

# A whole-system, preventative approach to challenging behaviour

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# What we know about challenging behaviour

- Socially constructed
- Means something (functionally important) to the person
- Reflects individual characteristics e.g.,
  - Physical health/pain
  - Mental health
  - Ability/disability profile
  - Genetic syndrome
- Reflects environmental characteristics e.g.,
  - Control and abuse
  - Social interaction and loneliness
  - Stimulation
  - Choice and freedom

# But challenging behaviour doesn't *belong* to the individual...

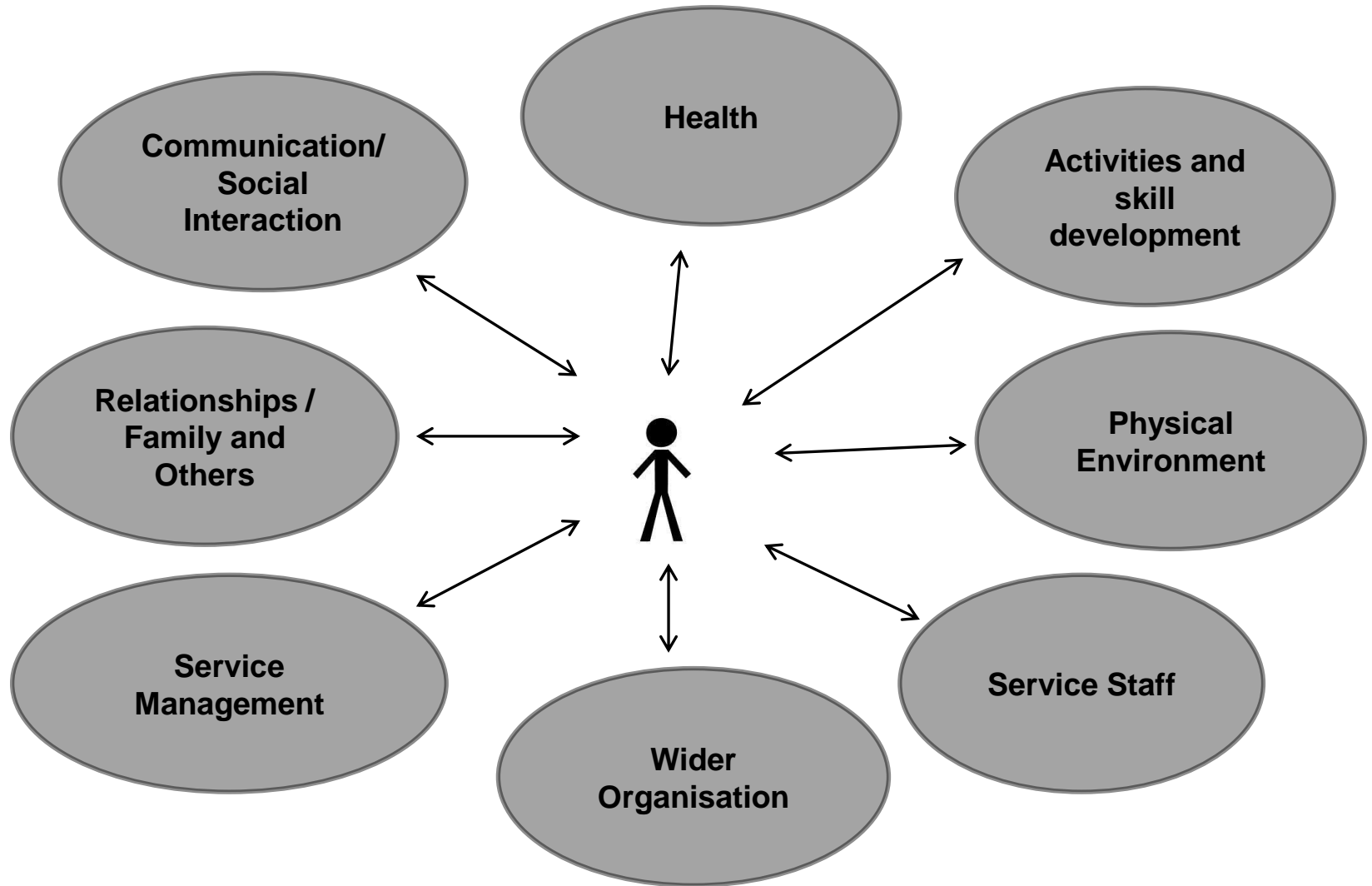
- Rather it occurs in contexts of
  - Immediate support and interactions
  - Classroom/group home/workplace setting, practices and culture
  - Organisational policies and procedures
- Therefore whole-system approach is necessary

# Implications of what we know – prevention in different parts of the system

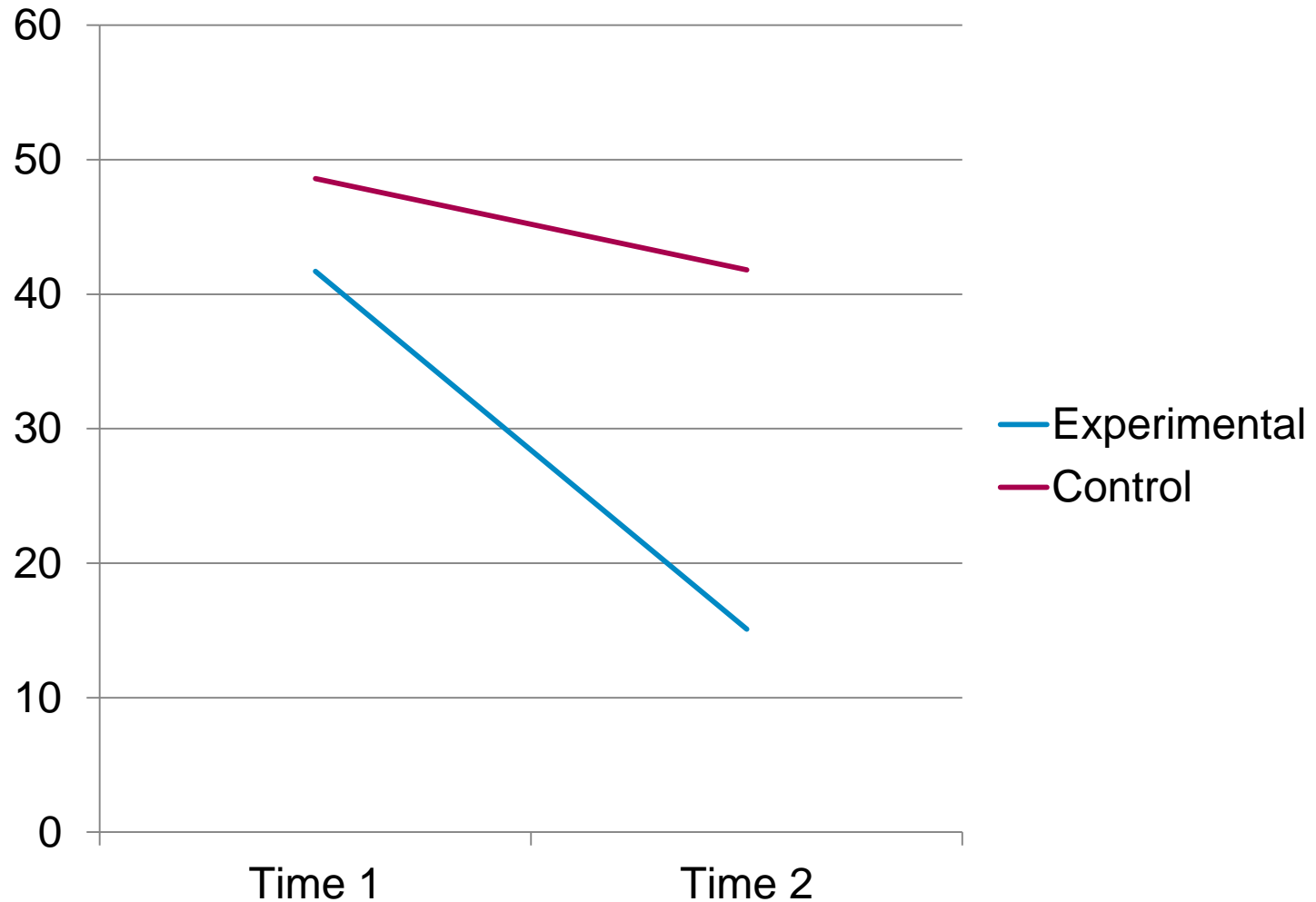
- Since the causes of challenging behaviour involve the interaction of social, biological, developmental and environmental factors...
- ...prevention must target all such factors e.g.
  - Overcoming the “institution of the mind” (Ericsson, 2005)
  - Early intervention with high risk groups
  - Active identification/treatment of health issues
  - Additional support to develop important skills
  - Provision of lives “reduced in stress, deprivation, and fear; enriched in those things that attract and engage the person’s interest and repertoire” (Risley, 1996)

# Prevention through system-wide work in social care settings

- Provide “capable” environments for all those receiving social care or similar provision
- Structured model of social care (see next slide)
- Agreeing goals or standards for the setting to achieve (cf. LaVigna et al, 1994)
- Support, training, monitoring and feedback with staff
- = Setting wide positive behaviour support



# Aberrant Behaviour Checklist scores



# One of the ways we can prevent challenging behaviour...

- Understand its causes
- Think of it as being a problem of the system not the individual
- Intervene across the system
- Focus on improving the quality of support, care and treatment



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