Setting an Agenda for Linking Idiographic and Nomothetic Approaches:
Some Lessons and Future Directions

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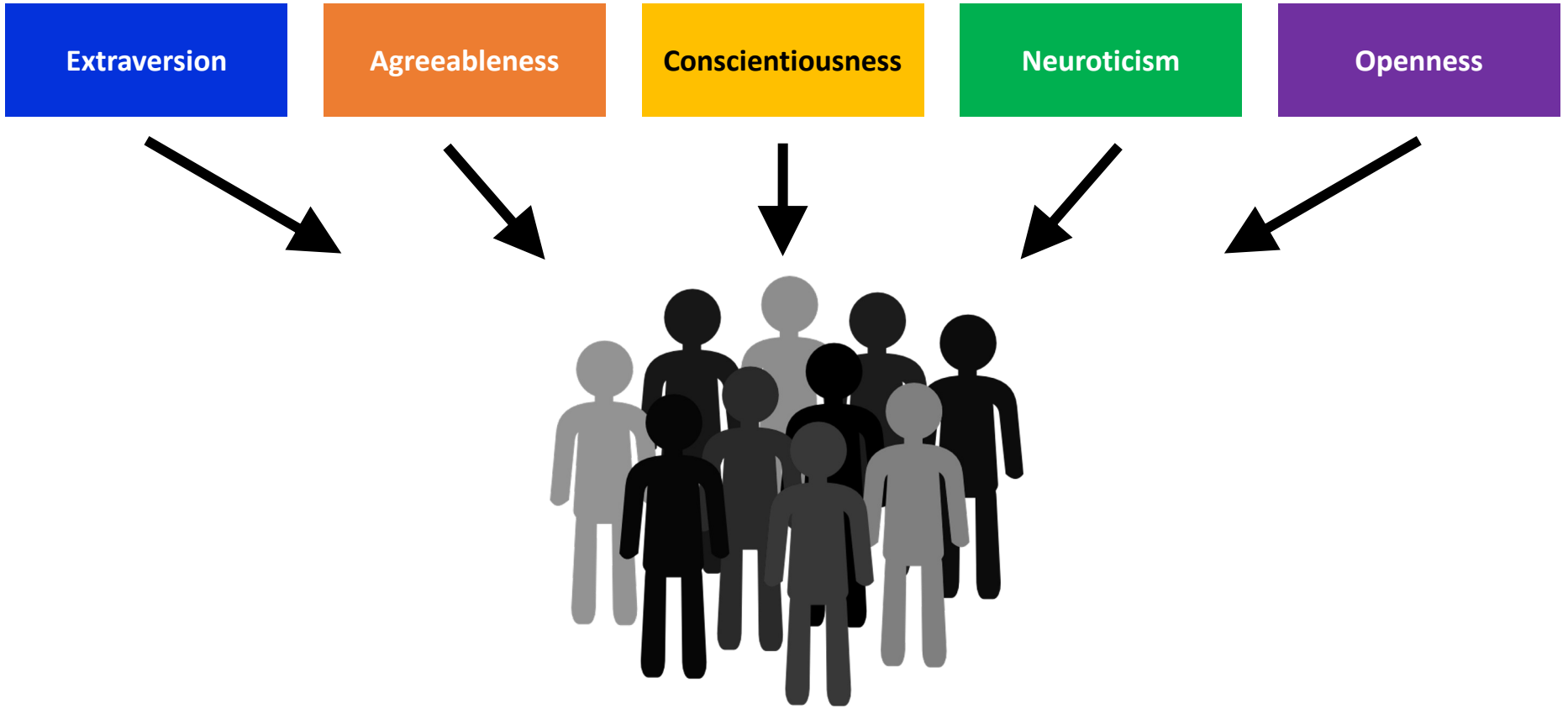
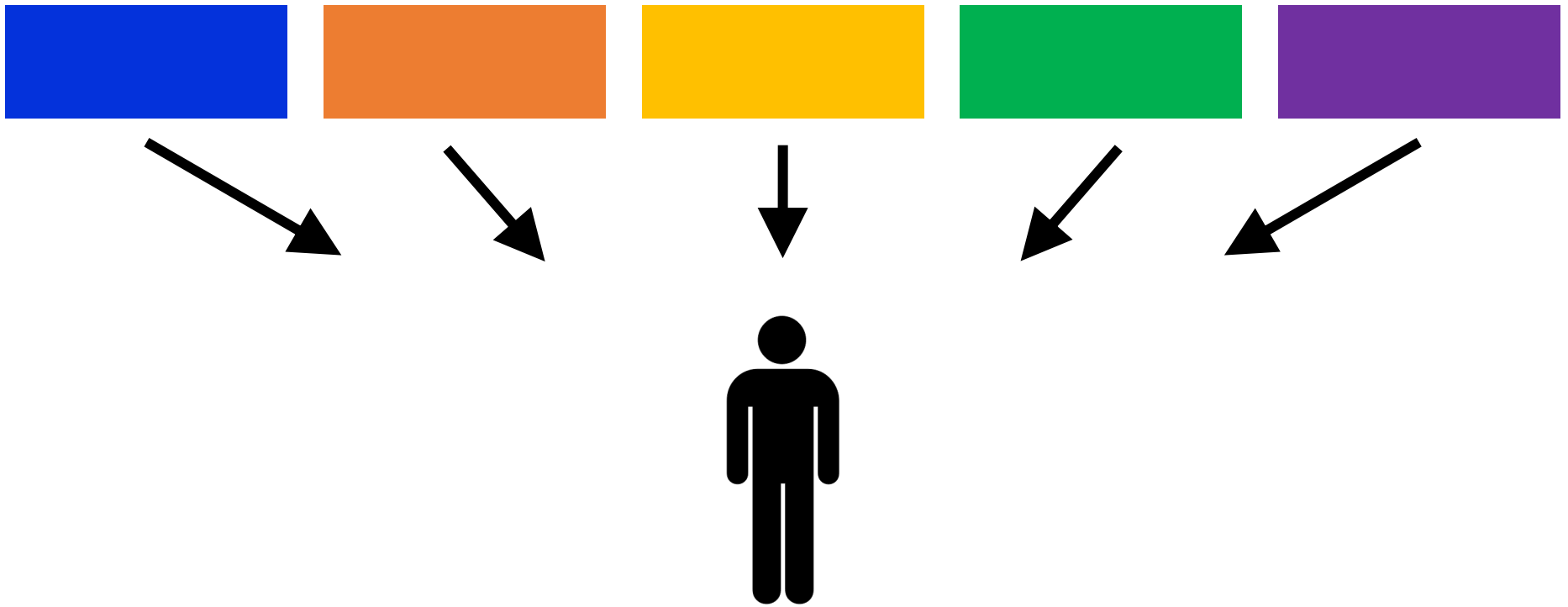
Preconference on Idiographics and Nomothetics in Personality, Madrid, Spain

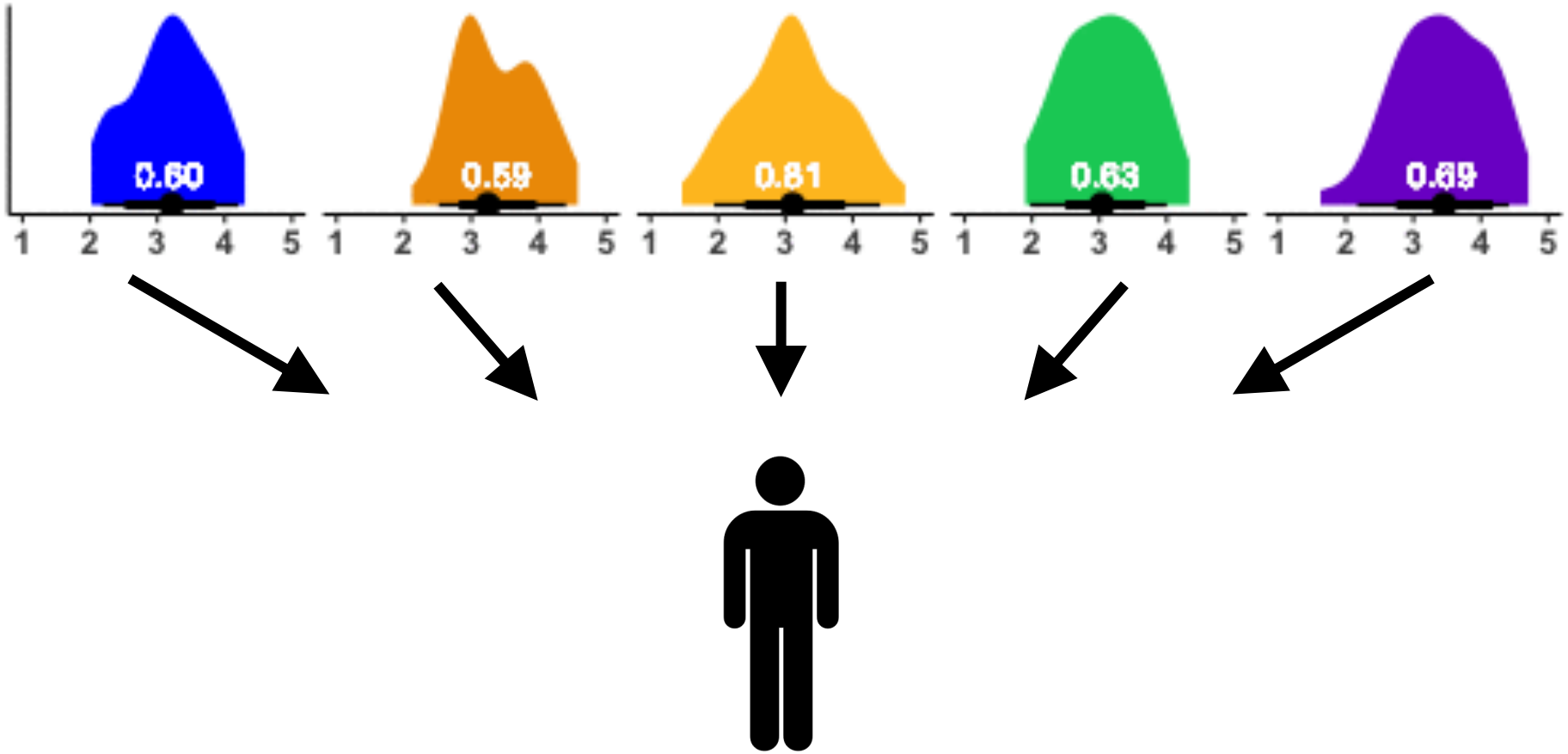
July 11, 2022



Nomothetic
Between-Person
Variable Centered



Idiographic
Person-Specific



Within-Person
Person-Centered

Aggregation	Questions
Between-Person	Description
Within-Person	Prediction
Idiographic	Explanation

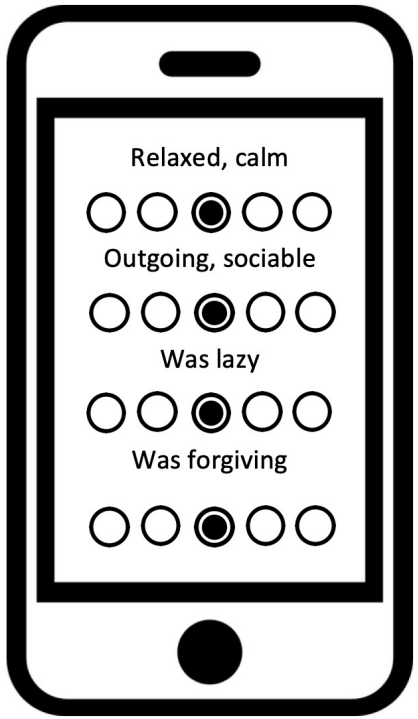
Aggregation	Questions
Variable-Centered	Description
Person-Centered	Prediction
Person-Specific	Explanation

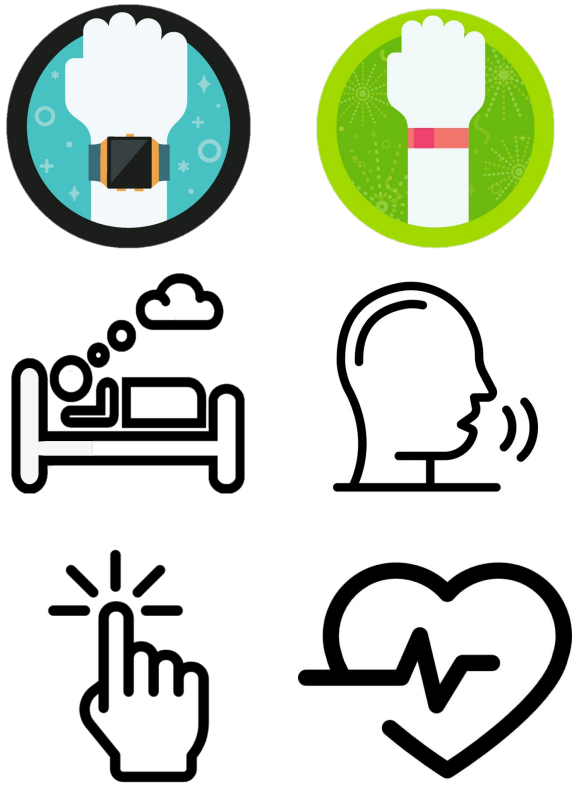
Basic Surveys

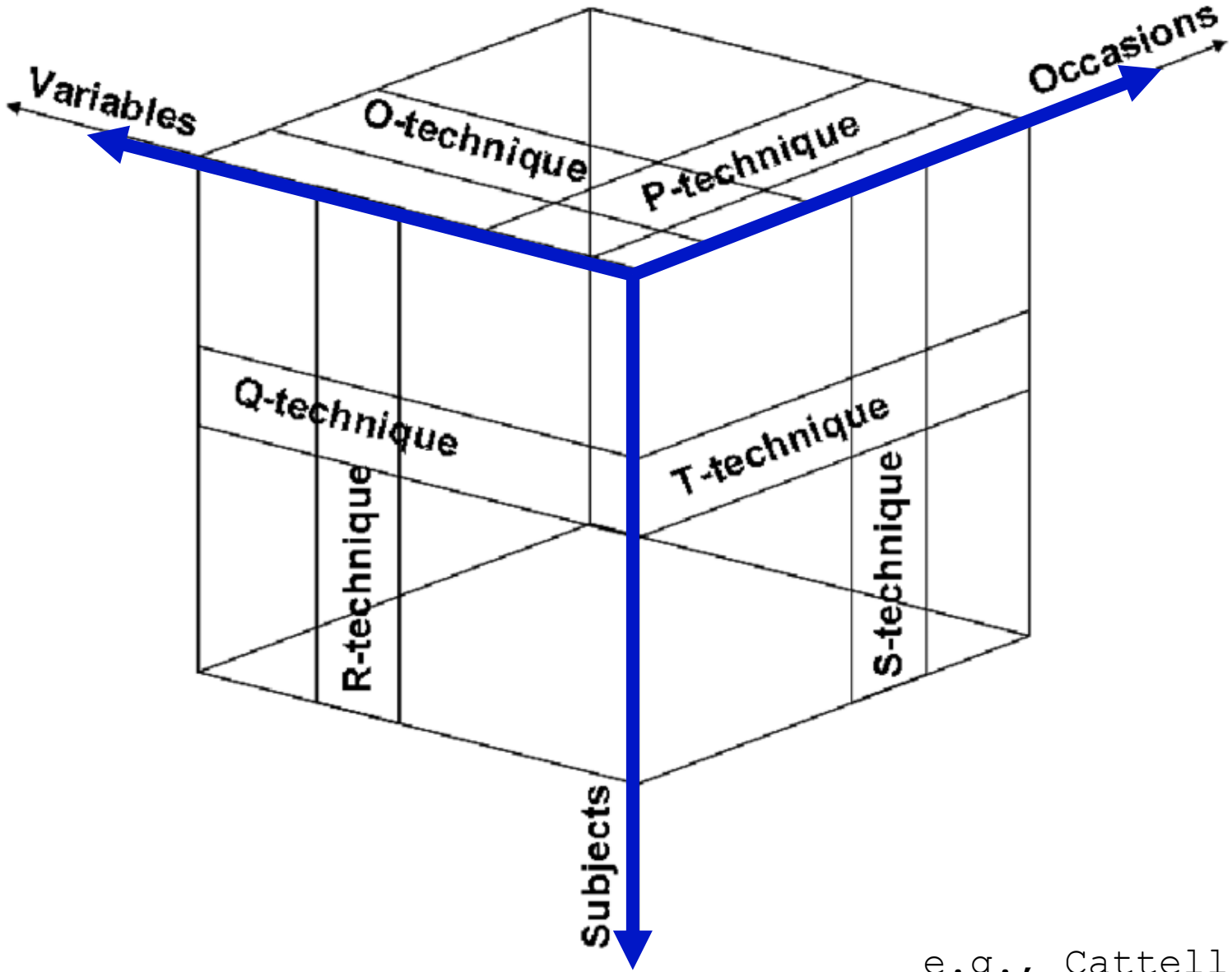
ESM / EMA

Mobile Sensing

Open-Ended Responses







e.g., Cattell, 1943, 1946, 1957

Structural Equation Modeling

Machine Learning

Time Series Analysis

Multilevel Modeling

Language Models

Network Approaches

Bayesian Modeling

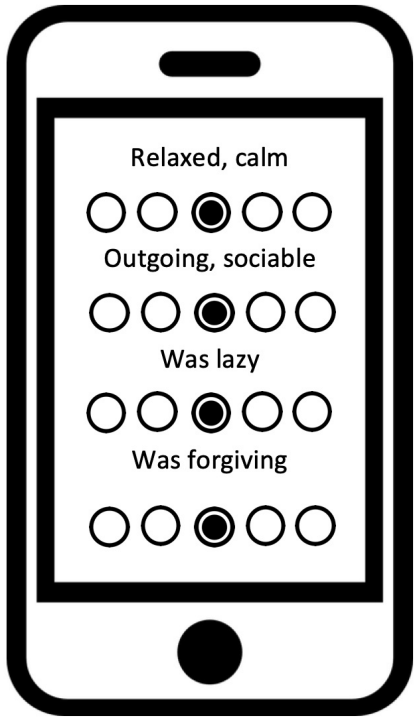
Integrated Data Analysis

Non-Parametric Approaches

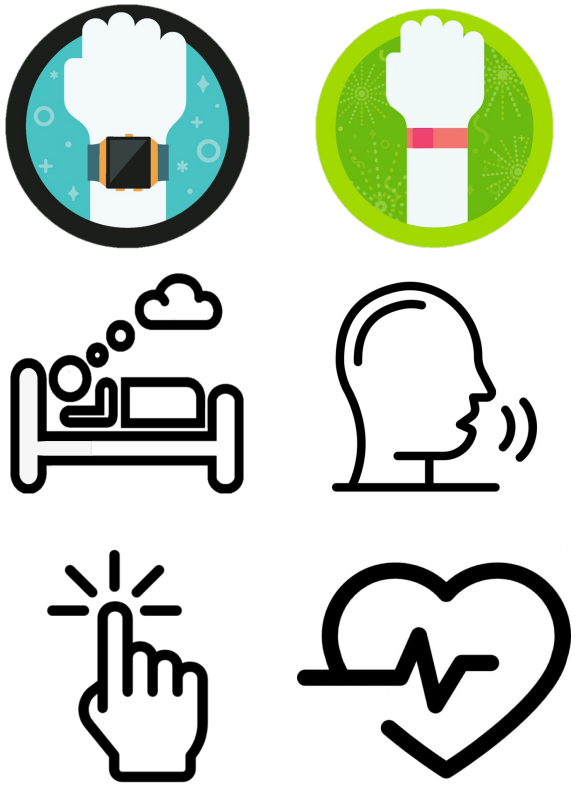
Some Lessons in Studying Idiographic Approaches

Basic Surveys

ESM / EMA

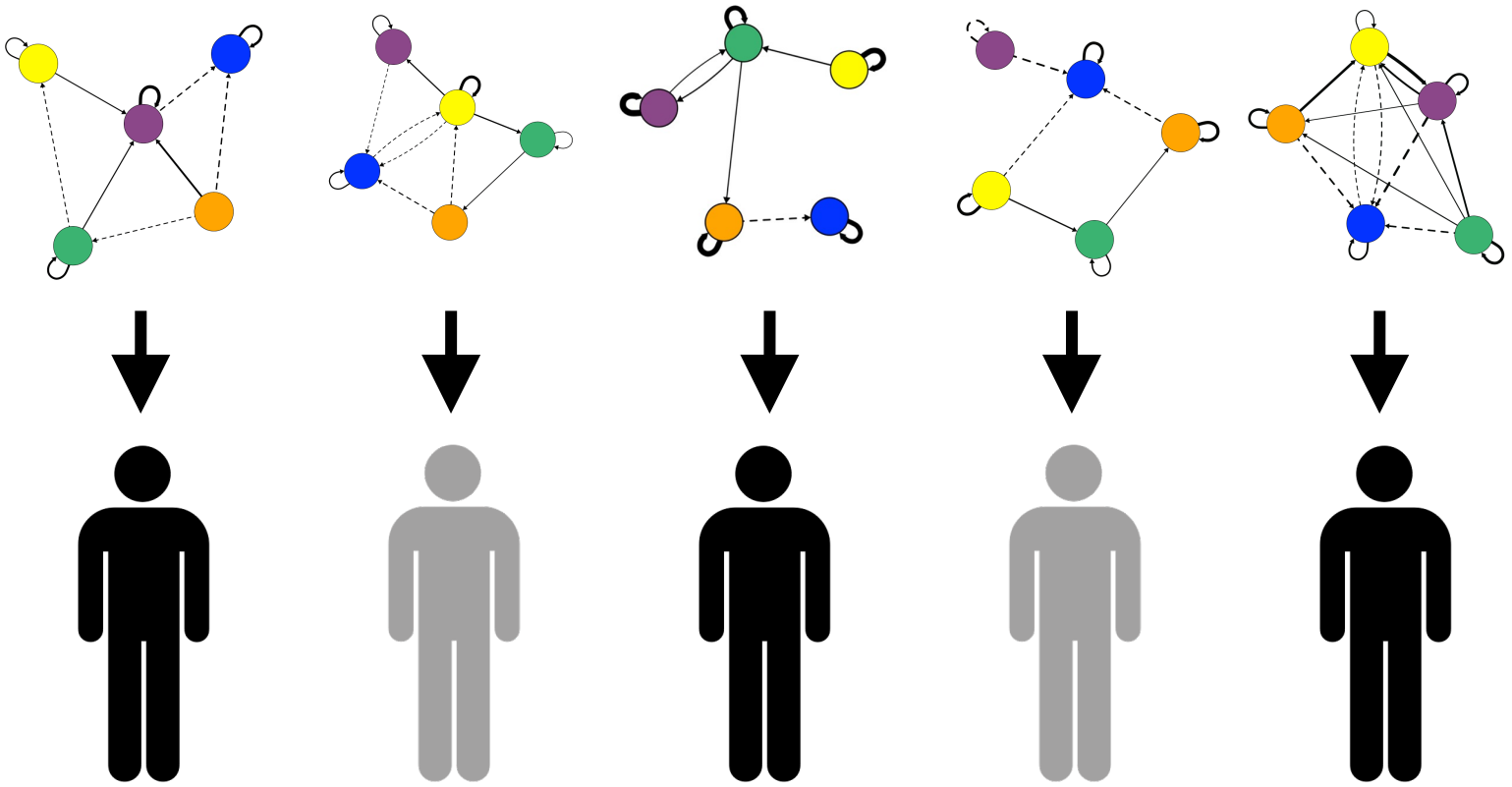


Mobile Sensing



Open-Ended Responses

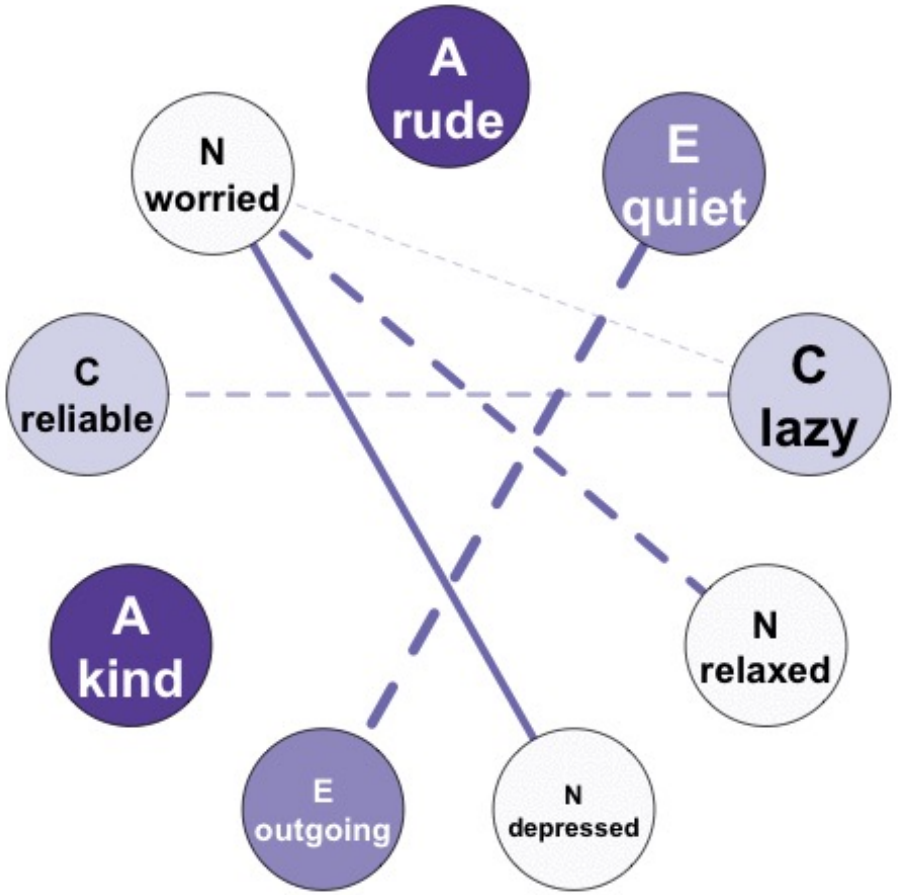
Some Lessons in Studying Idiographic Approaches



Idiographic

Person-Specific

Some Lessons in Studying Idiographic Approaches



Beck & Jackson (2020a, *JPSP*)

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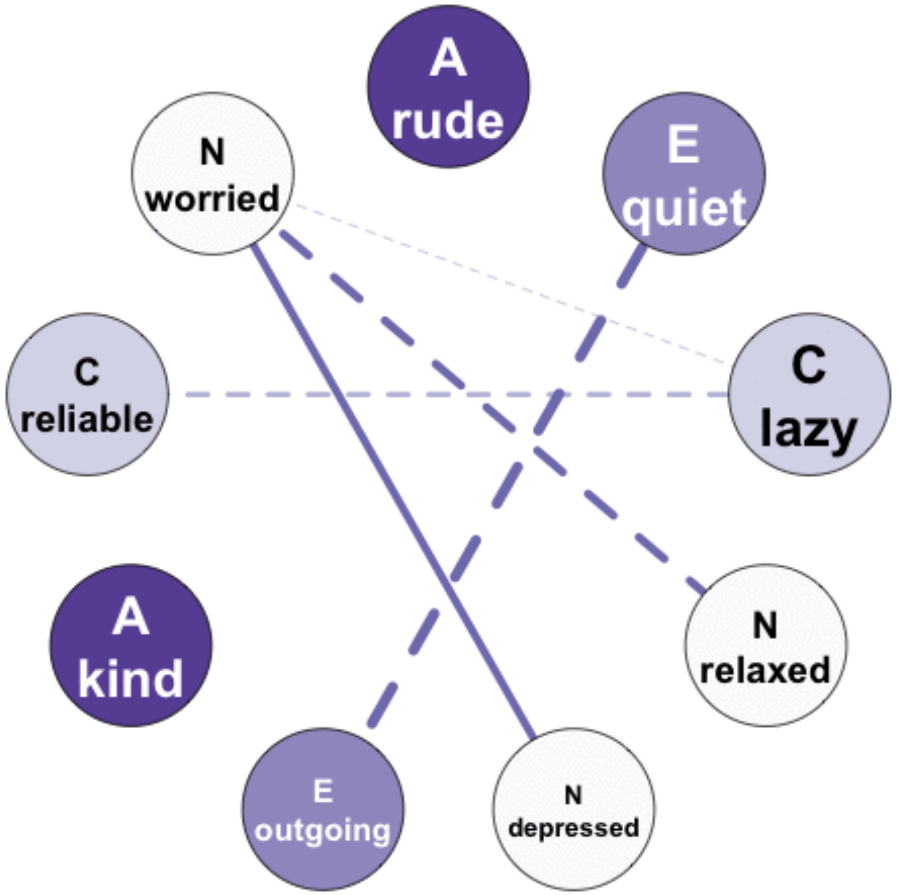

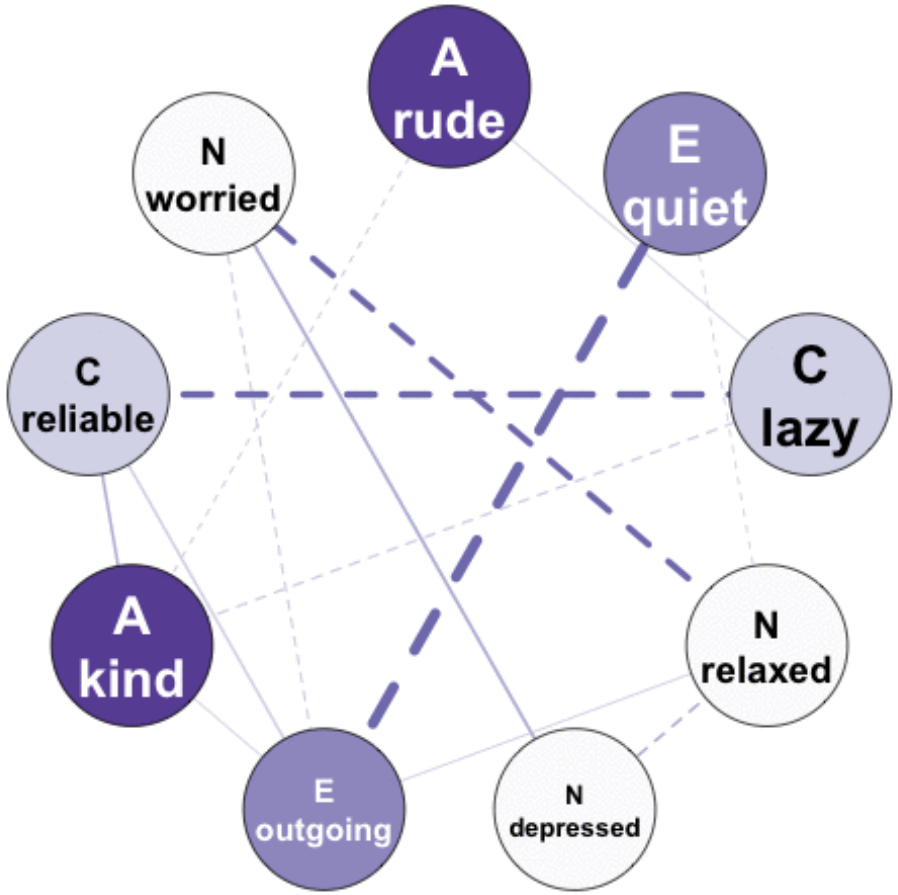

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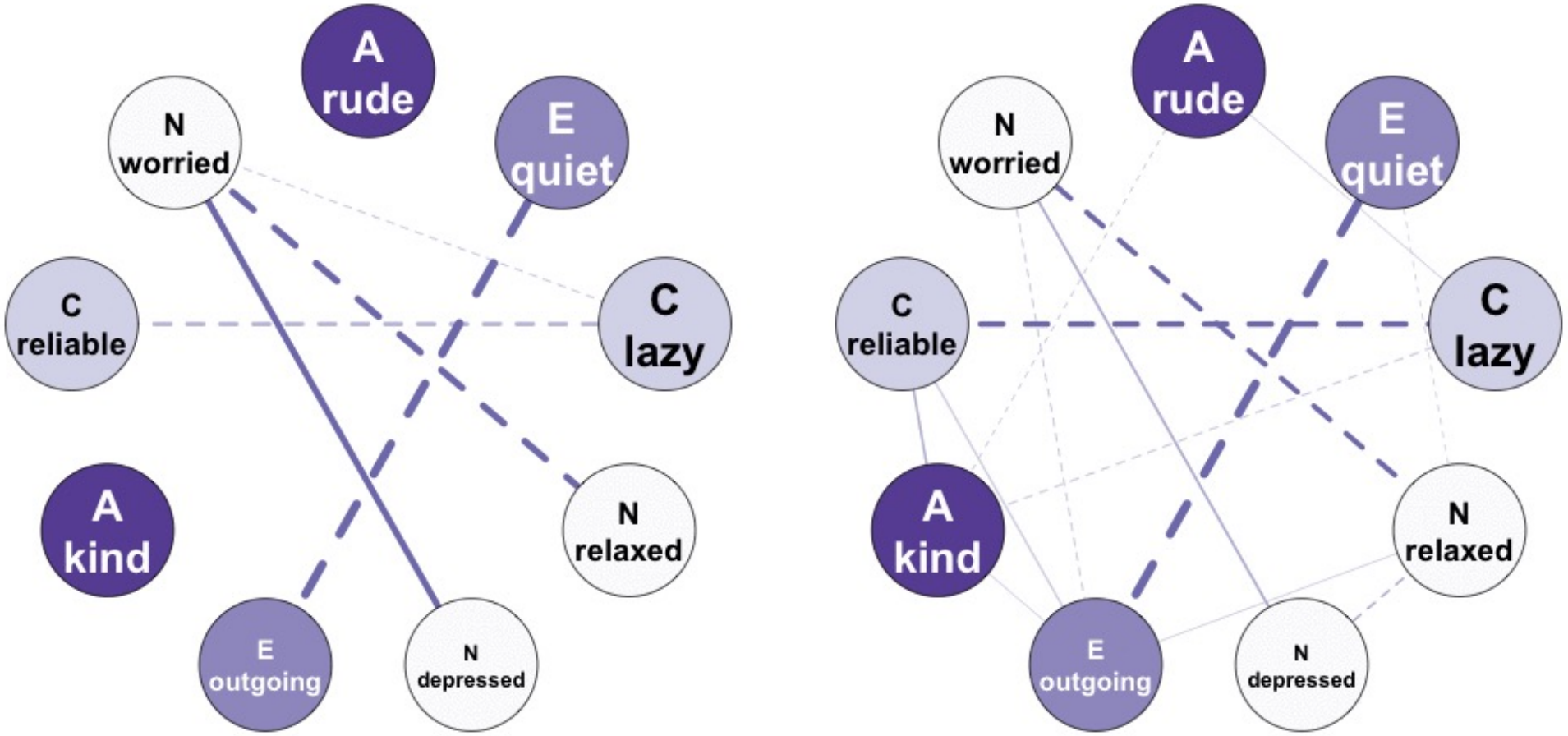
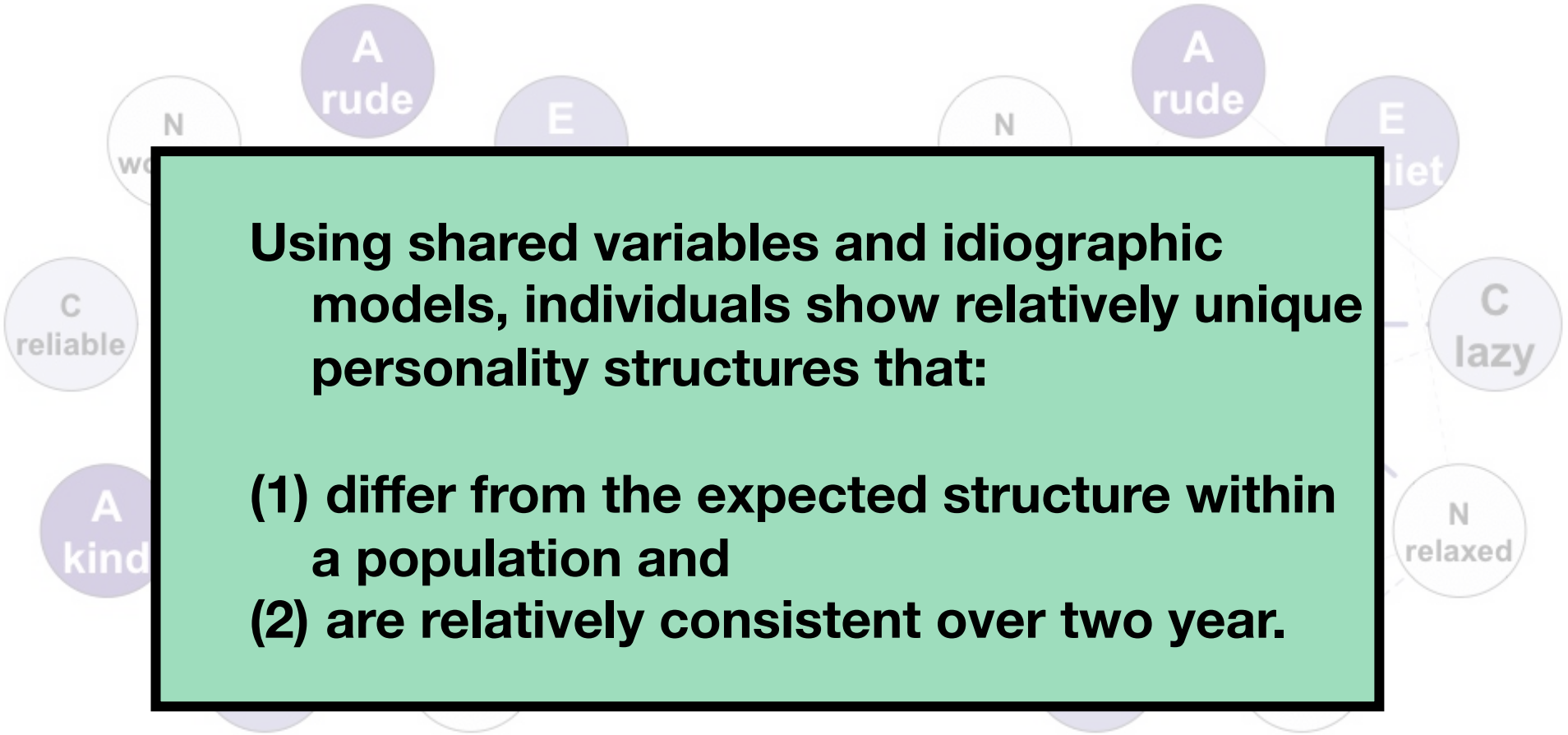


Beck & Jackson (2020a, *JPSP*)

Some Lessons in Studying Idiographic Approaches

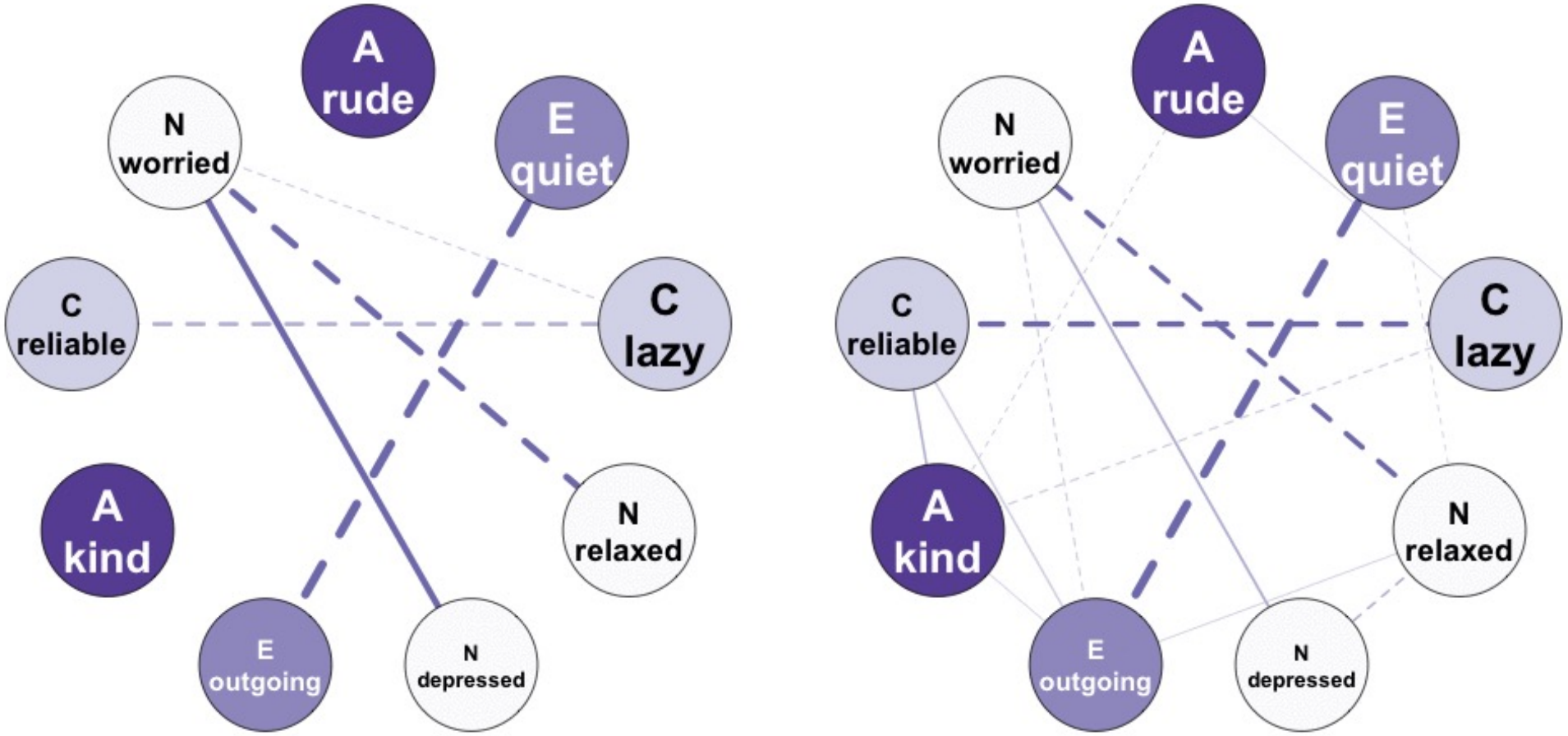


Using shared variables and idiographic models, individuals show relatively unique personality structures that:

(1) differ from the expected structure within a population and
(2) are relatively consistent over two year.

Beck & Jackson (2020a, *JPSP*)

Some Lessons in Studying Idiographic Approaches



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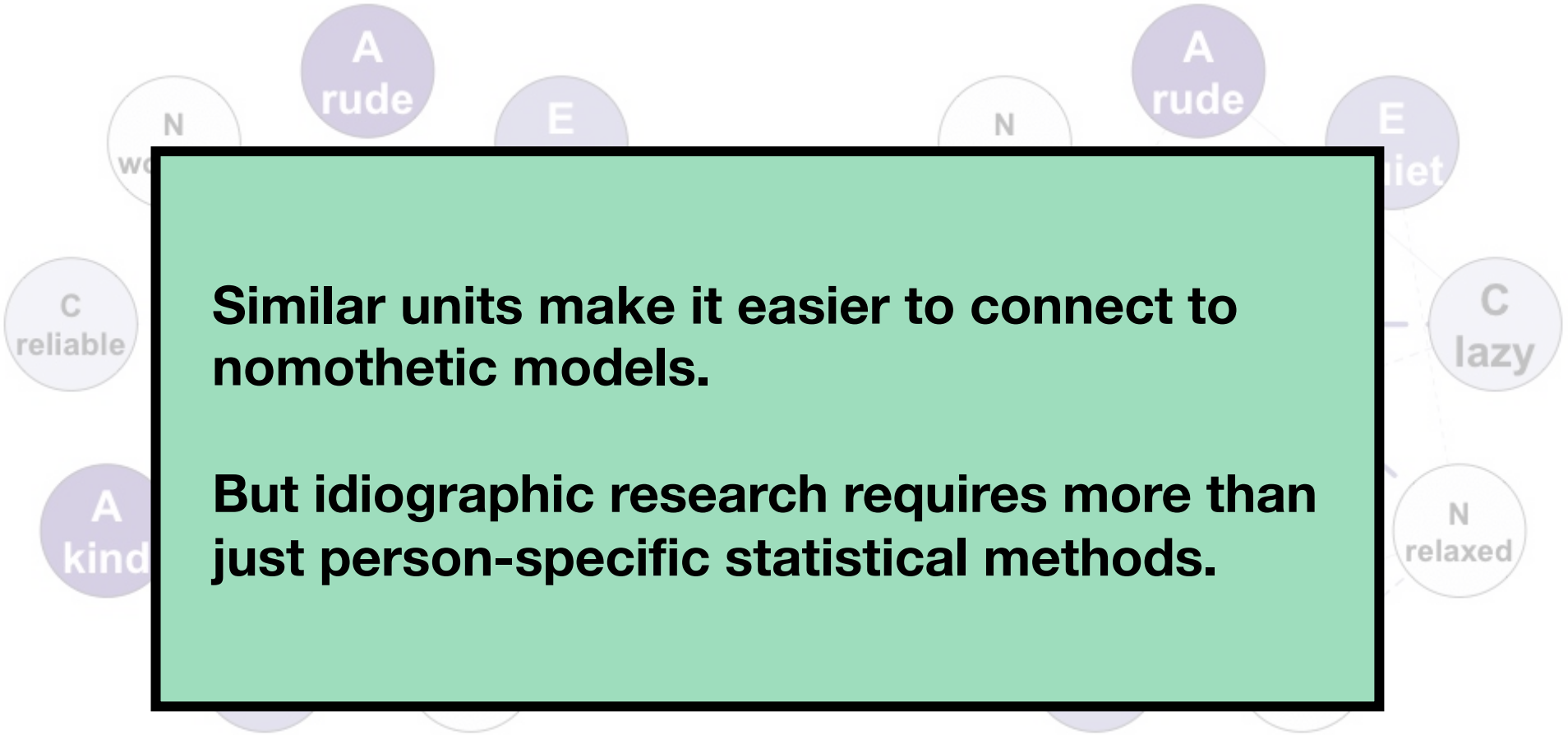

Similar units make it easier to connect to nomothetic models.

But idiographic research requires more than just person-specific statistical methods.

Beck & Jackson (2020a, *JPSP*)

Challenges to Linking Idiographics and Nomothetics

Where should the units come from?

How do we capture individuals' lives authentically?

Who do we measure?

How frequently do we measure?

How do we link across time spans?

Can we get at causality?

What is the data generating mechanism?

Is it the same across people?

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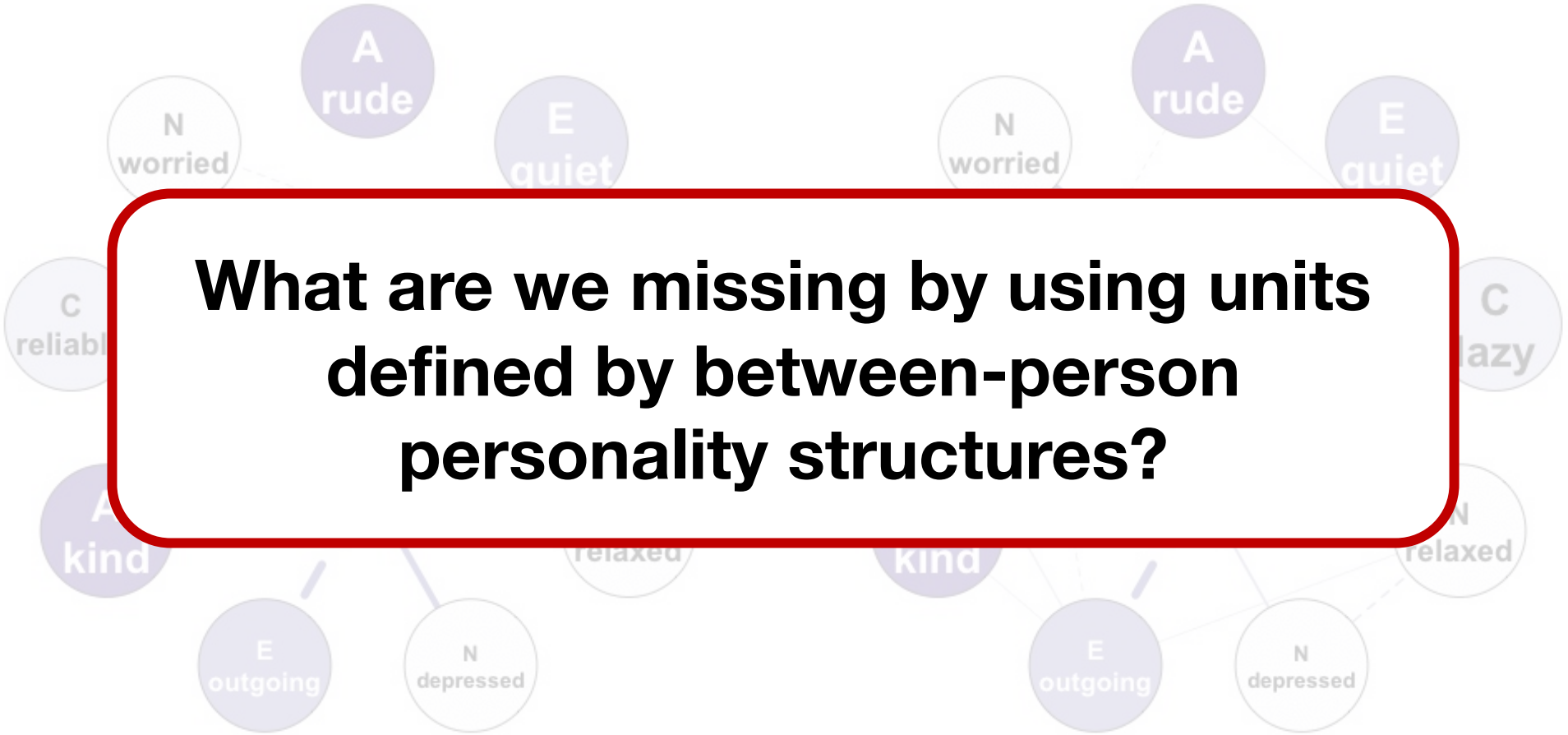
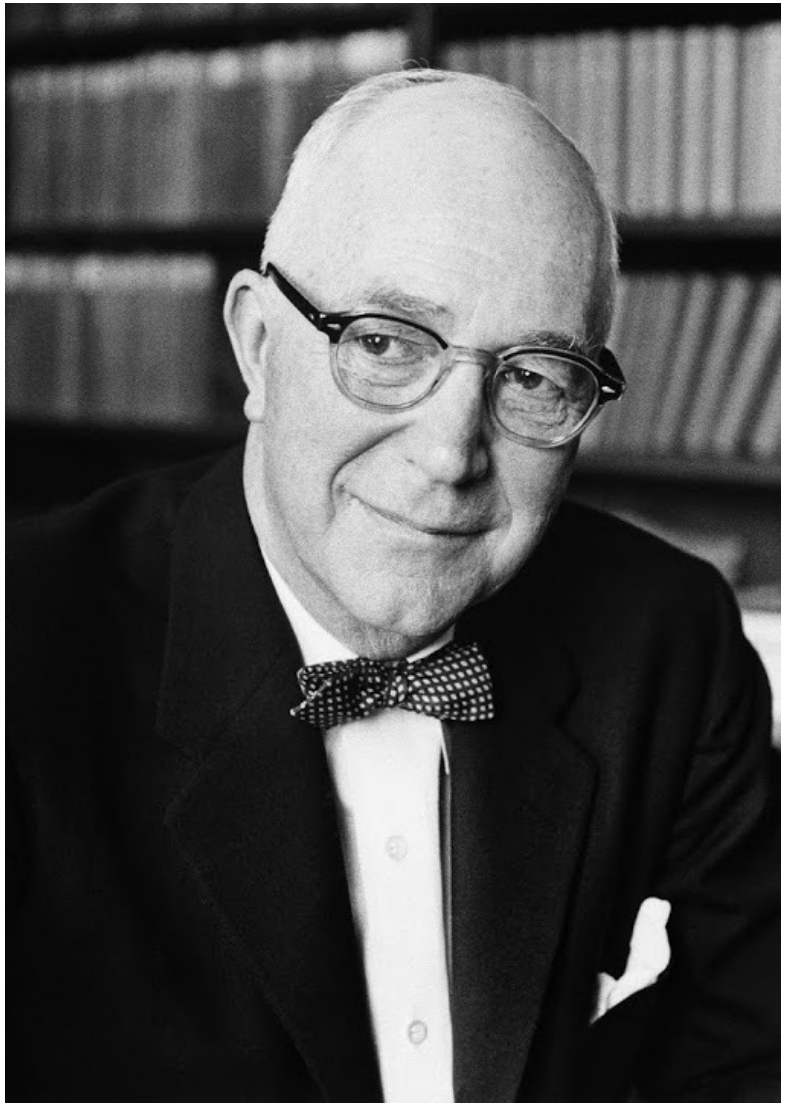
Challenge #1: The Units



What are we missing by using units defined by between-person personality structures?

Beck & Jackson (2020a, *JPSP*)

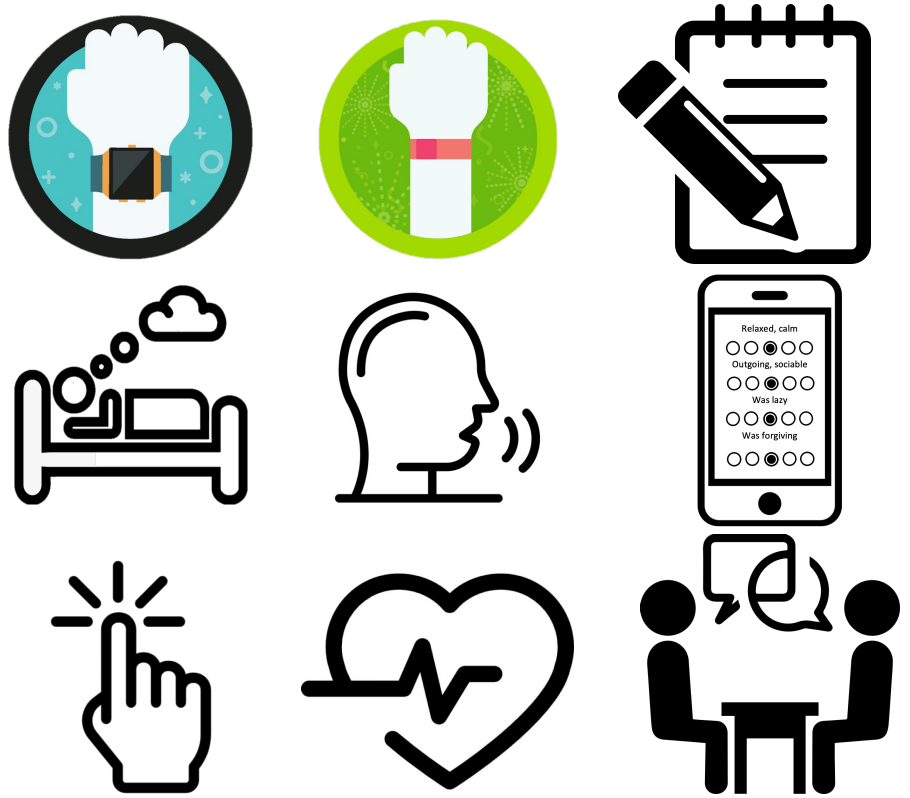


“Instead of growing impatient with the single case and hastening on to generalization, why should we not grow impatient with our generalizations and hasten to the internal pattern?”
(Allport, 1967, p. 84)

So what do we do?

Intensive

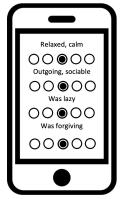
Mixed Methods



So what do we do?

Merging Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches

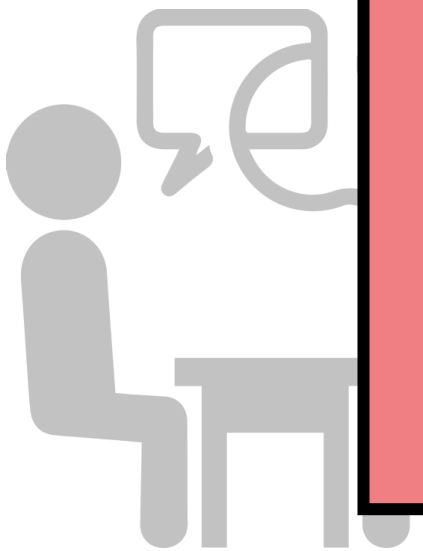
- Shared Items
- Pseudo-unique items
- Unique Items



- Test individuals' verbal theories
- Test predictive utility of shared criterion (outcomes)

So what do we do?

Merging Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches



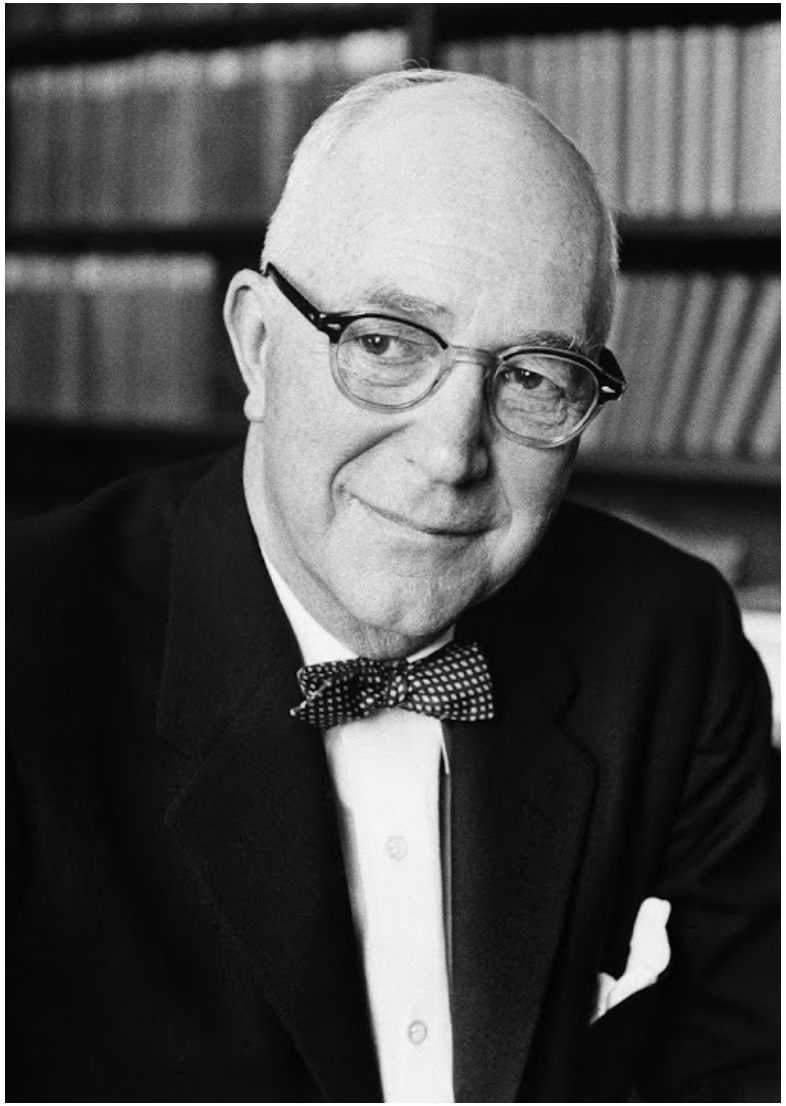
This is one example, addressing a specific question: The utility of idiographic units.

Linking idiographics and nomothetics will require more than one study.

individuals' verbal theories

predictive utility of shared criterion (outcomes)

Challenge #2: The Life



“The method required it, but the life did not.”
(Allport, 1967)

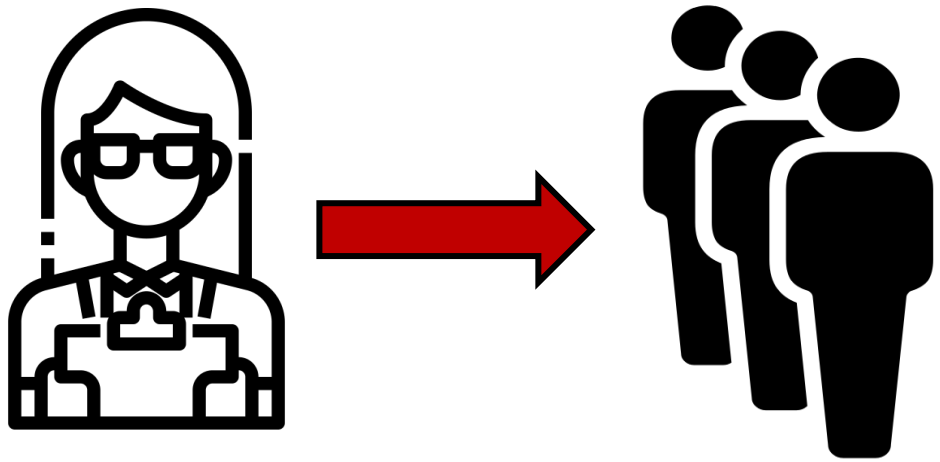
So what do we do?

Mixed Methods

So what do we do?

Mixed Methods

Collaborations



So what do we do?

Mixed Methods

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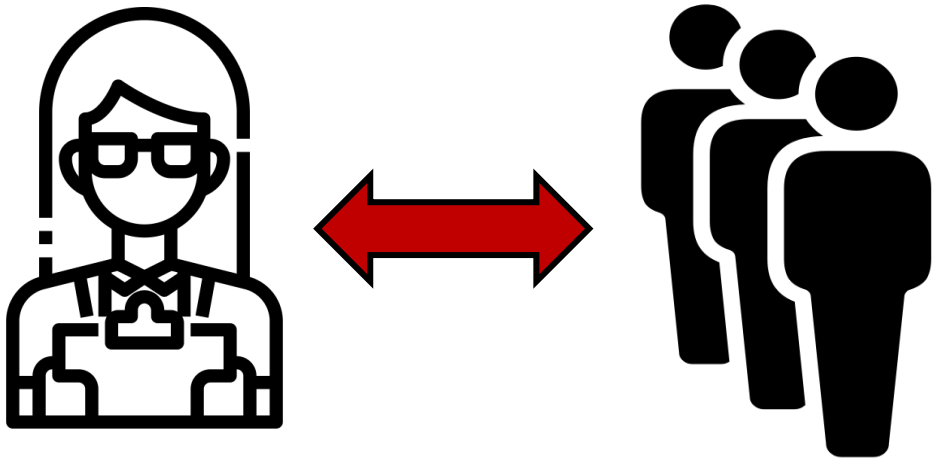

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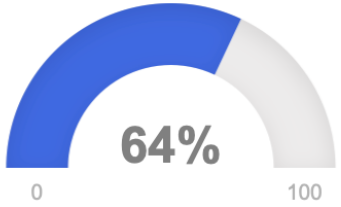
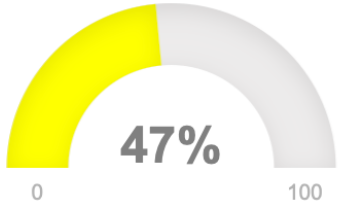
RStudio - Webinars | Brown | Amazon | facebook | Canvas | ShiftPlanning | CLPS 1720 '15 | OneNote | CLPS 1790 '13 | CLPS 1790 '14 | CLPS 1790 '15 | Neuro | Campaign Monitor | CS4 | Workday

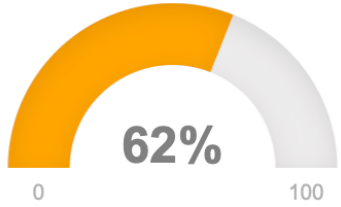
Extraversion Percentile



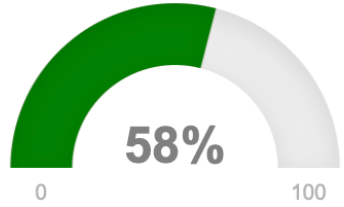
Agreeableness Percentile



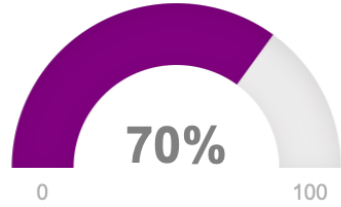
Conscientiousness Percentile



Neuroticism Percentile



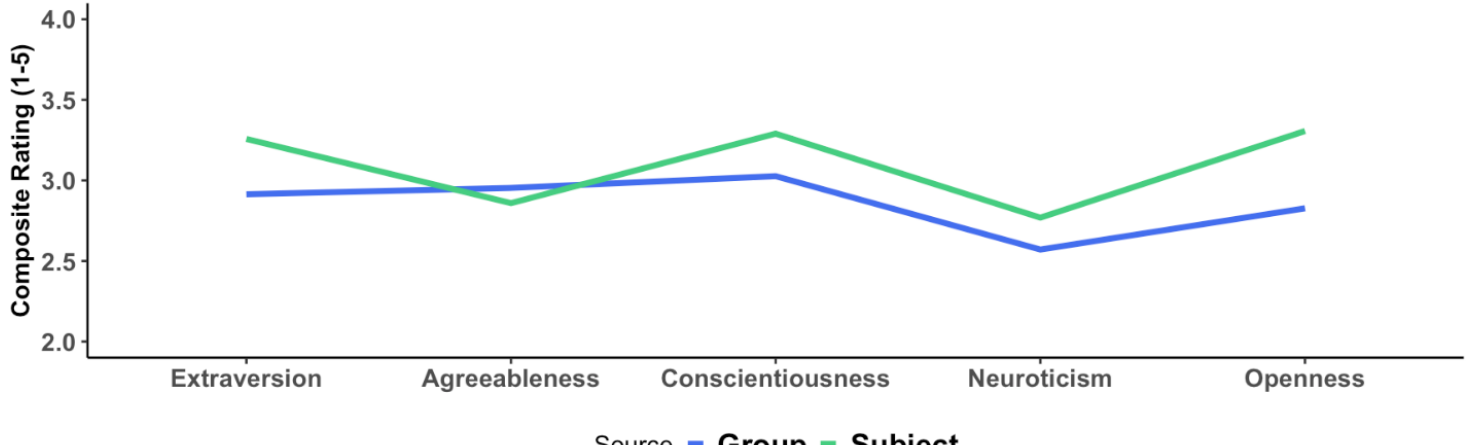
Openness Percentile



Welcome to your personalized results

This document summarizes your personal results from the two weeks of surveys you completed. Our hope is that (1) this document provides you with some self-insight that you would not get from taking a regular personality quiz and that (2) you can use what you learn to improve your life by reducing your procrastination or loneliness.

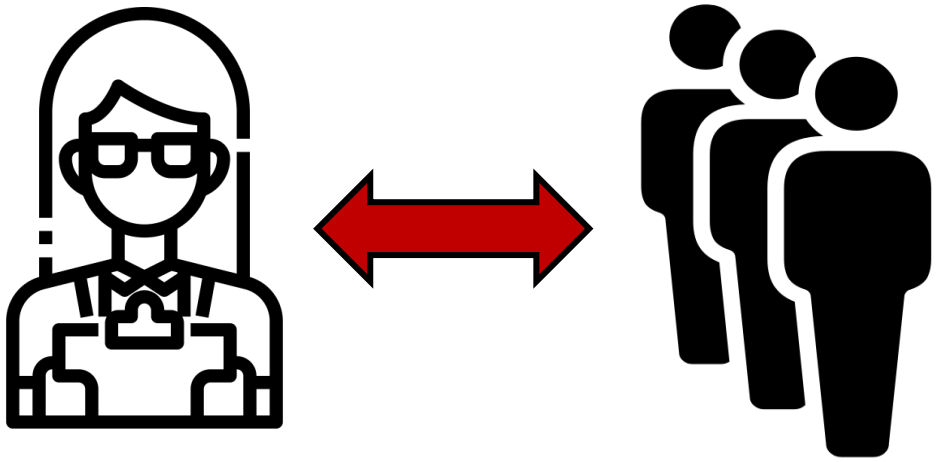
Before we dive into your results, though, you should take a minute to learn a little more about the surveys you completed. In each survey, we asked you to do a number



So what do we do?

Mixed Methods

Collaborations



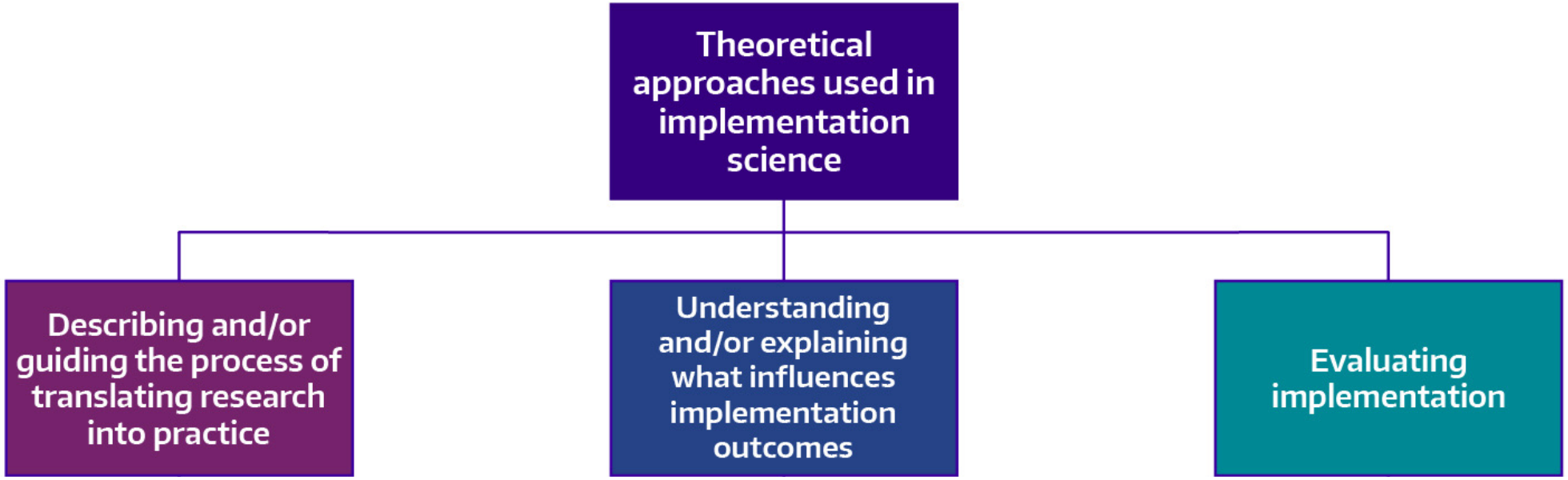
Stakeholders

So what do we do?

Theoretical approaches used in implementation science

Nilson, 2015

So what do we do?



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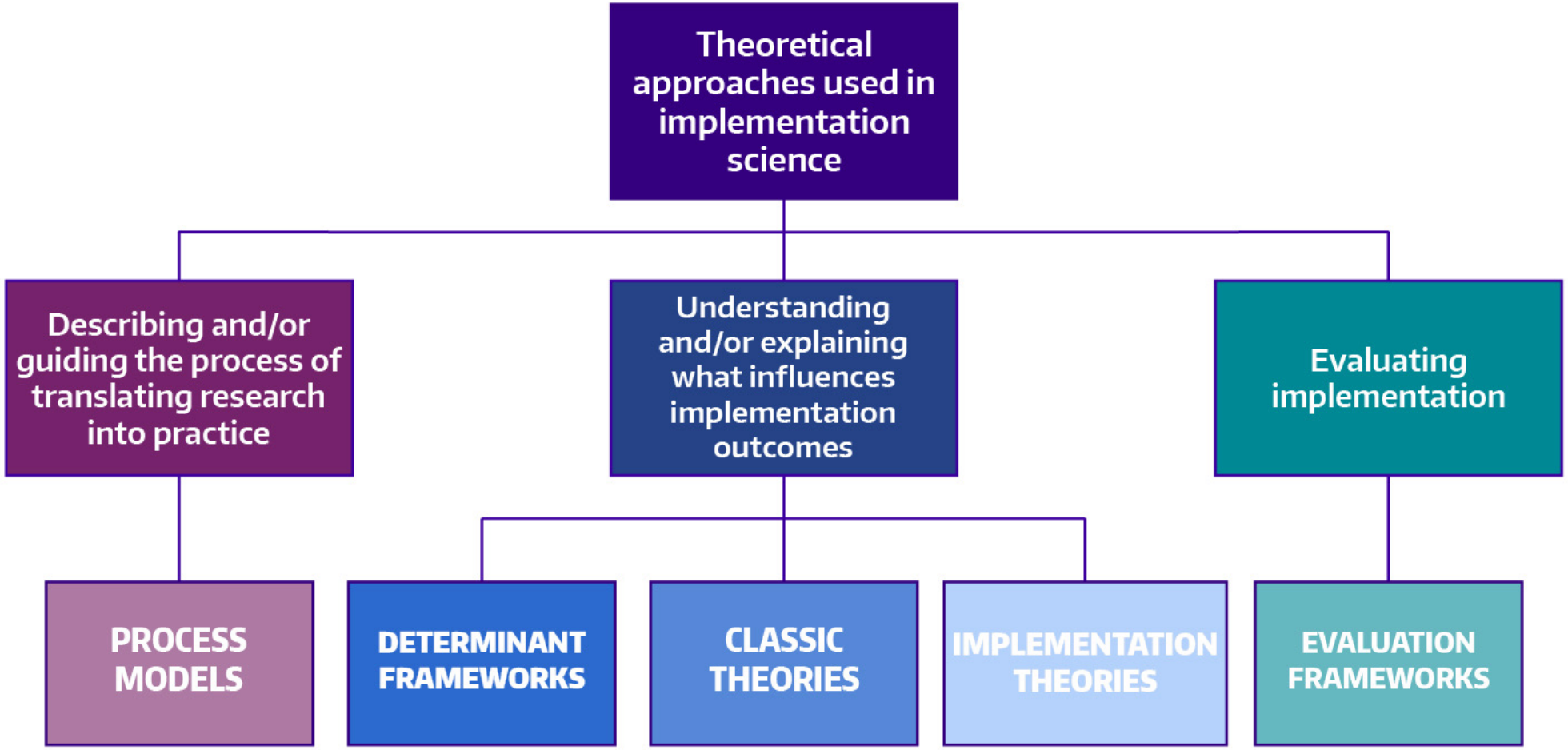

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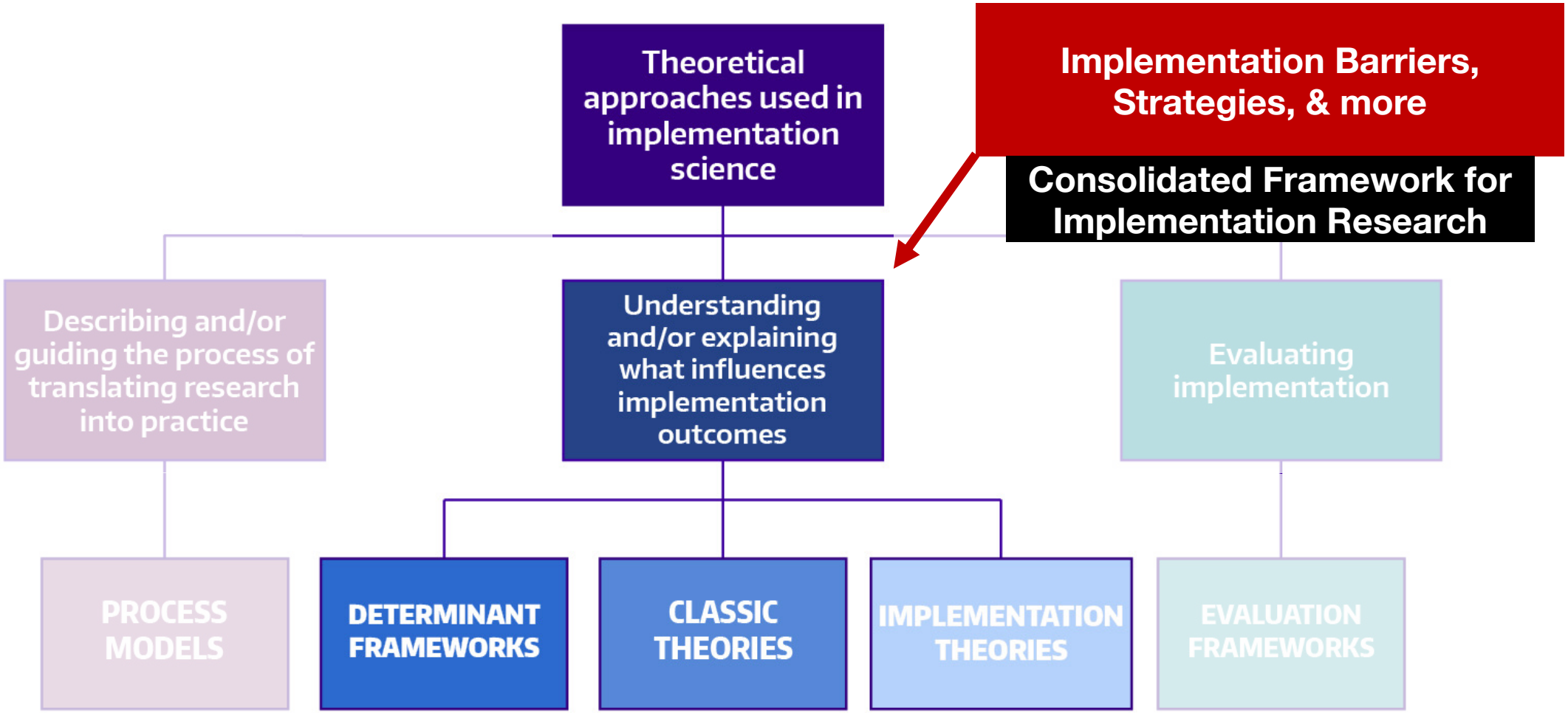
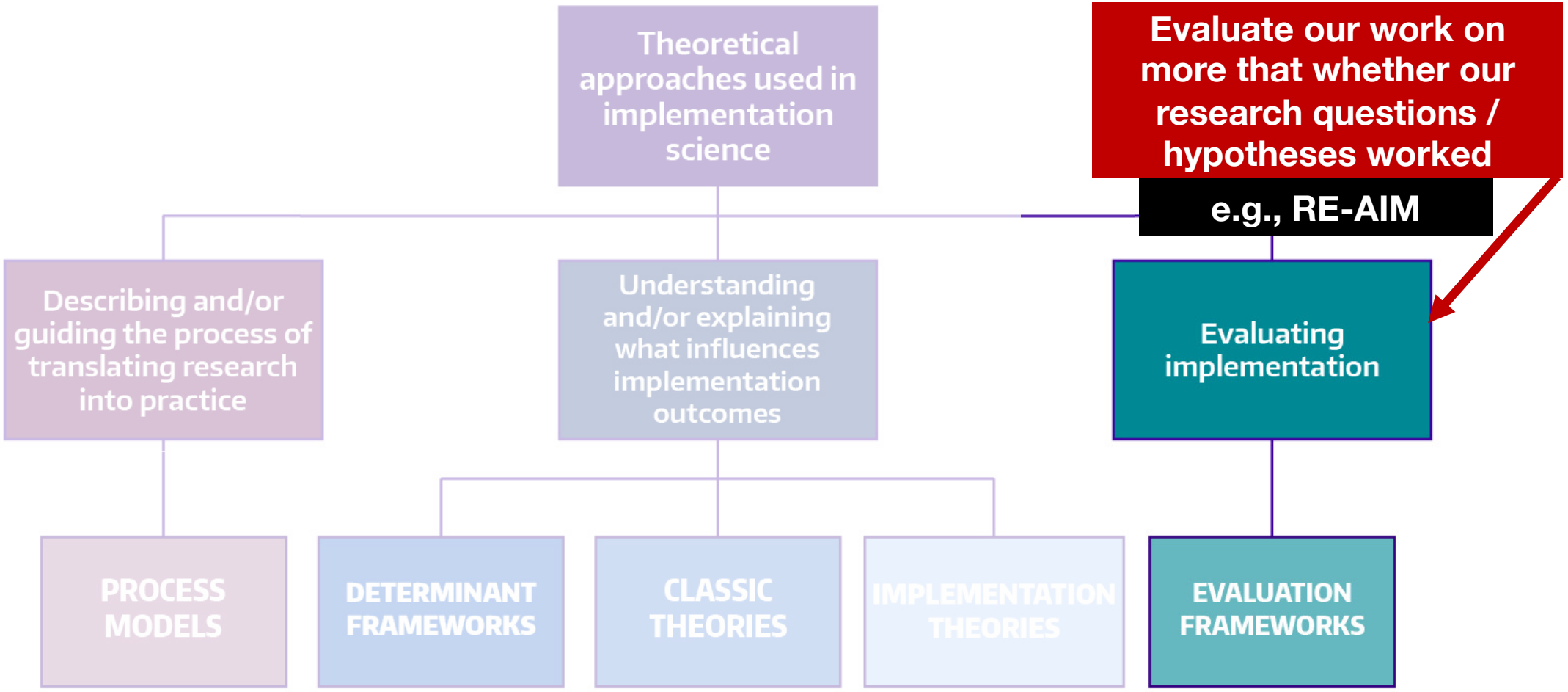


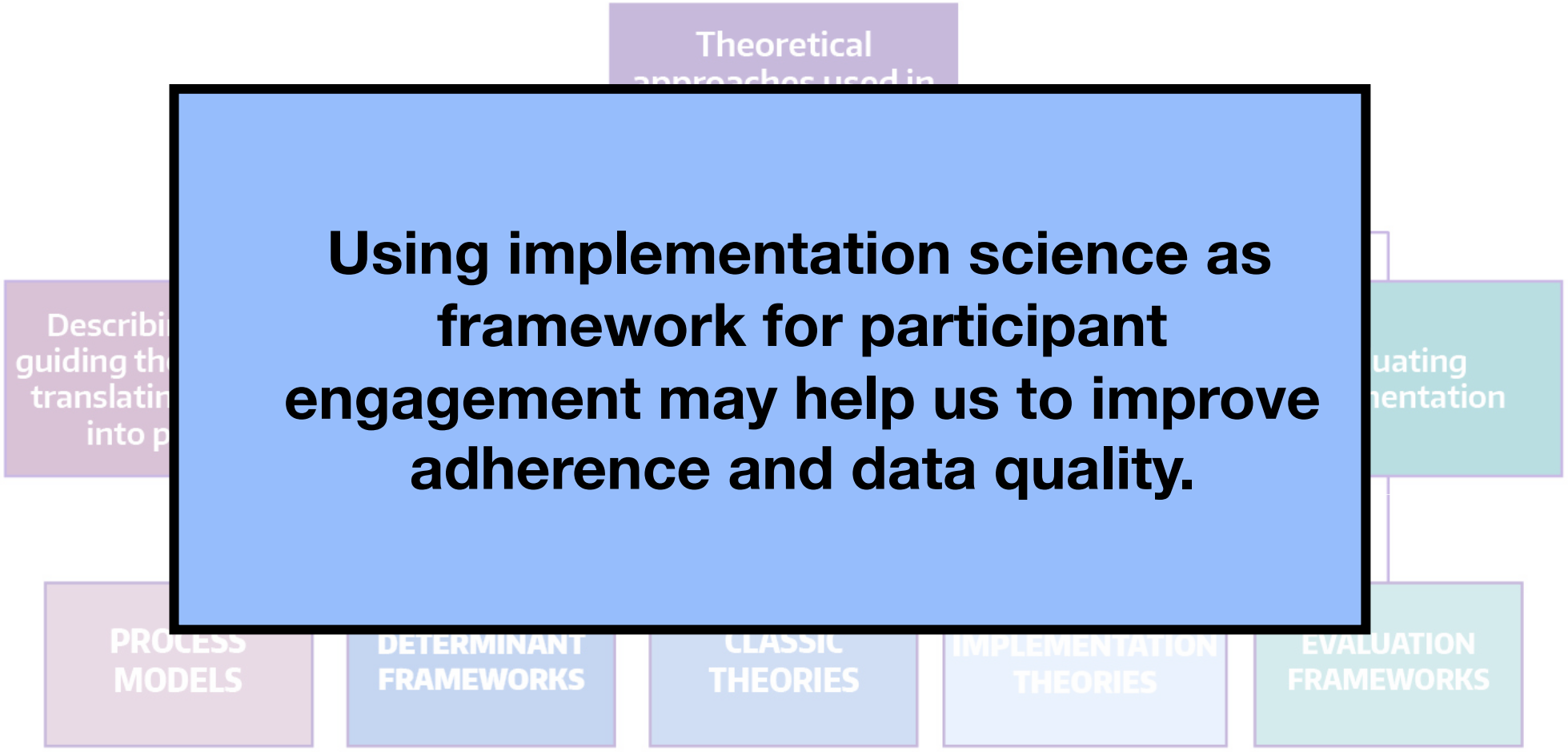
Nilson, 2015; Damschroder et al., 2009

So what do we do?



Nilson, 2015; Glasgow et al., 2011

So what do we do?



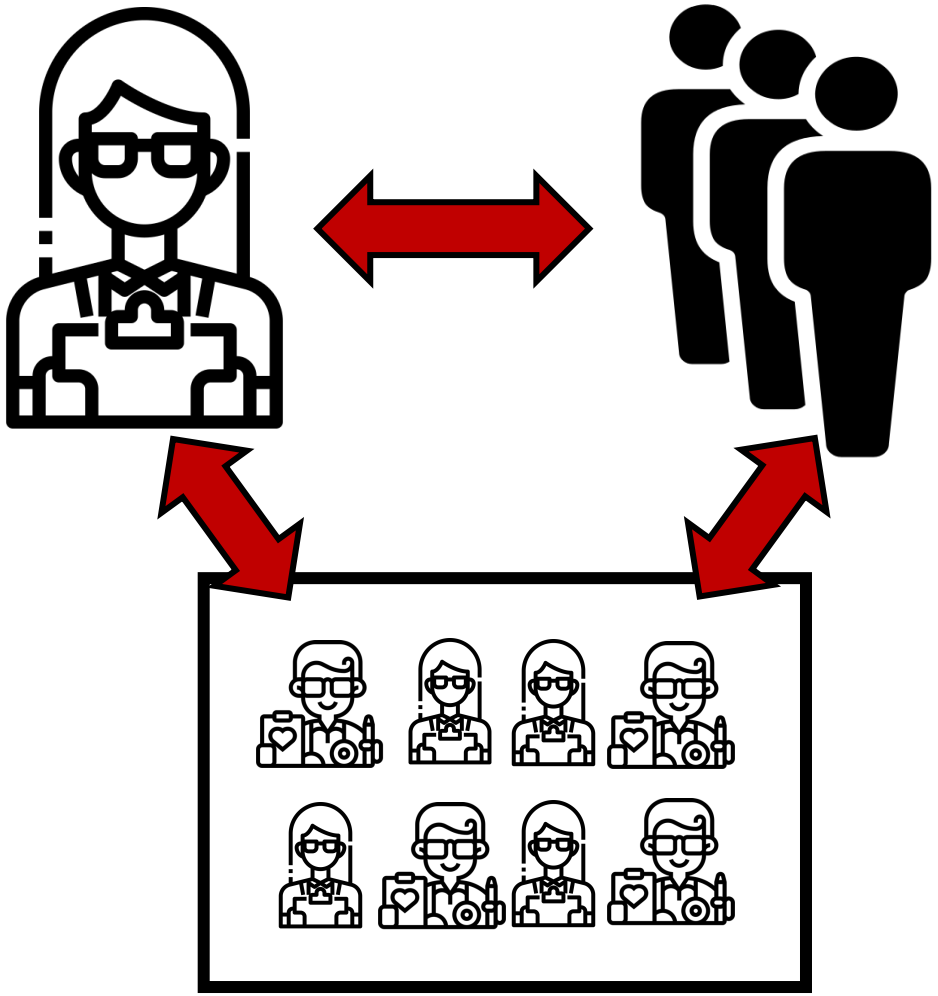
Using implementation science as framework for participant engagement may help us to improve adherence and data quality.

Nilson, 2015; Glasgow et al., 2011

So what do we do?

Mixed Methods

Collaborations



So what do we do?

Mixed Methods

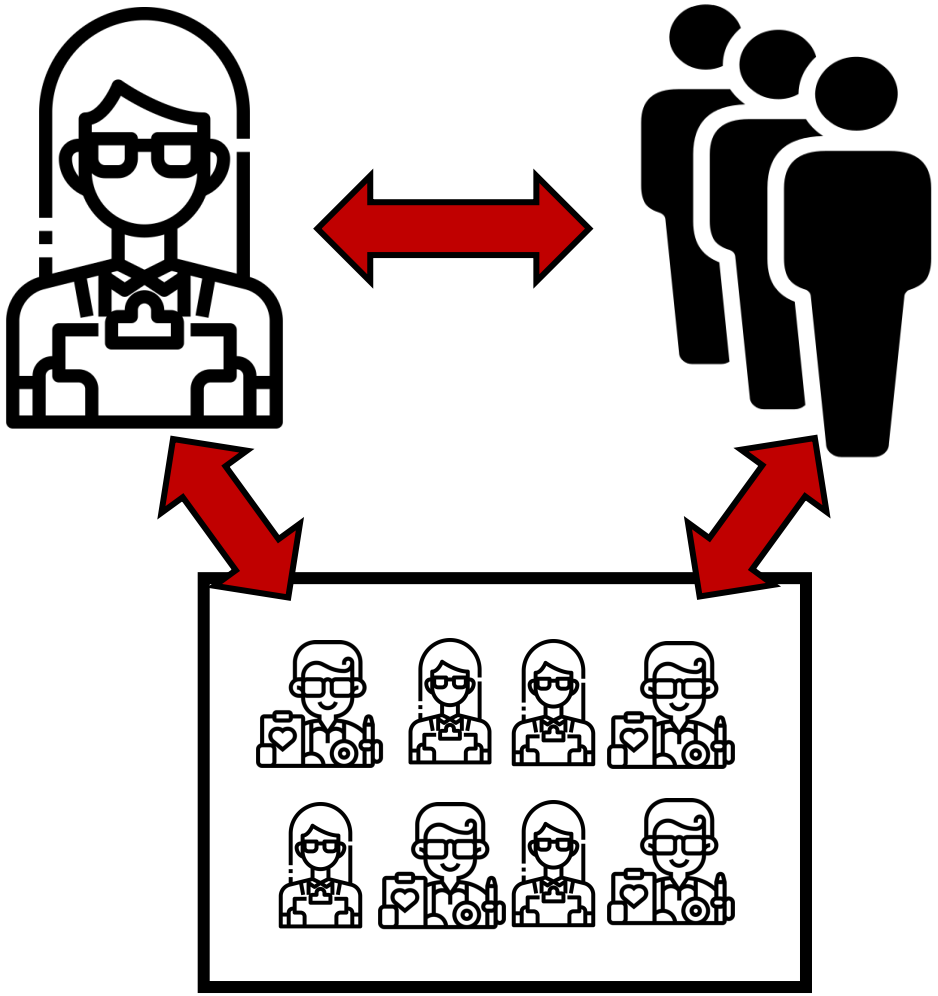
Collaborations

Shared instruments

Shared participants

Trainee workshops

… and more



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Collab

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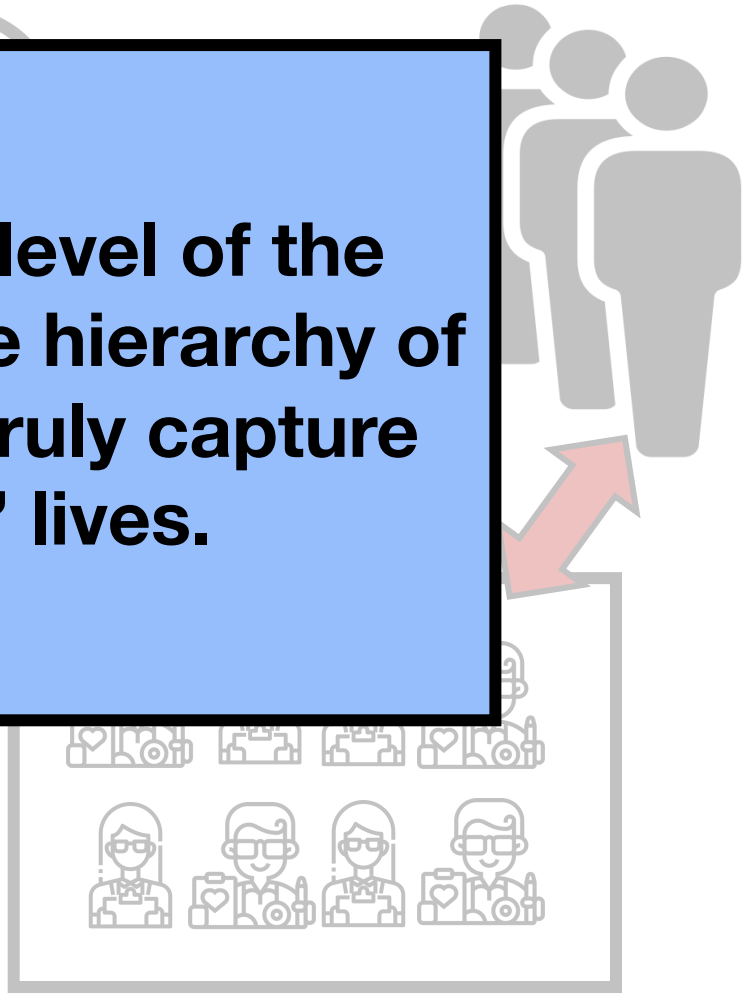
… and more

Collaborating at every level of the research process and the hierarchy of positions is needed to truly capture (many) indivduals' lives.



Wrapping Up

It's time to step beyond "two sciences of personality."

A "bottom-up" approach to defining units and measurement of personality may better capture links across levels of aggregation and the real lives of individuals.

But doing so will require collaboration and clear frameworks to understand and evaluate implementation.

Thank you!