

# HIV PREVENTION ENGLAND



## What is stigma?

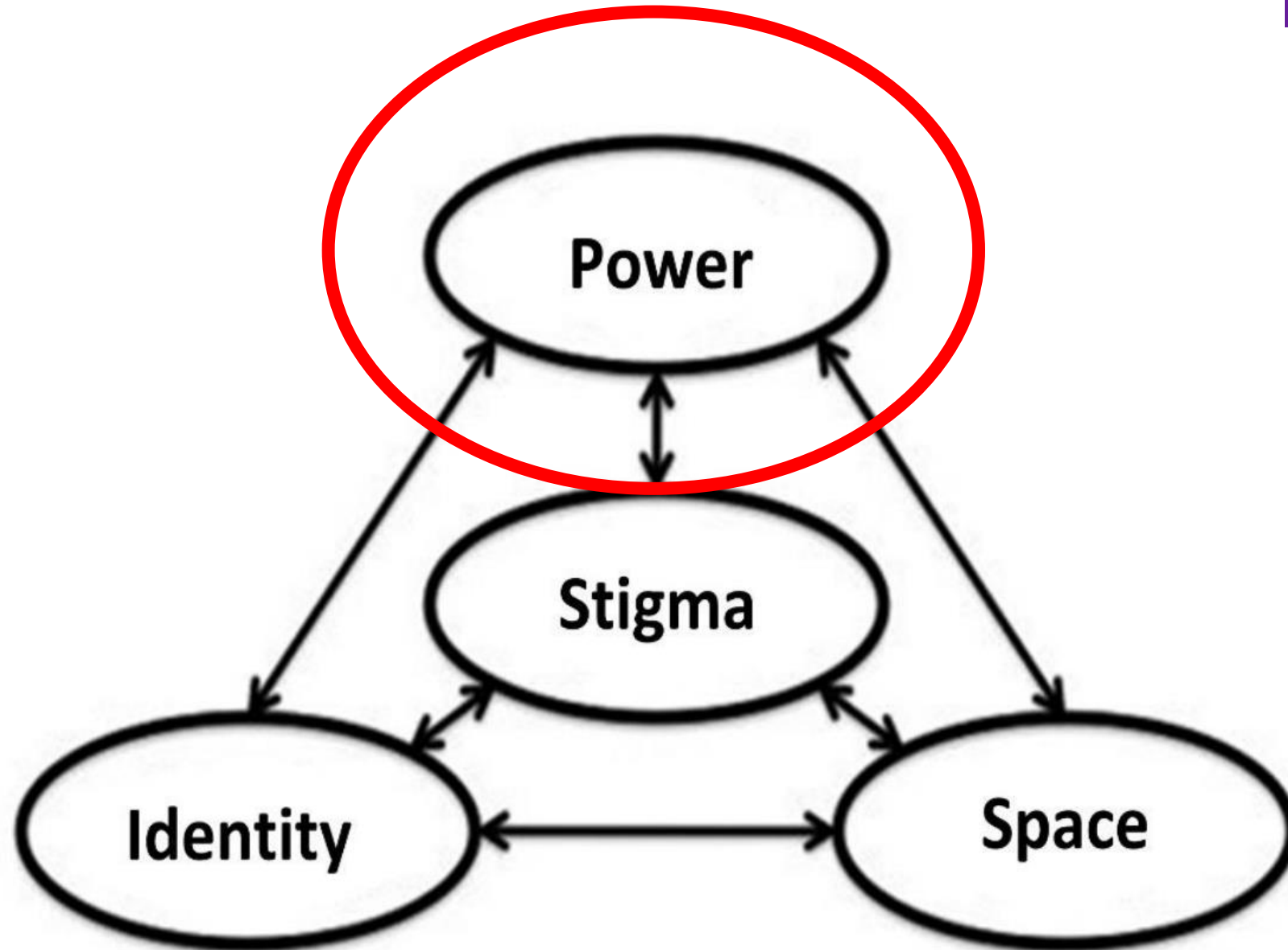
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How do power, identity, and space shape stigma?  
A case study of HIV-related stigma in post-flood  
Lilongwe, Malawi

# Framework



# Power

Who has the power to stigmatise?

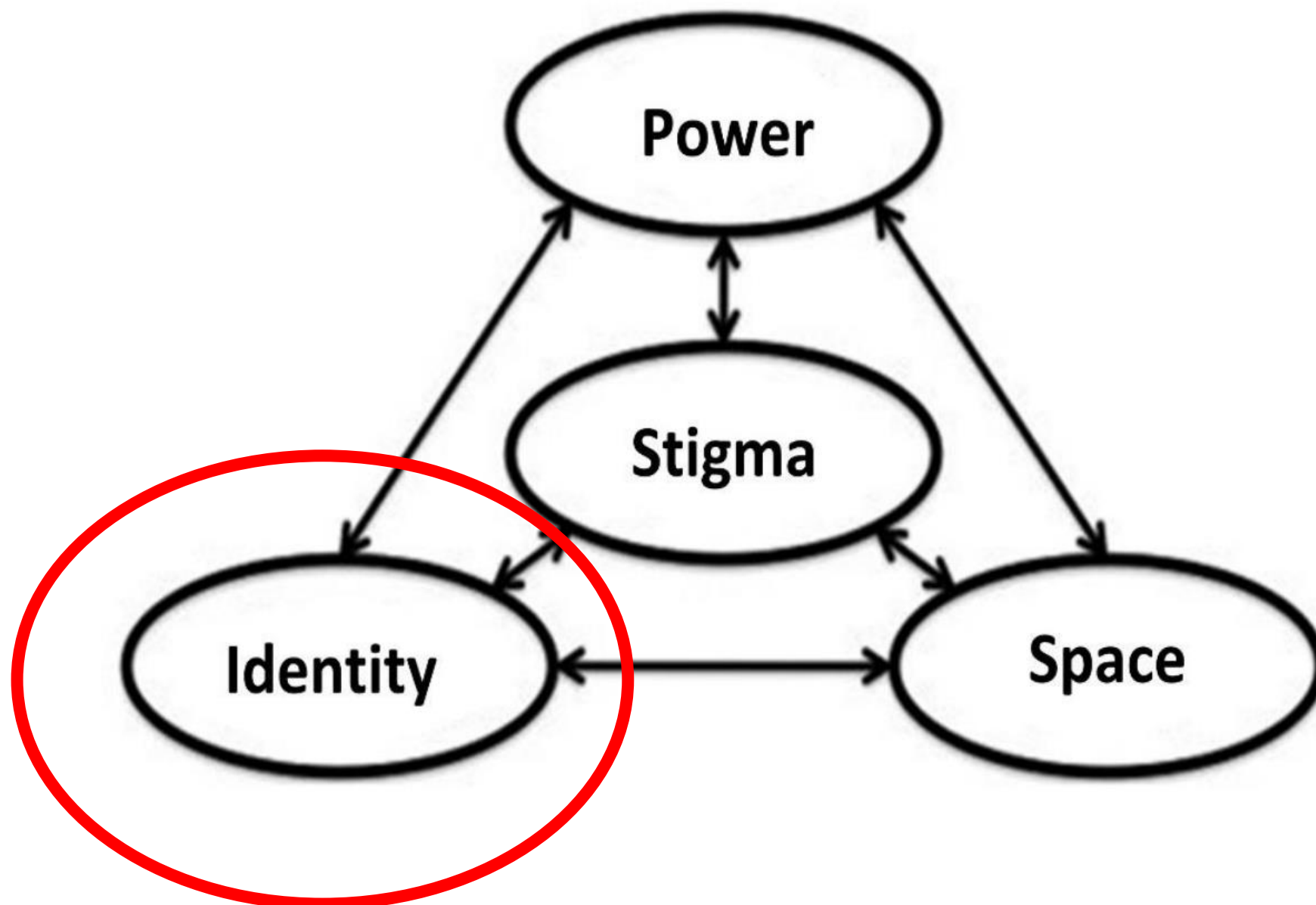
- There are motivations underlying the social production of stigma.
- Stigma is used as a resource to shape perceptions and behaviours.

(Link and Phelan, 2014)



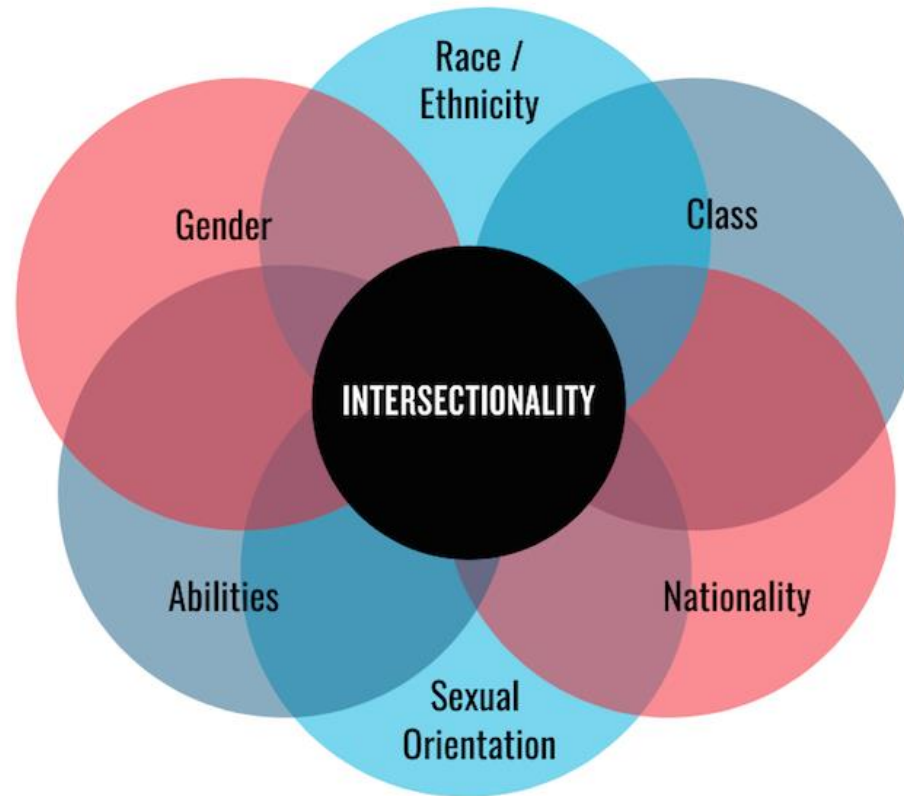






# Identity

- Intersectionality: Kimberlie Crenshaw (1989)



- “Multiple stigmas”
- Implications for perceptions of blame (Herek and Capitanio, 1999)



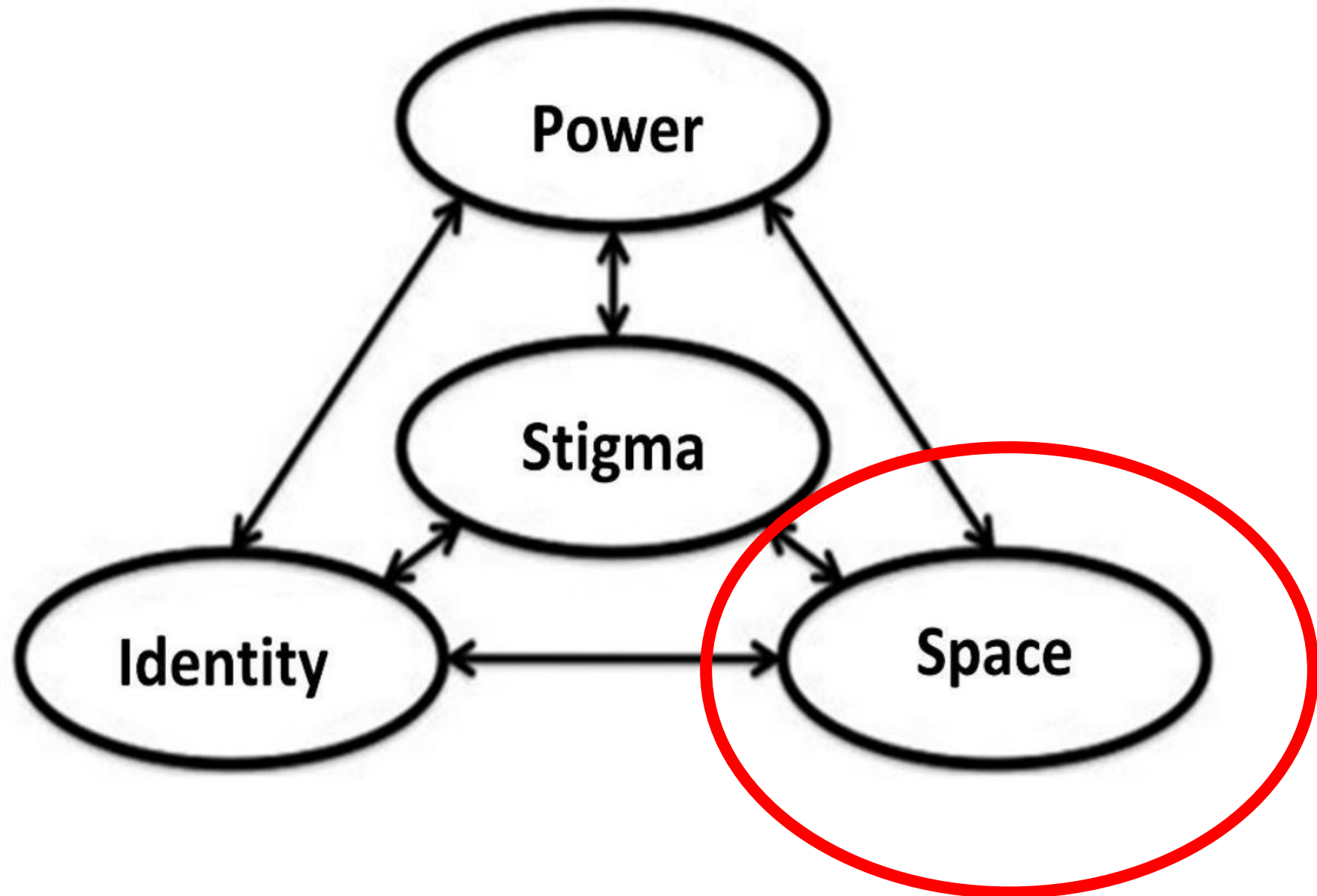
*"If people know you are gay or transgender then they will say, 'I think this is what you were looking for because you people are on high risk to get HIV.' For those straight people, it's an accident, but for us it's a punishment."*

(trans woman, aged 21)

- Risk-based language
- “key populations”
- Position of power

*"It is not easy to identify as a man living with HIV. Men will not surface to identify with HIV because it can feel like it is not masculine. Basically, the face of HIV has become a poor woman, so it can be difficult to associate with that and still feel like a man."*

*(man aged 60)*



# Space

- Space is not neutral.

(Koops and Galič, 2017)

- Space influences power dynamics and identity, and shapes social interactions.

(Low, 1996)



*"I try to be active at the church but people there suspect that I am gay. When they see me, they talk evil things about being gay."*

(gay man, aged 29)

# Concluding points...

- Stigma is often socially produced to shape behaviour.
- Identity is complex and made up of multiple intersecting layers, which can lead to “multiple stigmas”.
- Power, identity, and social behaviours are shaped by the spaces we inhabit.
- “safe spaces”

# Barriers to stigma reduction

- “Sticky messaging” (Heath and Heath, 2007)
- Lack of funding



# Barriers to stigma reduction

- Empathy drain (Cameron et al., 2015)
- Working conditions

*"There was a huge increase in patients, which made my job more difficult. There was a shortage of staff so we couldn't have any days off. It was very difficult for us and I was frustrated when people don't listen to you and some won't even take their medicine."*

(Nurse)

# How can we challenge stigma?

- Self-reflection – what has informed your perceptions?
- Acknowledge empathy drain and work together to overcome it
- Recognise your power and the language you use
- People are individuals, not numbers and not “key populations”
- Challenge other peoples’ and your own perceptions and assumptions.



Any questions?