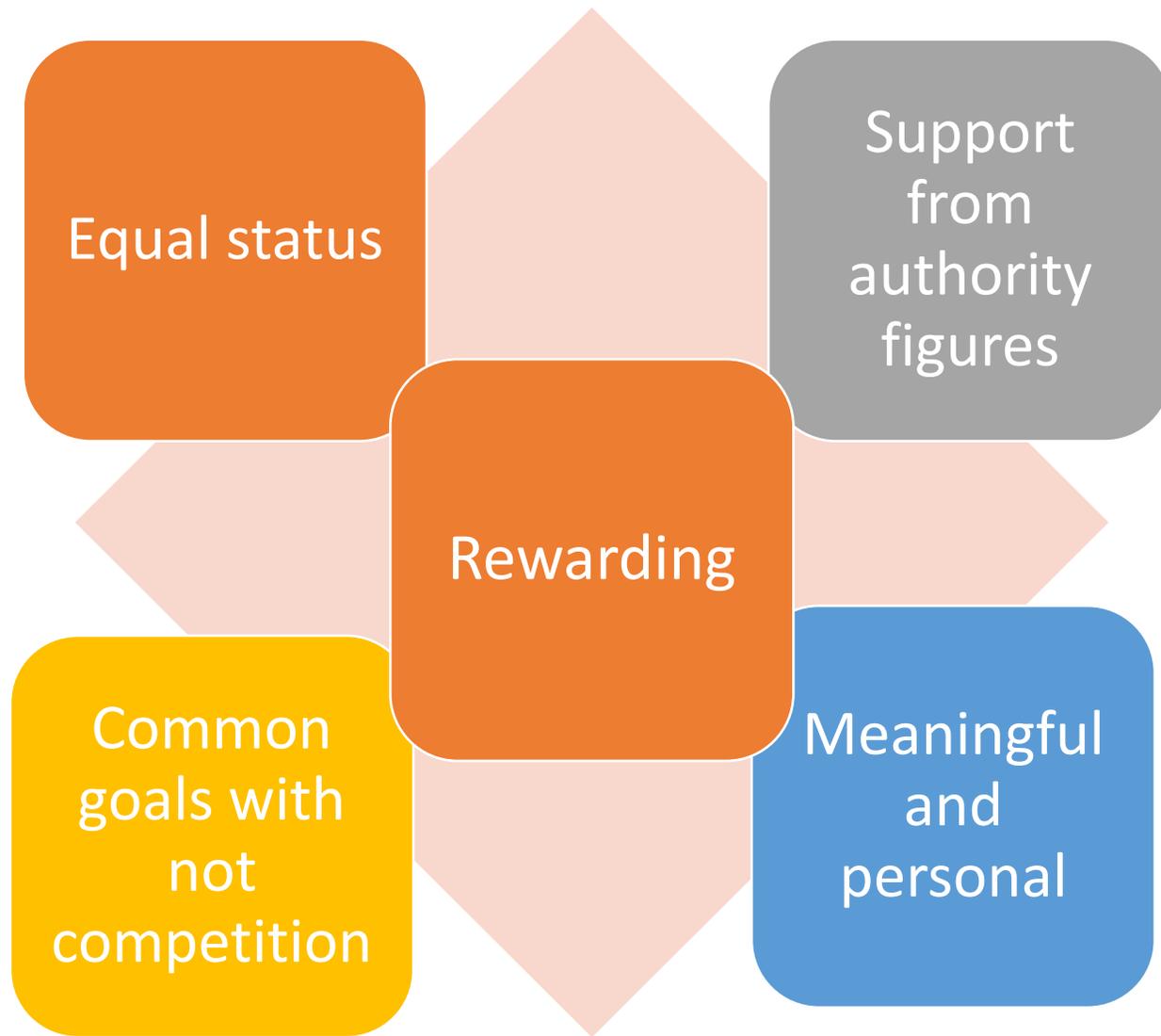
Reduced intergroup and ageing anxiety

Stronger intentions for future contact

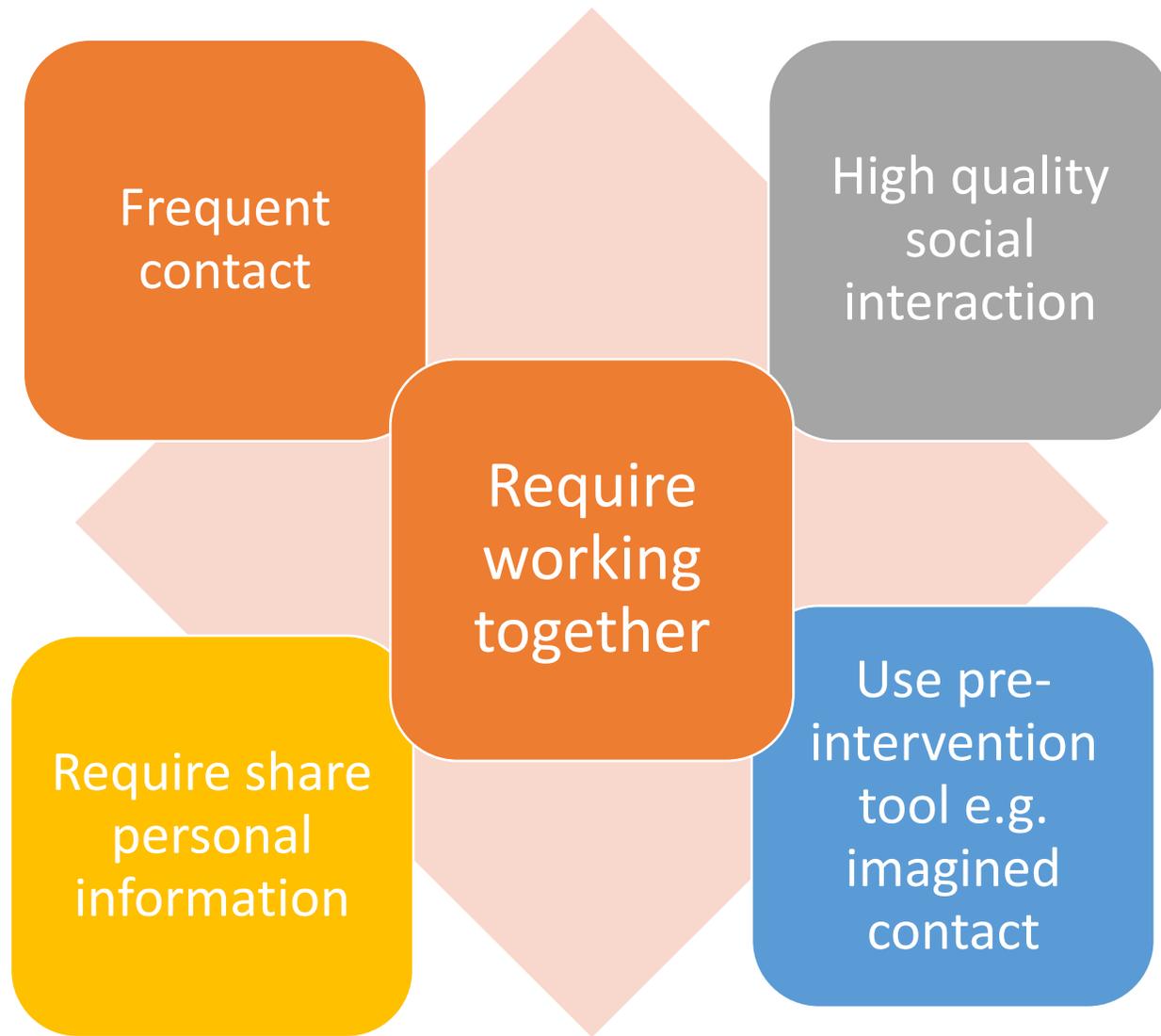


Unconscious attitudes

More helpful behaviours e.g. donating, volunteering



Features of
most-effective
intergenerational
contact



Features of most-effective intergenerational contact

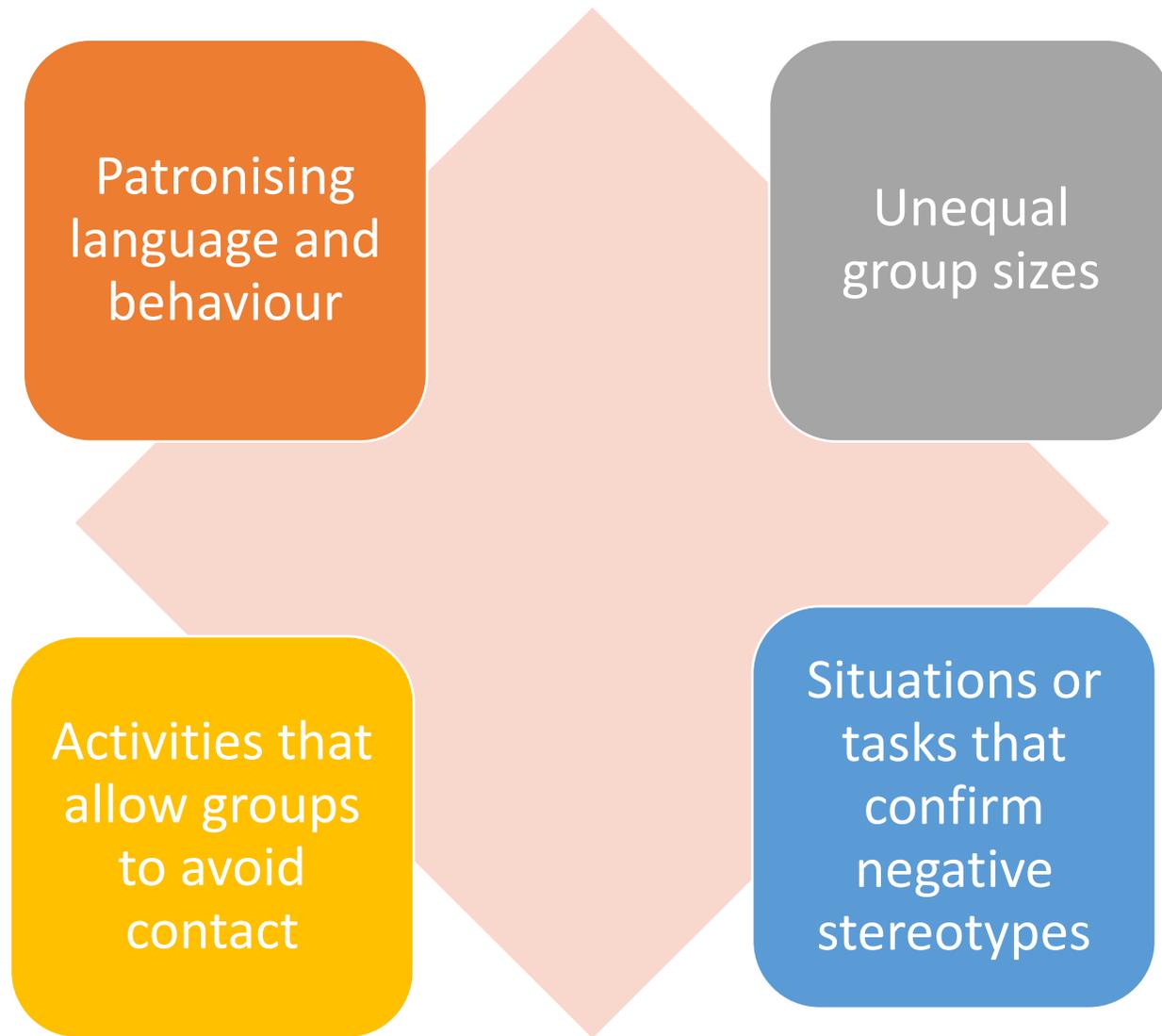
Pre-intervention preparation

- Indirect contact e.g. imagined contact, vicarious contact, e-contact
- Boost confidence in contact

“a state of readiness for positive contact, whereby children have the necessary confidence, skills, beliefs, and experience for successful intergroup contact.”

- Indirect contact interventions make children **‘contact ready’**: increase the chances that they will have positive cross-group interactions and in turn form high quality cross-group friendships that are maintained over time.
- Indirect contact intervention useful PRIOR to direct contact: ensure runs more smoothly
- Reduce anxiety and fear
- Ensure interaction run as smoothly as possible

What to avoid in intergenerational contact



[Drury et al \(2017\) – making intergenerational connections – an evidence review.](#)

High quality contact

- Fun
- Positive
- Enjoyable
- Carefully planned
- Carefully managed





Creating
indirect
contact: after
the
intervention

Thank you for your attention!

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References and Resources

- [Drury et al \(2017\) – making intergenerational connections – an evidence review.](#)
- [Pinquart et al \(2010\)](#)
- [Christian et al \(2014\)](#)