

‘Lessons from Theory, Implications for Evaluation’

**Summary of Findings from
GSR Behaviour Change Knowledge Review**

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**for the Social Research Association Summer Event
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Background

- Responding to the rise of the behaviour change agenda
- Cross-govt review commissioned by GSR (HMT, MoJ, DfT, Defra, DWP, CLG, FSA, WAG, TSG)

Objectives

- Overall, to make sense of models of behaviour change, for research analysts and policy makers
 - Provide overview of relevant models and theories
 - Provide guidance on their uses and limits

Methodology

- Desk research, plus audience 'Needs Analysis'
 - Interviews with 11 departmental analysts
 - Data gathering via 18 experts
 - Review based on 109 sources
 - Peer reviews, and comments from analysts, economists, policy makers...

Key Findings

- **A distinction made between behavioural models and theories of change**
 - *Behavioural models identify the factors influencing behaviour*
 - *Theories of change show how behaviours change, and can be changed*
- **A fine distinction: easier to observe in practical guidance than in conceptual classification**
- **Understanding both bodies of theory essential for developing effective interventions**
- **As a result, practical Framework for Model-Based Interventions proposed, as Nine Principles**
- **Framework embeds behavioural models within a development process shaped by theories of change**

Review of Theory: Behavioural Models

1. Underlying Assumptions

- **Economic theory the starting point for understanding behaviour**
 - *Rational Choice theory, and utility maximisation*
 - *Preferences are 'off the model' (assumed constant)*
- **Economists note idiosyncratic decision making: 'bounded rationality'**
- **Heuristics included in principles of 'behavioural economics', merging economic and psychological understandings**
- **In psychology, rational choice as linear 'Expected Utility' models; also as (Information) Deficit models**



Review of Theory: Behavioural Models

2. Social-Psychological Factors

- **Social-psychological models the standard for behaviour change**
- **From Expectancy Value Theory (based in attitudes), becoming increasingly Adjusted (EV models), ie. less deliberative**
- **Factors inc.**
 - **Values, beliefs, attitudes**
 - **Norms**
 - **Agency**
 - **Habit**
 - **Affect**

Figure 1: Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1986)

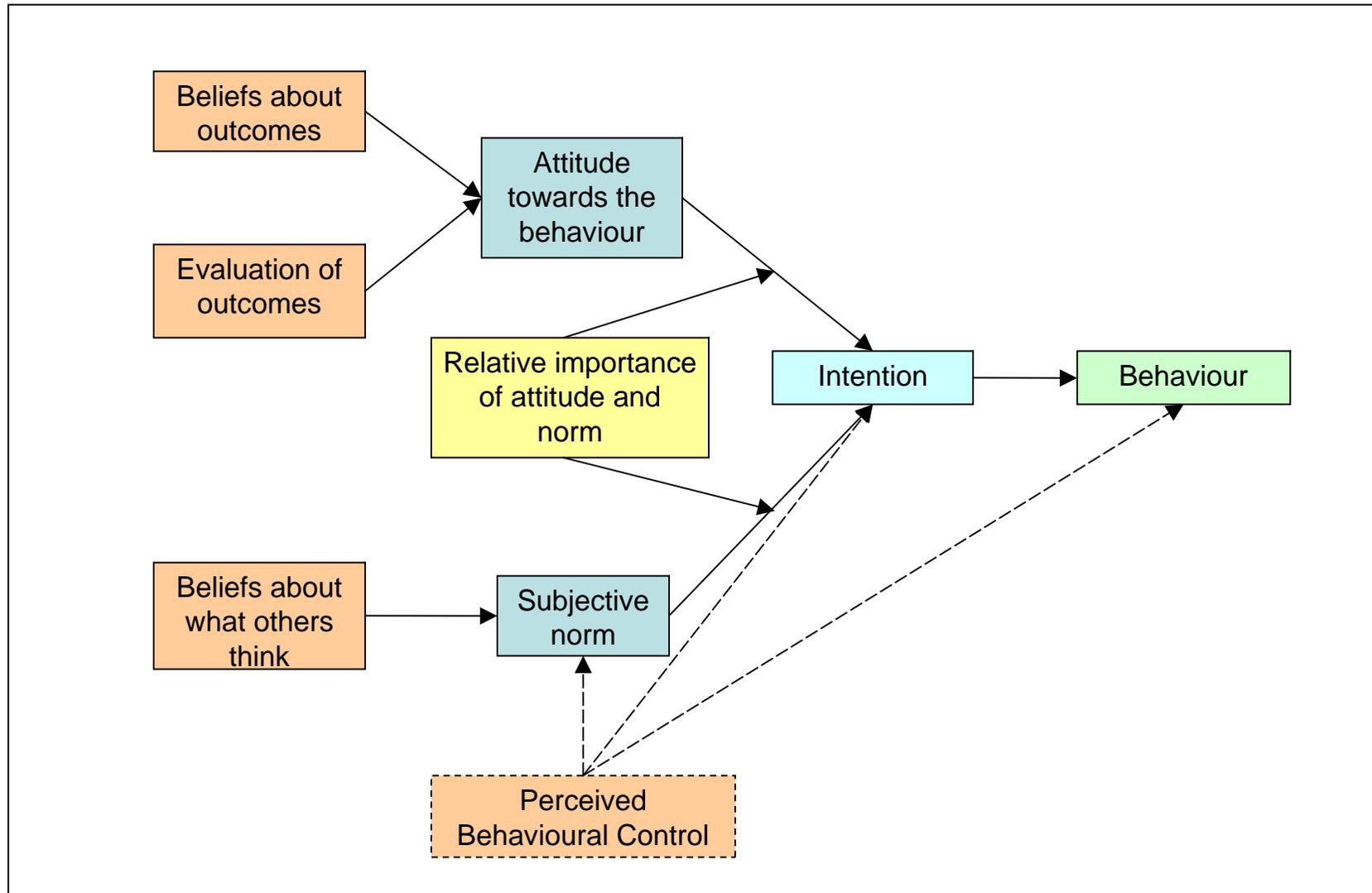


Figure 2: Triandis' Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour (1977)

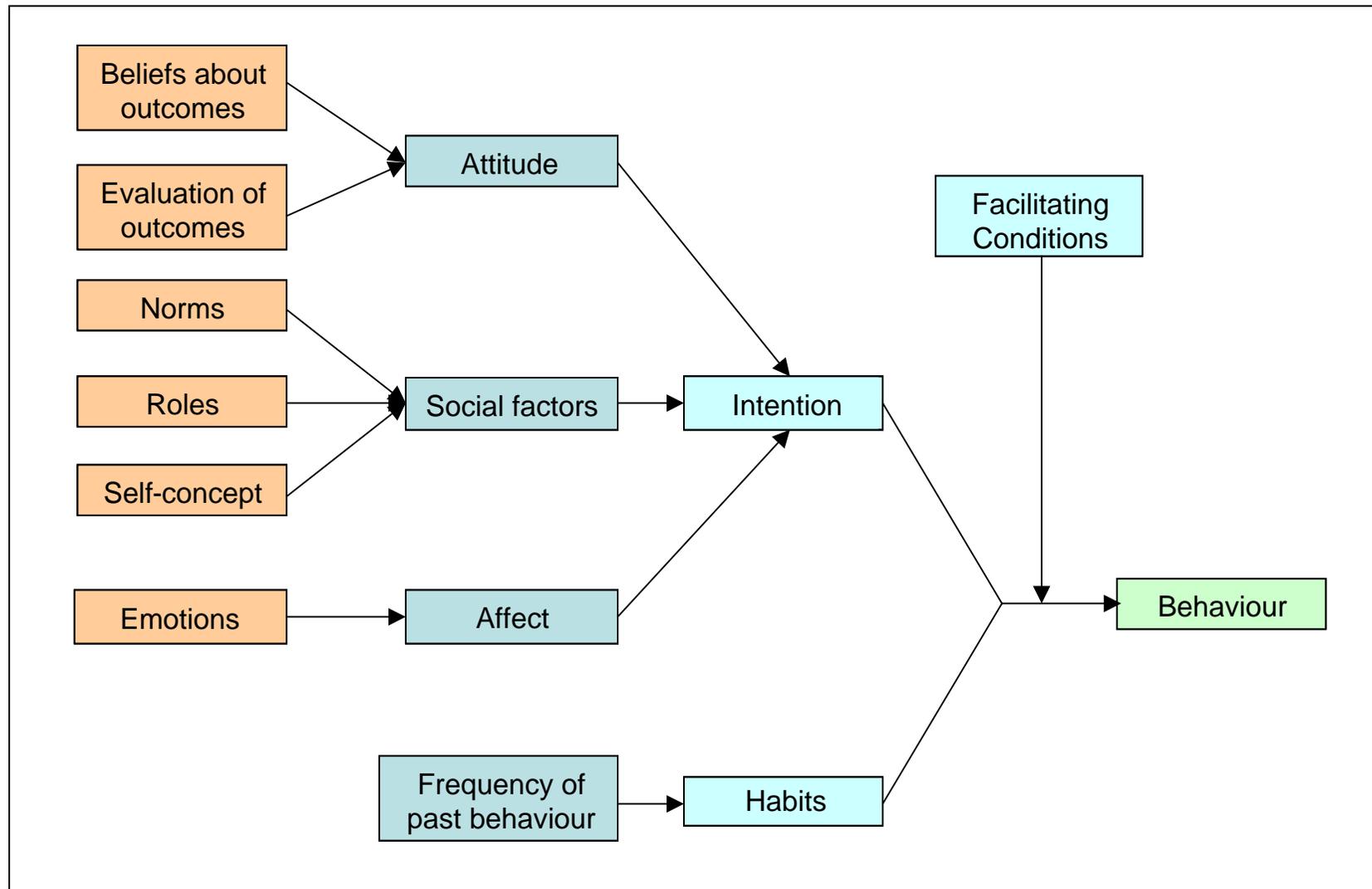
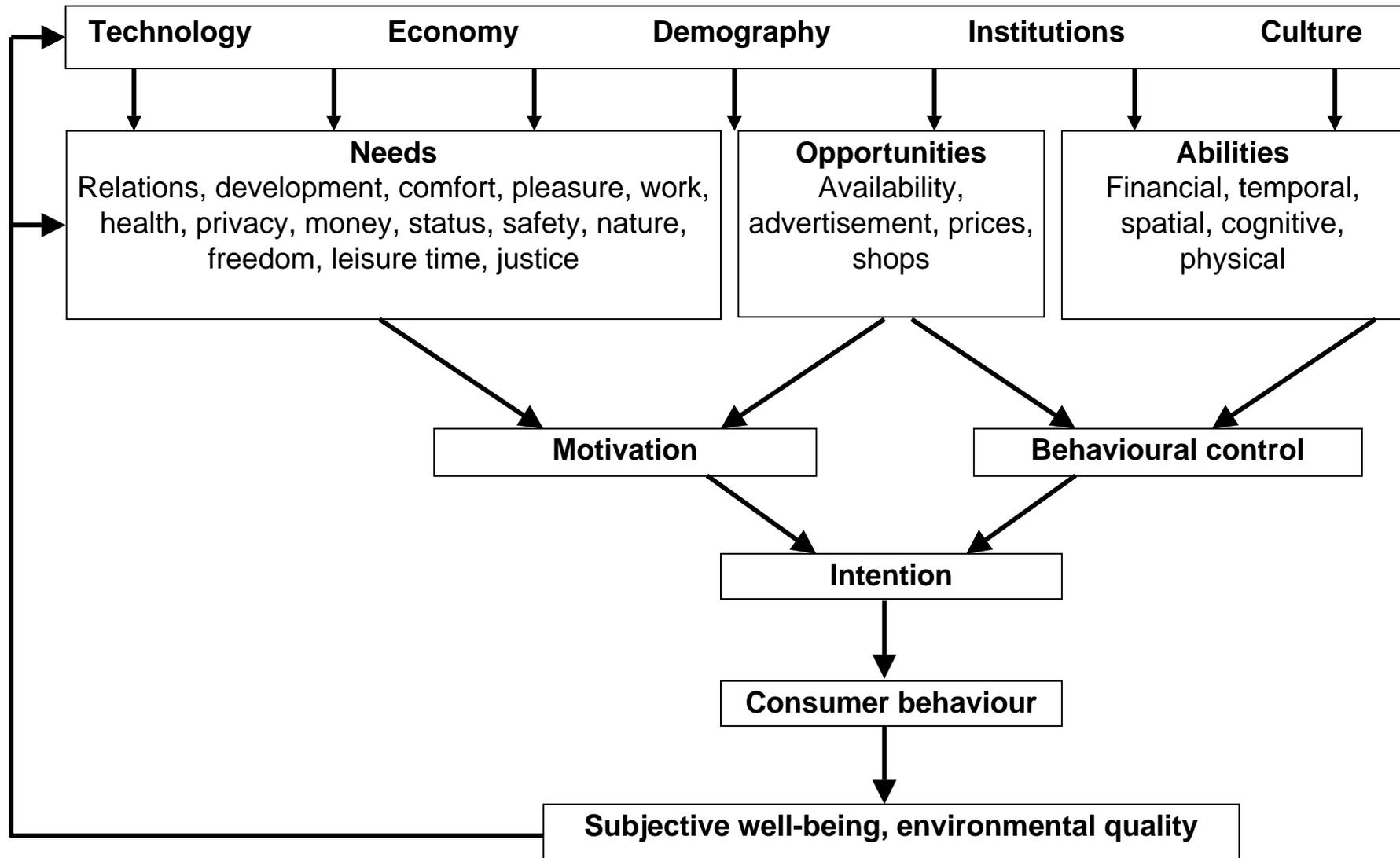


Figure 3: Vlek et al's NOA Model (1997)



Review of Theory: Theories of Change

1. Change Theory

- Less consensus around literature on theories of change: often practical not conceptual in purpose
- eg. Lewin's Change Theory (1947) on changing habits
- Based on unfreezing/refreezing dynamic, lifting habits up to conscious scrutiny
- Habits as positive 'resistance to change' based on group standards
- 'Group decision' is vital; better than 'a good lecture'
- Lewin as the father of action research (learning through doing)

"There is nothing so practical as good theory"

Review of Theory: Theories of Change

2. Change as a Process

Prochaska & Di Clemente's Transtheoretical ('Stages of Change') Model (1983)

- **Changing habits as progress through 6 segments**
- **10 stage-matched interventions ('processes of change')**
- **Developed from smoking cessation, but increasingly rejected by practitioners**

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations (1962-)

- **Explains adoption of innovations through society, based on S-curve**
- **Segments public into five types ('innovators' to 'laggards') who adopt based on a five step 'Information-Decision Process'**
- **Developed to model take-up of technologies, not the spread of behaviours**

⇒ Value predominantly conceptual: behaviour as a process not an event

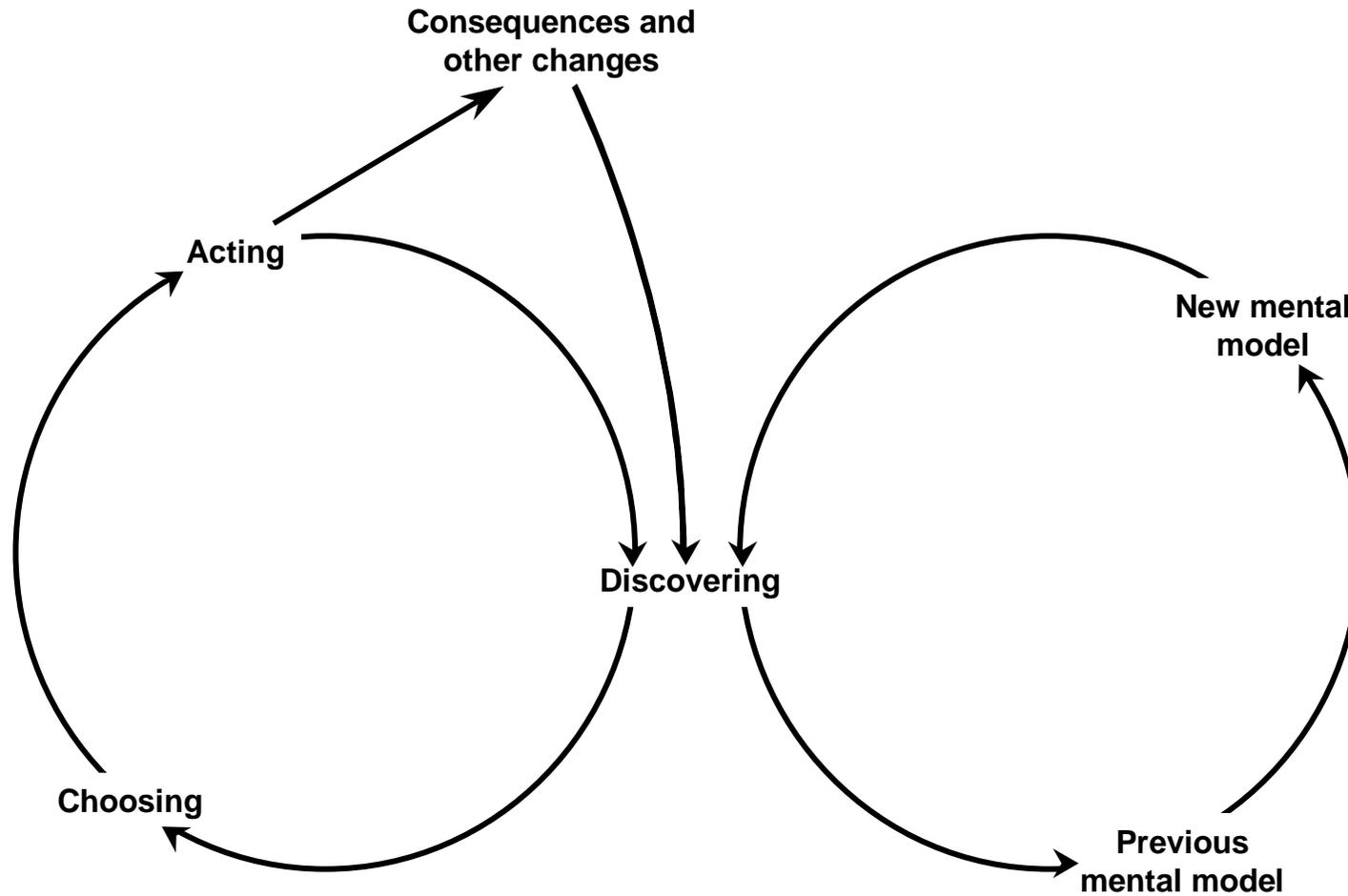
Review of Theory: Theories of Change

3. Change as Learning

- Formal learning a key tool in behaviour change interventions
 - Information-Motivation-Behavioural Skills Model (IMB)
 - Education for Sustainable Development (eg ESD1 / ESD2)
- Learning theory has learning and change as intertwined
 - eg Deweyan Inquiry (learning as surprise)
- Double loop learning distinguishes between ‘instrumental’ and ‘process’ learning (action and reflection)
- Second loop learning necessary for transformational change
- Reshapes ‘underlying assumptions’ (Schein)

“Learning and change cannot be imposed on people”

Figure 4: Argyris and Schon's Double Loop Learning (1978)



Review of Theory: Theories of Change

4. Change in Systems

- **Systems defined by their ‘emergent properties’, which provide their resistance to change**
- **In human activity, ‘emergent properties’ account for ‘policy resistance’**
- **Systems thinking as “a discipline for seeing wholes”**
- **Thus a diagnostic (not practical) technique for approaching complex problems, or ‘messes’**
- **Produces diagrams and maps, not models**

Practical Guidance: A Model-Based Framework

'Nine Principles for designing and developing interventions based on models'

- 1. Identify the audience groups and target behaviour**
- 2. Identify relevant behavioural models**
- 3. Select the key influencing factors**
- 4. Identify effective intervention techniques**
- 5. Engage the target audience as 'actors'**
- 6. Develop a prototype intervention**
- 7. Pilot the intervention, and monitor**
- 8. Evaluate: adapt, extend or abandon**
- 9. Gather learnings and feed back in**

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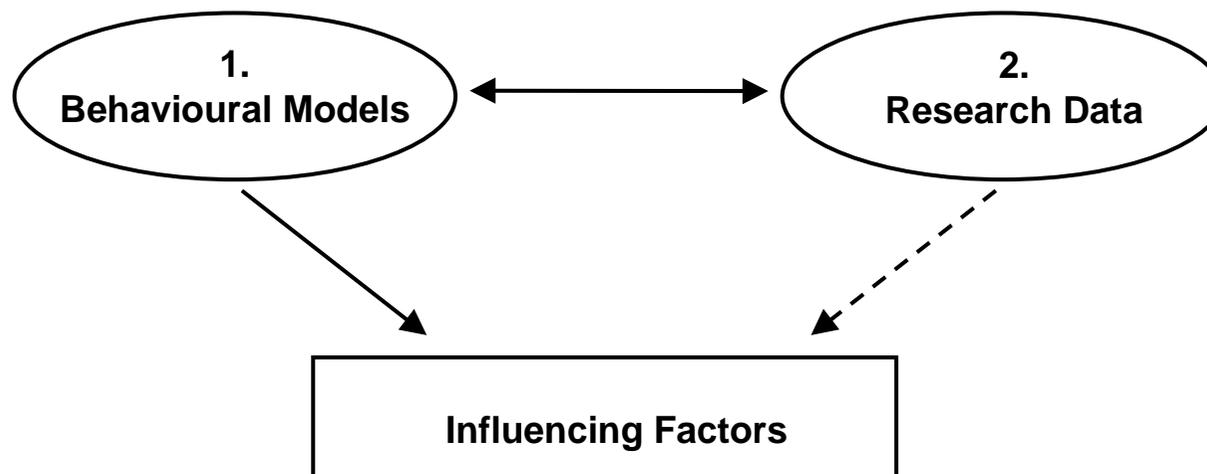
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Principle 2: Selecting Models

- Models assessed in terms of their predictive capacity (based on factors)
- Endpoint is a shortlist of influencing factors, not a 'winning' model
- Key factors go on to draft strategy as intervention objectives
- A dual-path method:

Path 1 = From Models to Factors

Path 2 = From Research Data to Models and Factors



Practical Guidance: A Model-Based Framework

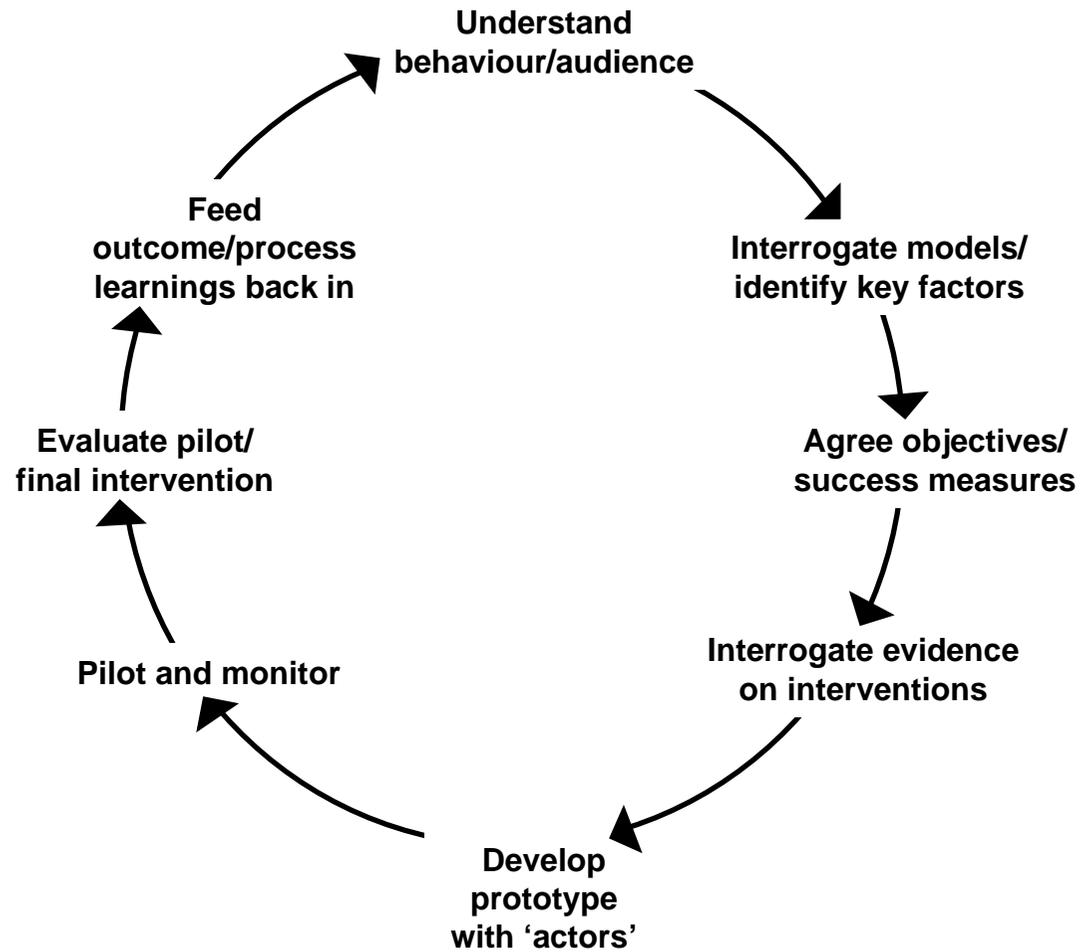
Principle 4: Identifying Intervention Techniques

- **Once objectives have been set, identify intervention techniques to address those key factors**
 - **From process-based models of change (eg. Stages of Change, IMB)**
 - **From case studies of past practice**
 - **From meta-analyses**

(eg. Abraham and Michie 2007, matching BCI elements to models)
- **Work up prototype intervention through collaboration with audience as actors**
- **Solutions must be flexible to audience groups, and behaviour-specific**
- **GSR Project 2 to provide further guidance...**

Practical Guidance: A Model-Based Framework

The Role of Research



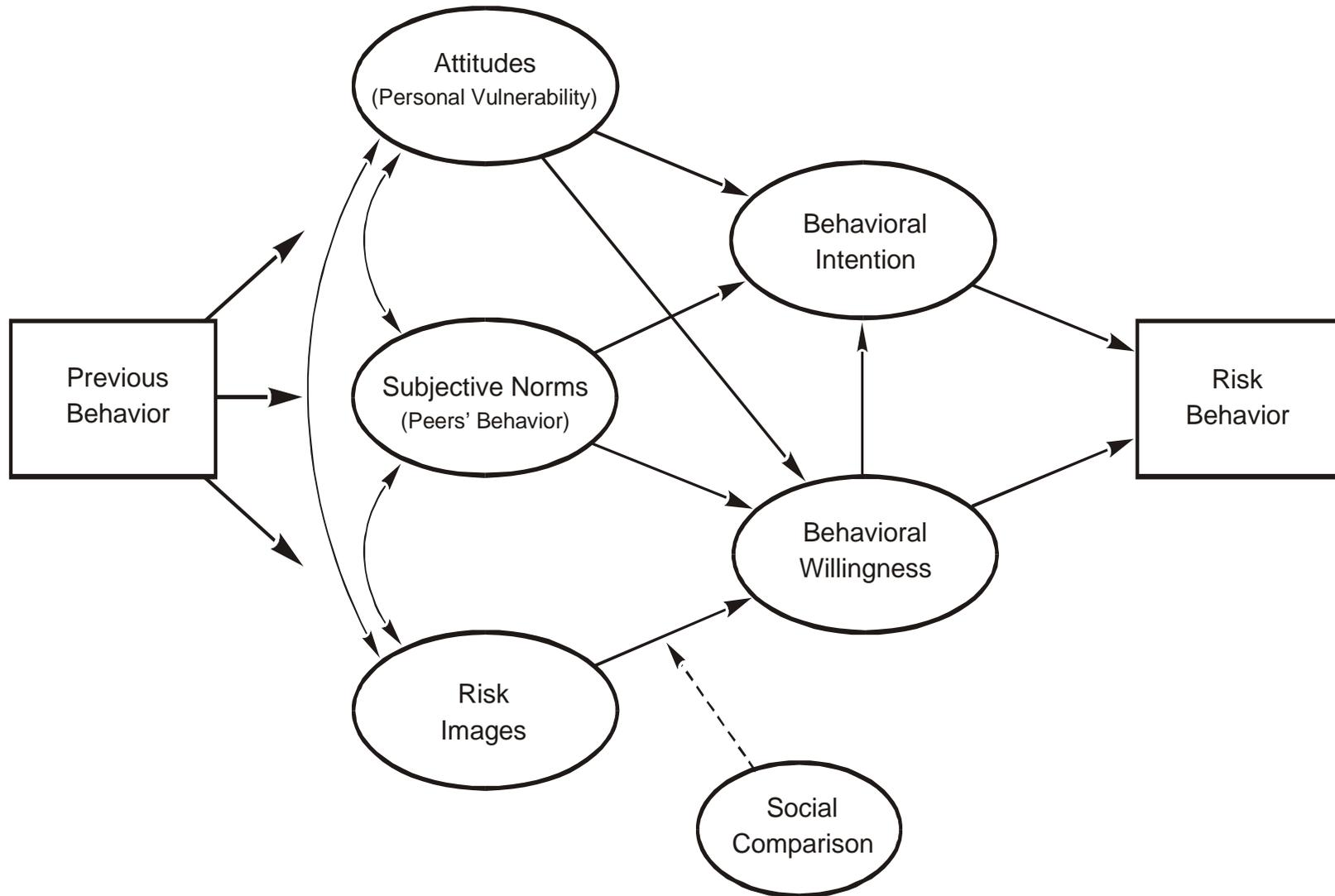
Example from Practice: FRANK (2005-06)

- **FRANK's Objective:**

“to prevent or delay the onset or escalation of drug use” among 11 to 18 year olds

- **One sub-audience: non-users at risk of becoming users (11 to 14s)**
- **From desk research, Gibbons and Gerrard's Prototype/Willingness Model (2003) of risky behaviours identified for drug trying and early using**
- **'Risk images' identified in campaign strategy as the key factor to work on for the younger audience (also in view of comms tools)**
- **Ad executions developed and refined through research with the target audience**
- **Campaign evaluated against 'risk images' measures, as well as FRANK user data and drug use statistics**

Example from Practice: The Prototype/Willingness Model



Conclusions

- **A distinction between behavioural models and theories of change supports effective practice**
- **There is no one 'winning' model - identify influencing factors from as many as are relevant**
- **Models are concepts to help us understand behaviours, not recipes for changing behaviours**
- **Models underpin effective interventions, but only when developed on the ground (with the audience and in context)**
- **Flexibility in implementation is key - a learning process (trial and error)**
- **Behaviour change best approached as a craft not a science**



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