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Age Prejudice
and its
Consequences

University of
Kent/ Kent
County Council
Round Table

Brussels
March 24th 2009

Age Prejudice and its Consequences (and why cohesion helps)

Ageism and
Stereotype
Threat

Dominic Abrams and Hannah Swift

Centre for the Study of Group Processes
Department of Psychology
University of Kent

Equality and
Human Rights
Commission

March 19th 2009

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Sibila Marques, Luisa Lima (ISCTE), Genevieve Coudin (Paris V)

Prevalence of discrimination in Britain (ACE 2004)

Ageism and
Stereotype
Threat

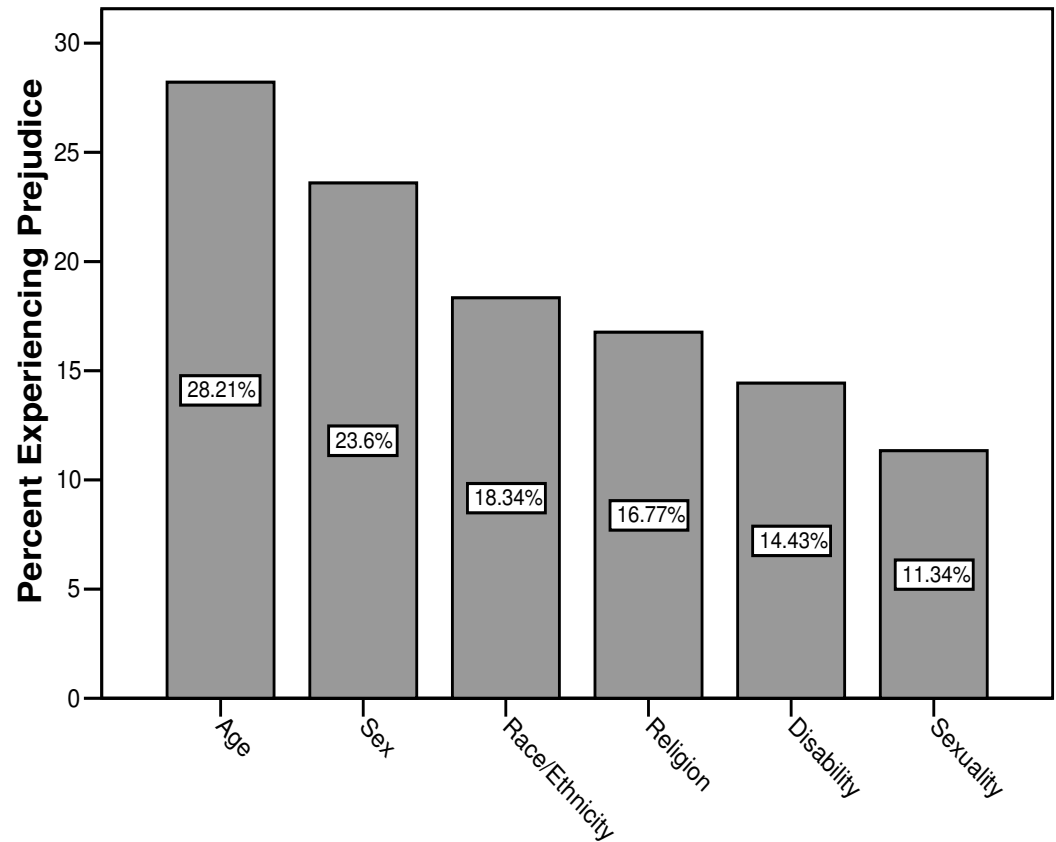
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In the past year how
often has someone
treated you unfairly
because of your:

- Gender
- Age
- Religion
- Race or ethnic
background
- Any disability
- Sexual orientation

**Experience of Prejudice in the Last Year on the Basis of
Different Categories**





Example:

A person prangs the car

Is the person 17 or 70?

Apply stereotype >> Infer cause

*Older >> Incompetent >> Dodderly
Driver*

*Younger >> Impetuous >>
Inexperienced Driver*

Apply remedy

Older >>> Remove driving license for ever

Younger >>> Fine, more lessons

Age Stereotypes

Ageism and
Stereotype
Threat

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	Warm	Cold
Competent		Young
Incompetent	Old	

Ageism and
Stereotype
Threat

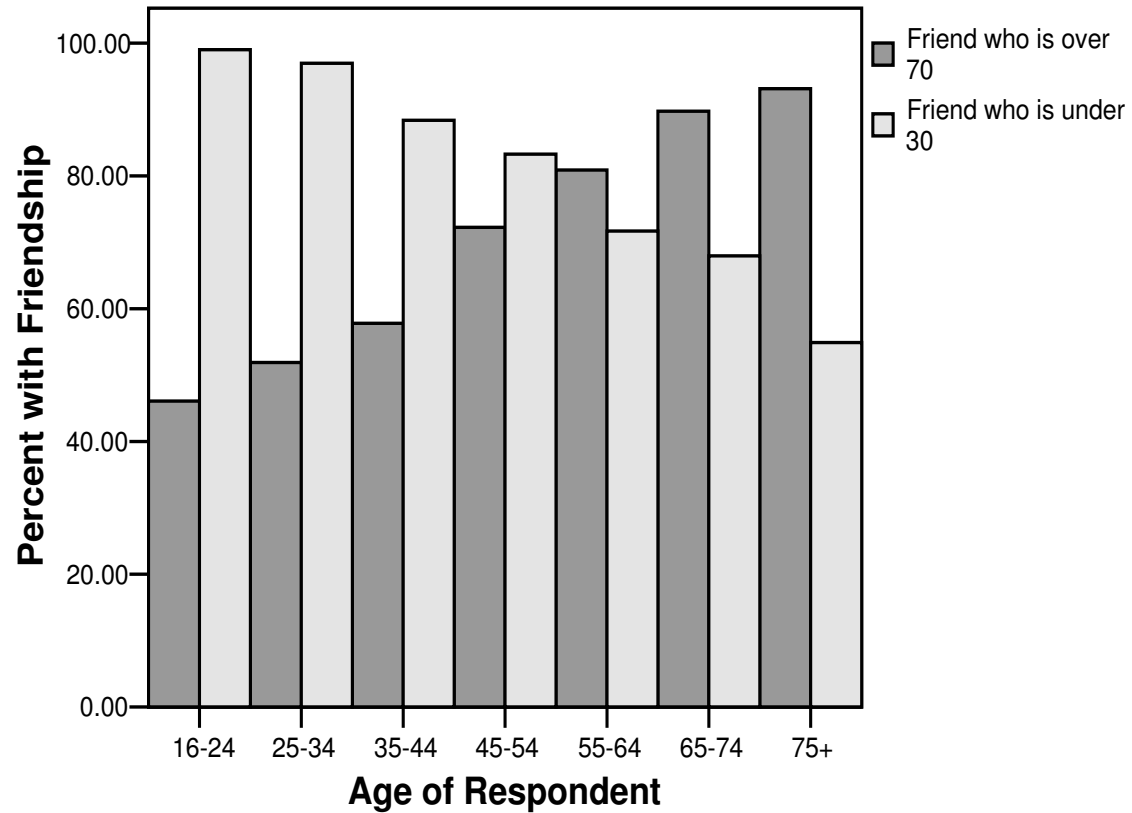
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Is Intergenerational Contact a Problem?

Do you:
Have a friend or
close friend..
Who is
....
over 70
....
under 30

**Percent with Friends or Closer Intergenerational Relationships
as a Function of Age**



Can Stereotypes Be Reduced Through Positive Contact?

- reduce the psychological distance between 'old' and 'young'.
- weaken the expectation one will be stereotyped

Young people's stereotypes

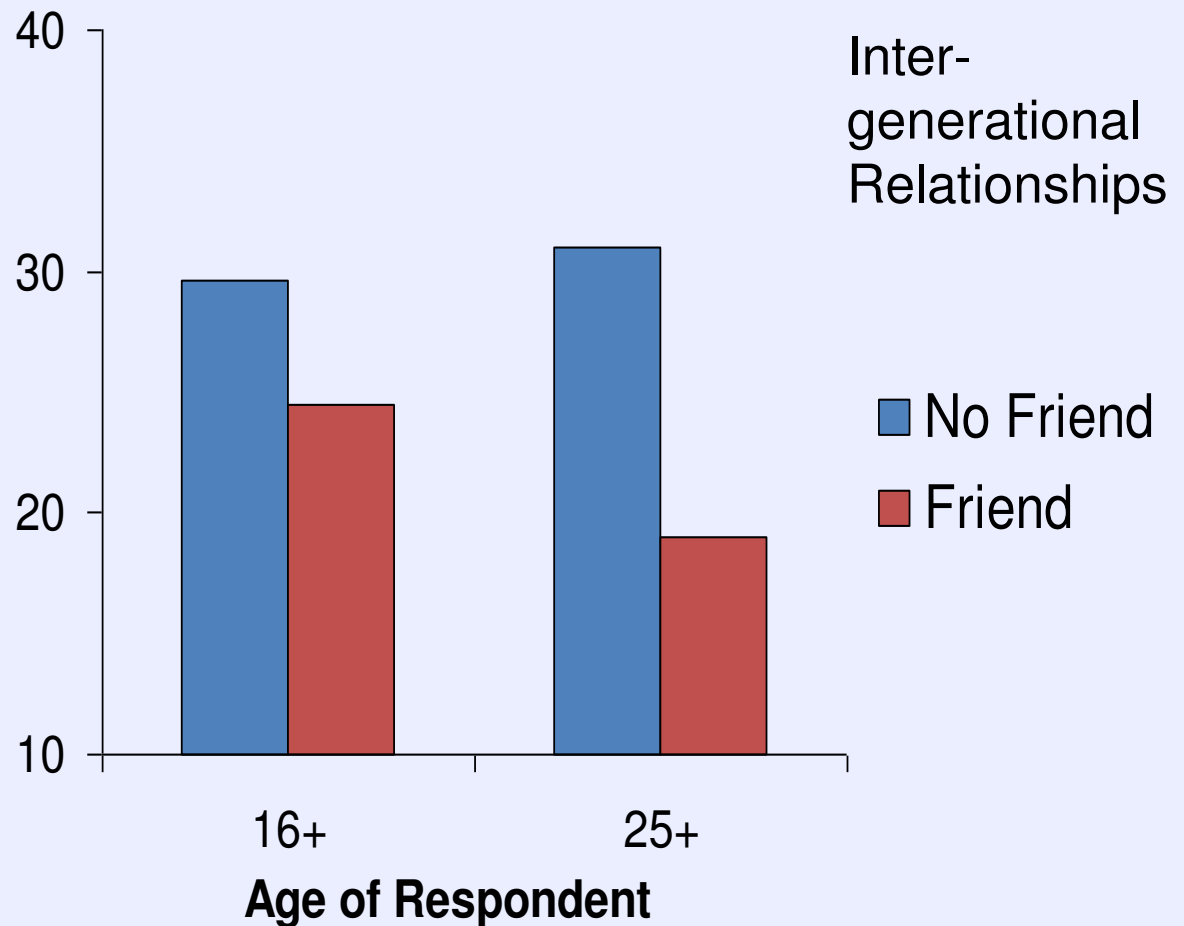
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% Agreeing Competence Declines with Age



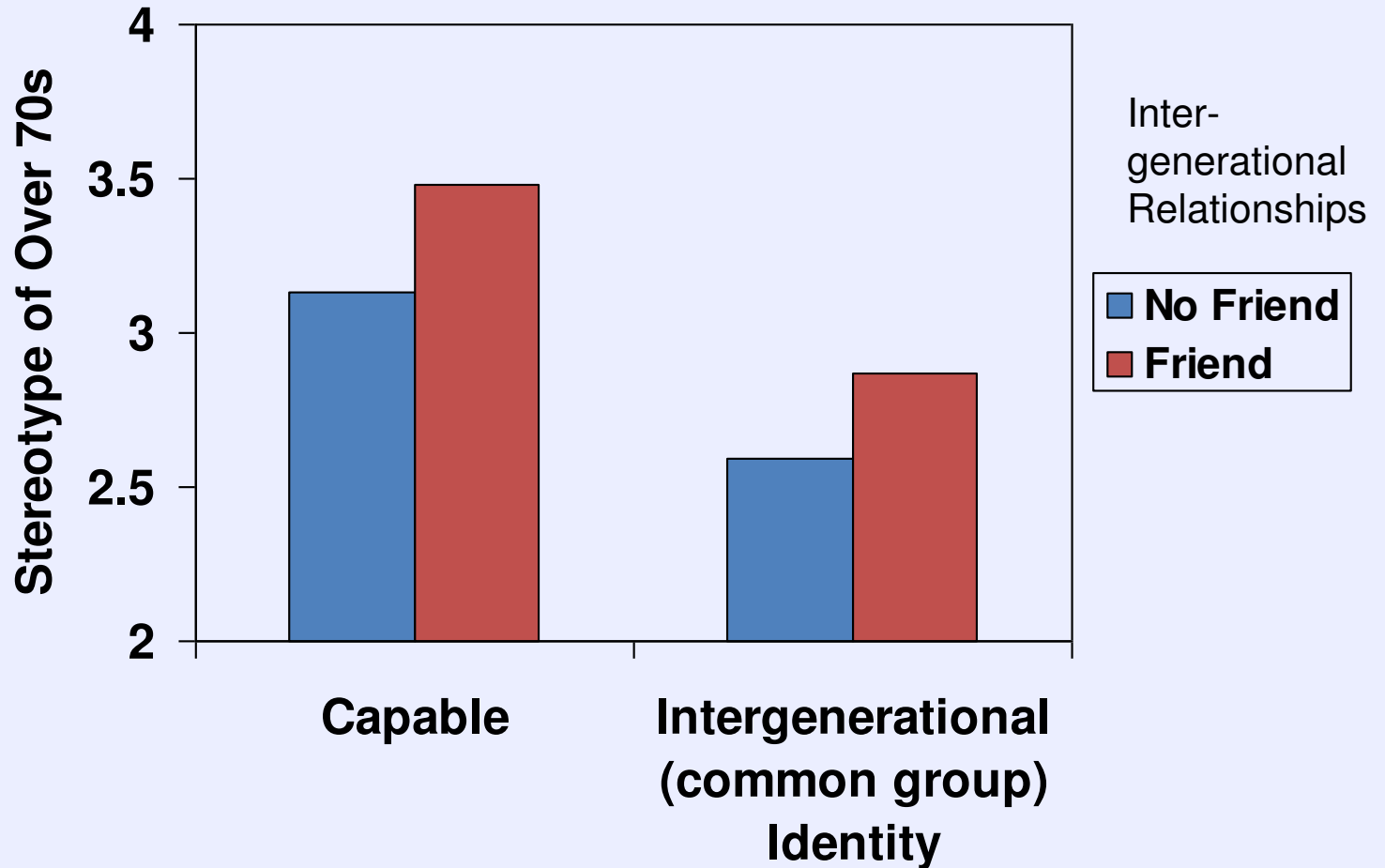
Over 70's

Self-Stereotypes
and Shared Identity

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Stereotype Threat

Disadvantage for older people who fear
confirming a stereotype of incompetence

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97 older people took a test of cognitive ability

– “see whether old people do perform more poorly on intellectual tasks than young people” (comparison >> *threat*).

or

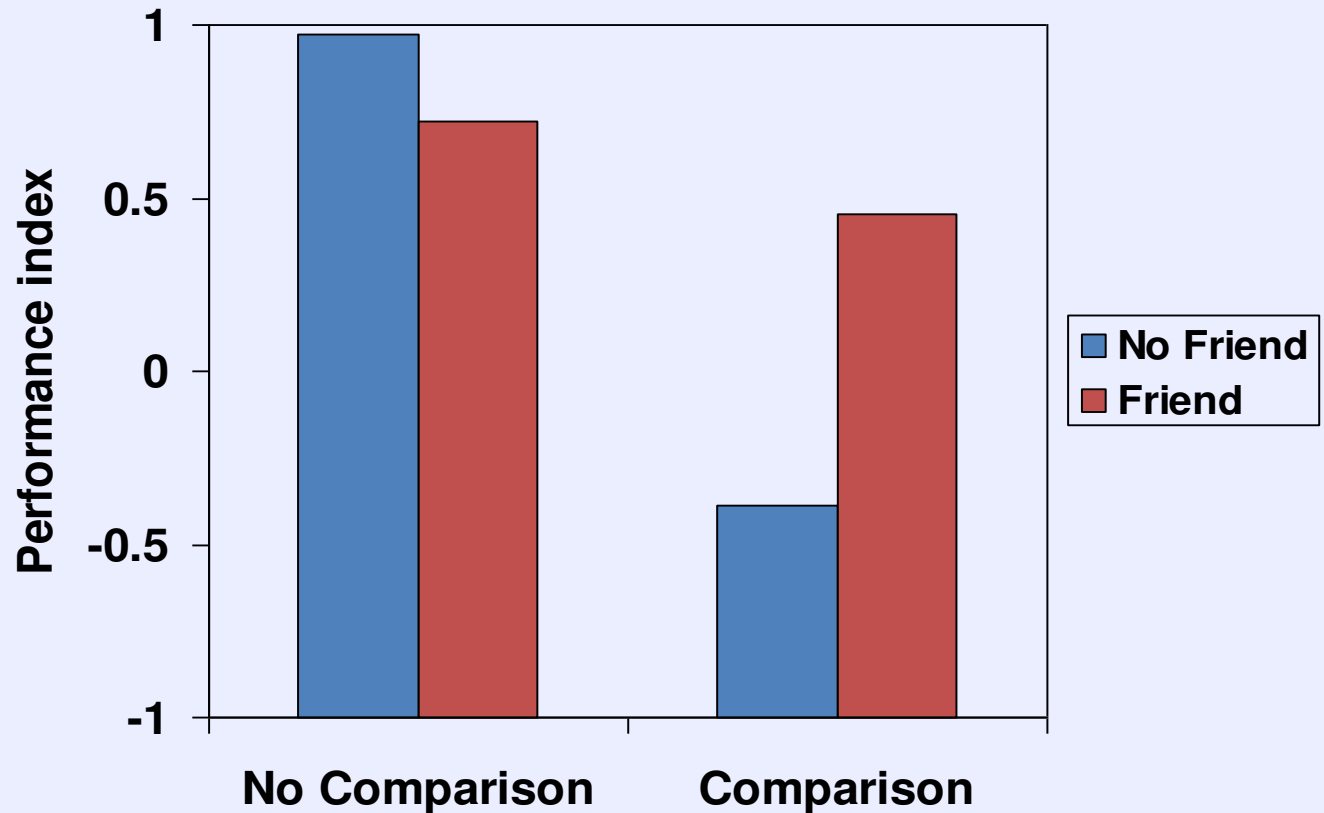
– “see how people differ in their responses on different tasks” (no comparison).

Stereotype Threat is Prevented by Intergenerational Friendship

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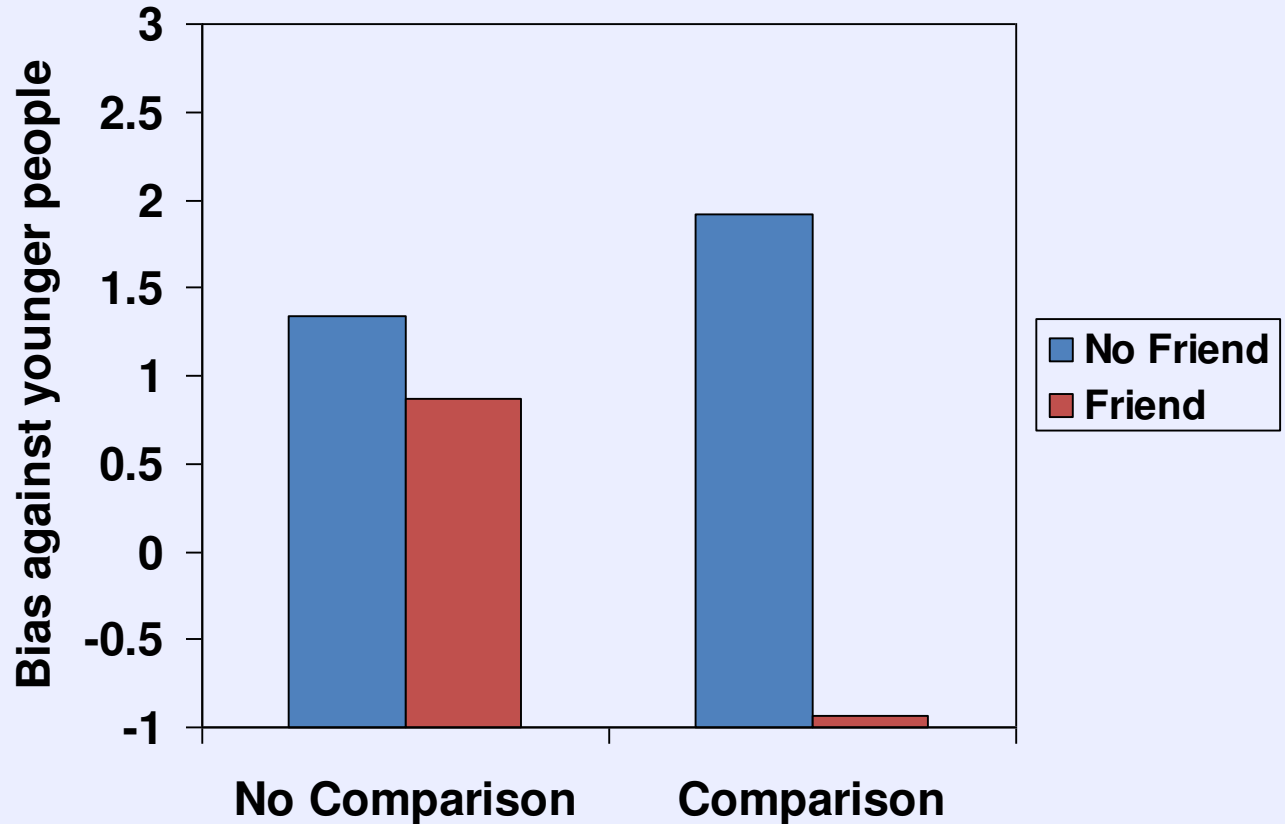


Threat is Turned into Positive Identity Through Intergenerational Friendship

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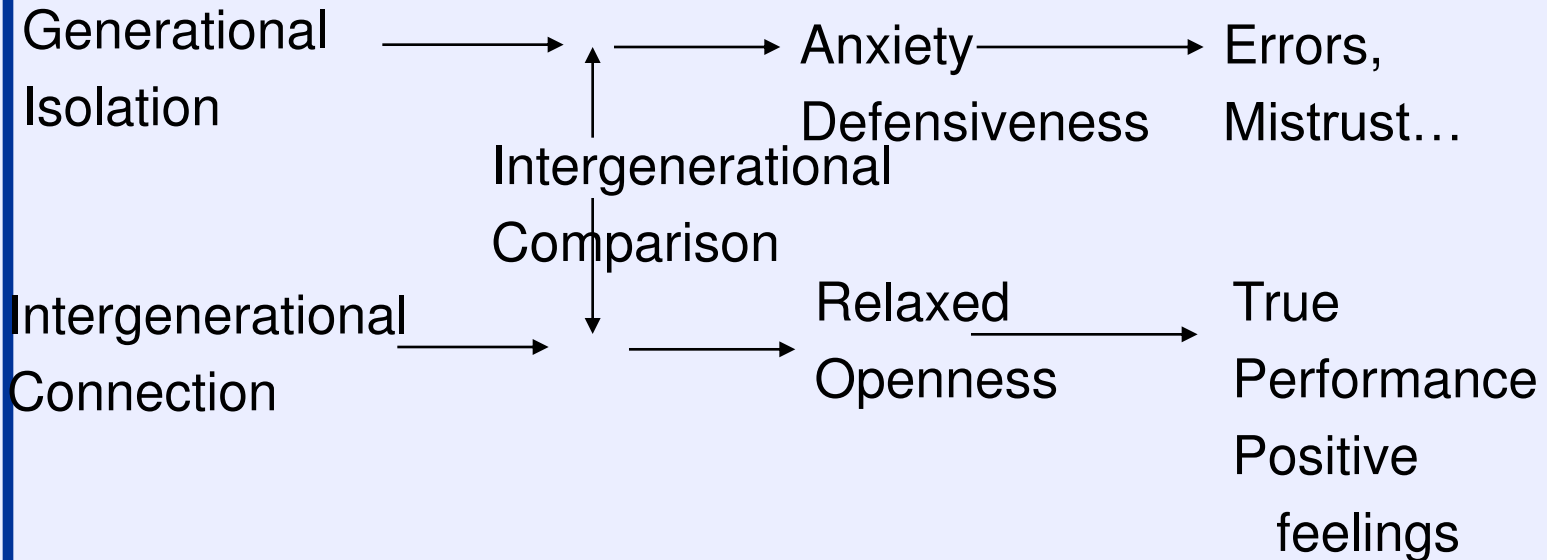


Why Intergenerational Friendships Are Good

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Intergenerational Contact Creates:

- More positive age stereotypes
- Less age-related anxiety
- Better cognitive performance
- More positive intergenerational attitudes