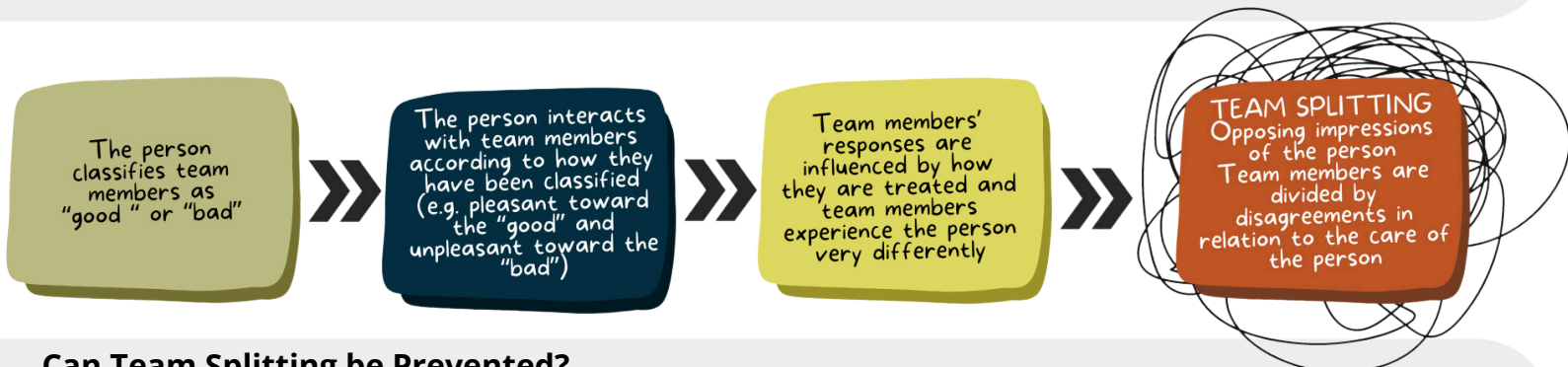


Personality Disorder: Preventing Team Splitting

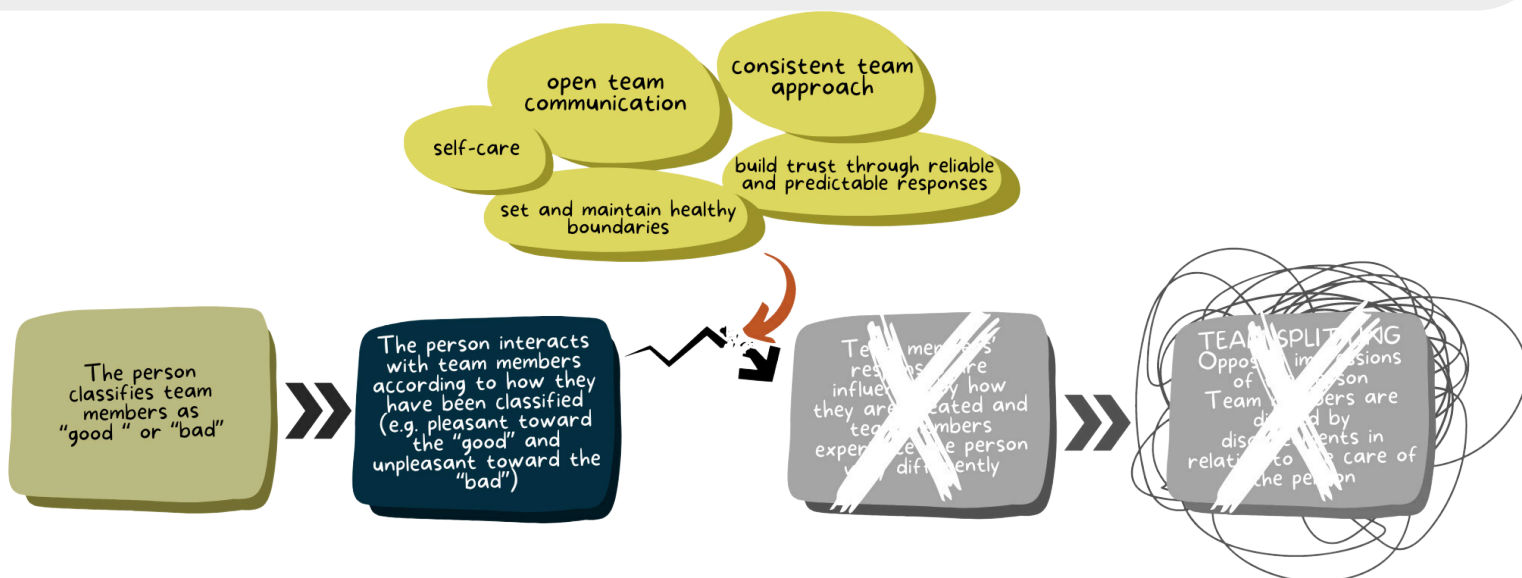
What is Team Splitting?

Team splitting refers to tensions, frustrations and divisions within teams. It results from a series of events, starting with the individual with personality disorder labelling team members as 'good' or 'bad'. This dynamic may reflect how the person with personality disorder typically engages with others as a result of intense distress or abandonment fears. The initial labeling of people as good/bad leads to the person responding and interacting with team members in very different ways depending on how they are classified. This in turn affects how team members experience interactions with the person, and often influences how they respond. This can result in strongly opposing impressions of the person and approaches used. These varied views easily lead to disagreements and frustration amongst the team.



Can Team Splitting be Prevented?

Yes, the good news is that teams can prevent team splitting! The cycle can be broken when all team members provide a consistent approach. This means that your response to the person with personality disorder is not influenced by how you are being treated, but rather is based on what is agreed upon in the plan of care. This involves consistently setting and maintaining healthy boundaries, which can help the person to experience their environment as predictable and helps to build trust, respect and a sense of safety. It also includes keeping open lines of communication as a team. It is not easy to be labelled and treated as a 'bad', so look out for and support team members experiencing this. Try to avoid internalizing the negative criticism by reminding yourself and others that this is someone who has likely had lifelong difficulty connecting with others and maintaining healthy relationships. Practice self-care and encourage colleagues to do the same.



For a full reference list, please see: *Personality Disorder in Older Adults: Understanding the Person, Building Skillful Approaches and Fostering Wellness in Care Teams.*

