



Eliciting Information in Investigative Interviews with Sexual Offenders: A Procedural Justice Approach

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Background



- Sexual offences and investigation
 - Over 150,000 reported offences; specially trained officers
- Investigative interviews
 - Use of PEACE framework; Conversation Management
- Procedural Justice and Therapeutic Jurisprudence
 - Voice; Transparency; Fairness; Impartiality

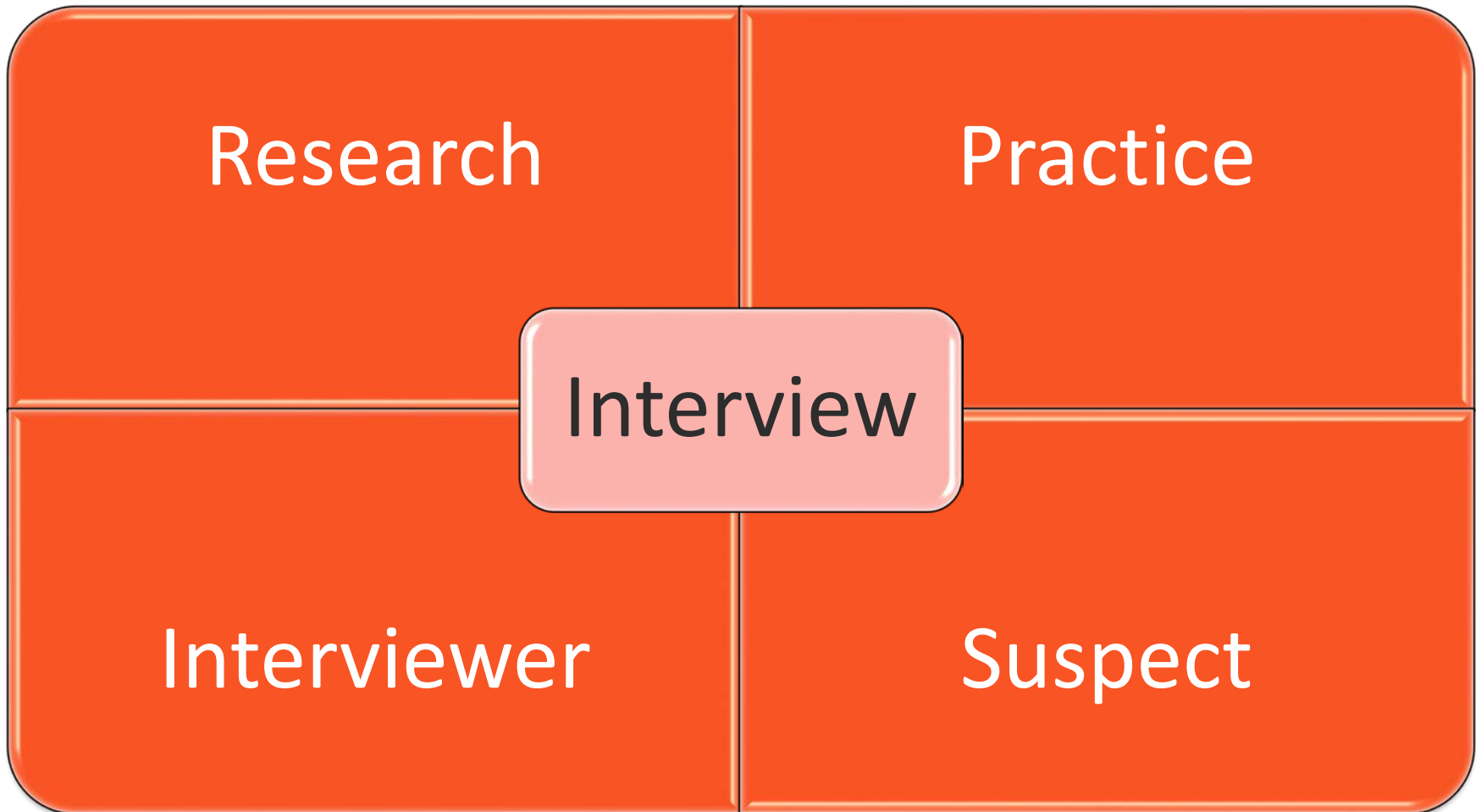
Are current practices in interviewing sexual offence suspects effective?



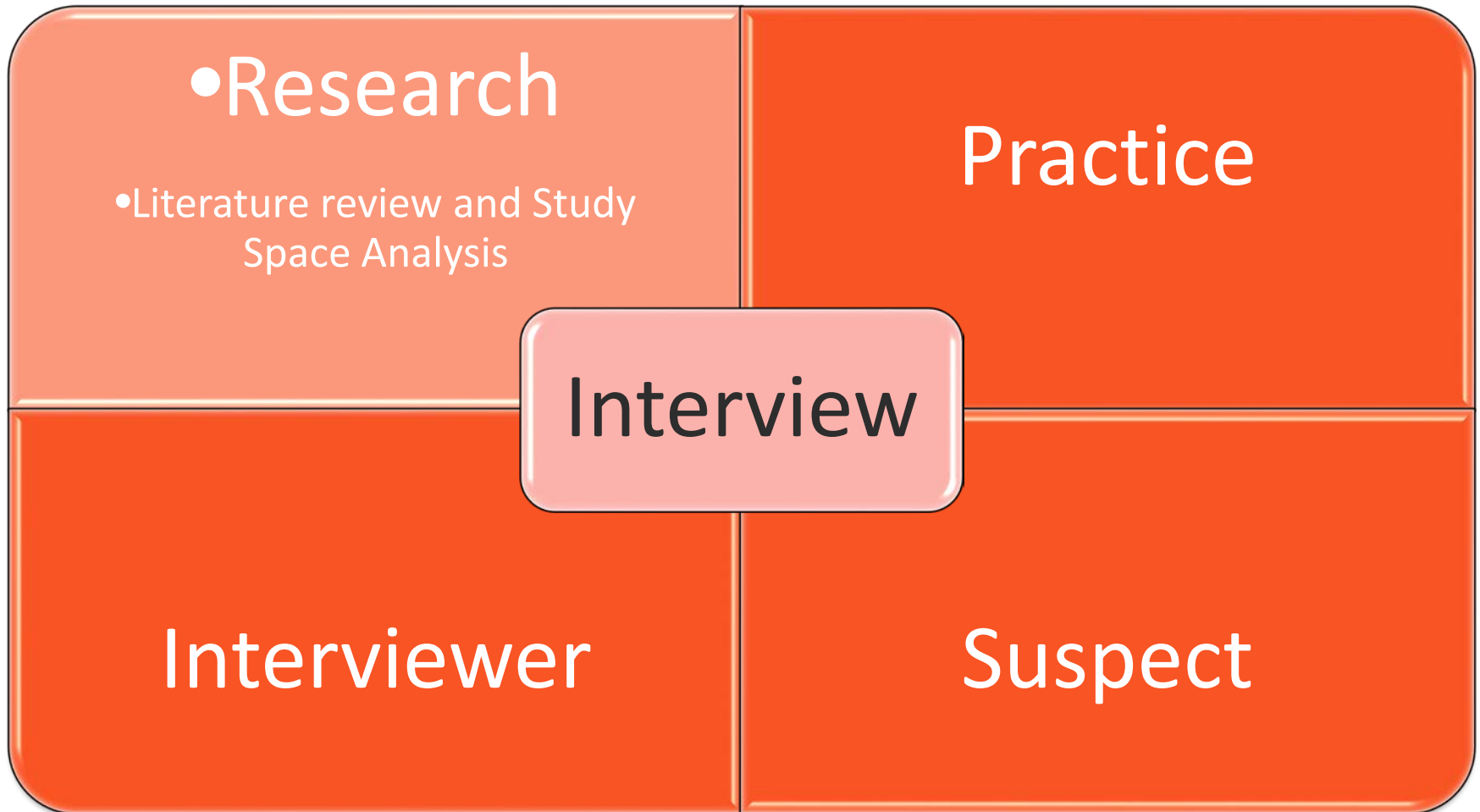
Perspectives from both sides of the table



Research Pathway



Are current practices in interviewing sexual offence suspects effective?





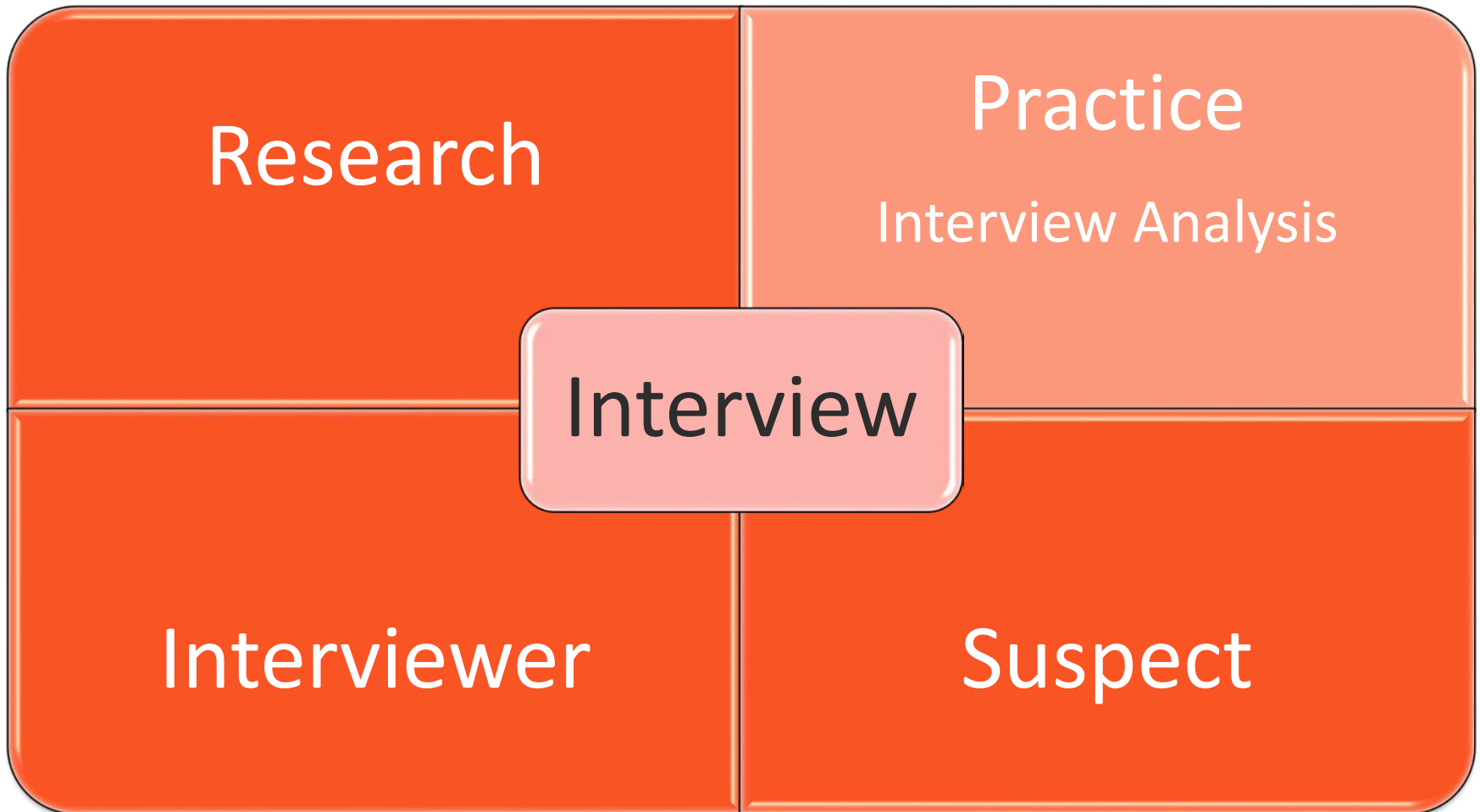
Interviewing sexual offence suspects: A Study Space Analysis

Study Space Analysis



- **Method:** A Study Space Analysis (SSA) was used to evaluate 20 studies relating to the interviewing/interrogation of suspects of sexual offences. An SSA identifies concentrations and gaps within the research literature through analysis of the variables and methodology of included studies.
- **Results:**
- Offence Characteristics: *Factor interaction leads to different interview decisions by suspect (child molester v rapist);*
- Interviewer Approach: *Humane approach more likely to produce confession, dominant approach more likely to produce denials ;*
- Interview structures; *Strength of evidence is a strong indicator of confession, appropriate questions produce more investigation information*
- **Gaps:** Offence characteristics and IRI yield; Role of interviewer personality and empathy traits; Strength of evidence and IRI yield

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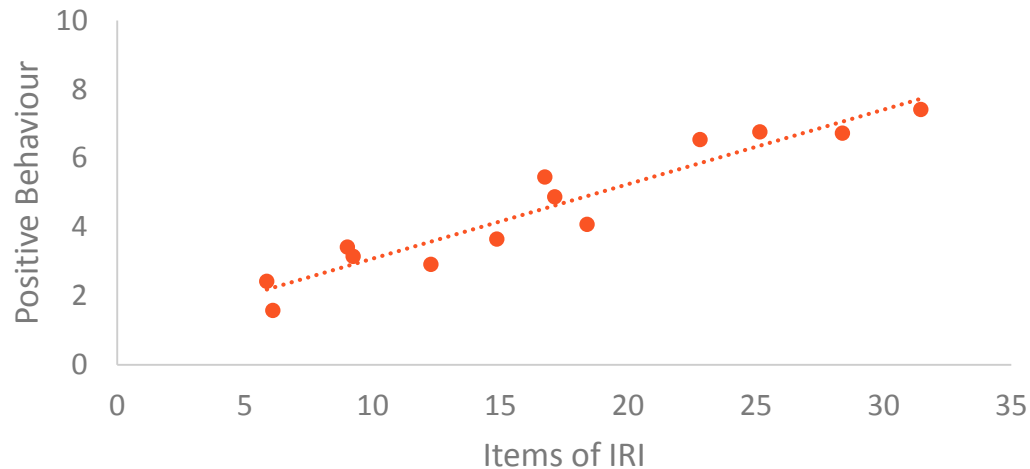
Sexual Offence Interviews Analysis: Does practice follow theory?

Initial observations from a sample of UK sexual offence interviews (2012-15)

- **Method:** 30 police investigative interviews with individuals suspected of allegations of rape (adult/child complainant) coded for interviewer behaviours
- **Results:** PEACE structure is limited; E & E limited rapport building; limited open questions and free recall in **A**ccount; **C**losure very limited; Active and reflective listening present in many interviews; limited empathic behaviours; few examples of negative interactions; IRI mostly generated from closed/inappropriate questions

Does positive behaviour predict Information?

Positive behaviour predicts IRI



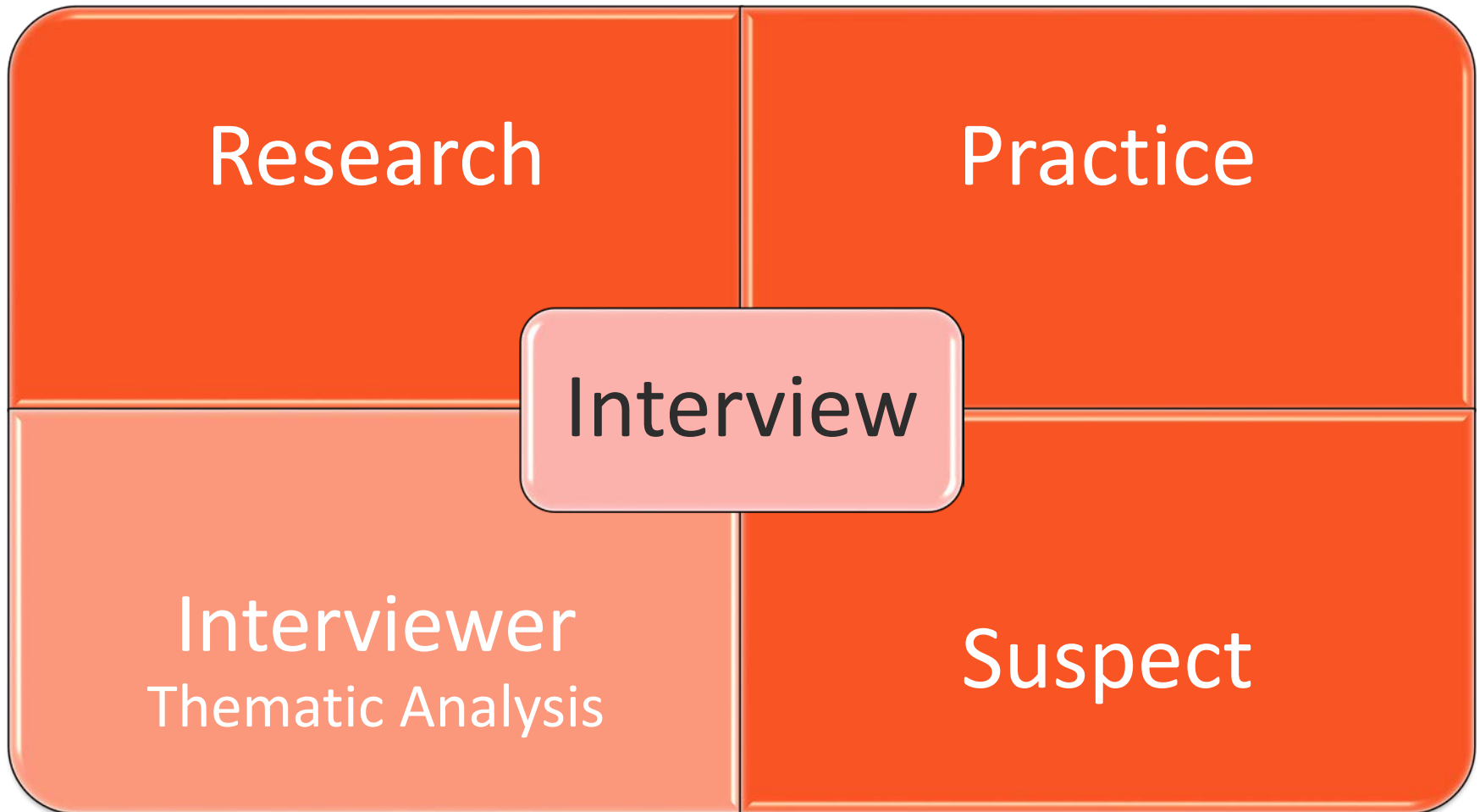
The logistic regression predicts that positive behaviour accounts for 91% of the variation in IRI $R^2 = 0.91$, $F(1,11) = 109.64$, $p < 0.001$

Key Findings



- Offence type did not influence interviewer behaviour
- Interviewing officers display positive behaviour in line with current guidance
- Positive interviewer behaviour increases the amount of information obtained.

Are current practices in interviewing sexual offence suspects effective?





The perceptions of Interviewers: A thematic analysis with a phenomenological approach

The interviewer's perspective



- **Method:** 10 sexual offence investigators Interviewed on the investigation of sexual offences and the interviewing of sexual offence suspects
- Analysed using Thematic Analysis with a phenomenological approach..
- Descriptive comments
- Linguistic comments
- Conceptual comments

Key Findings



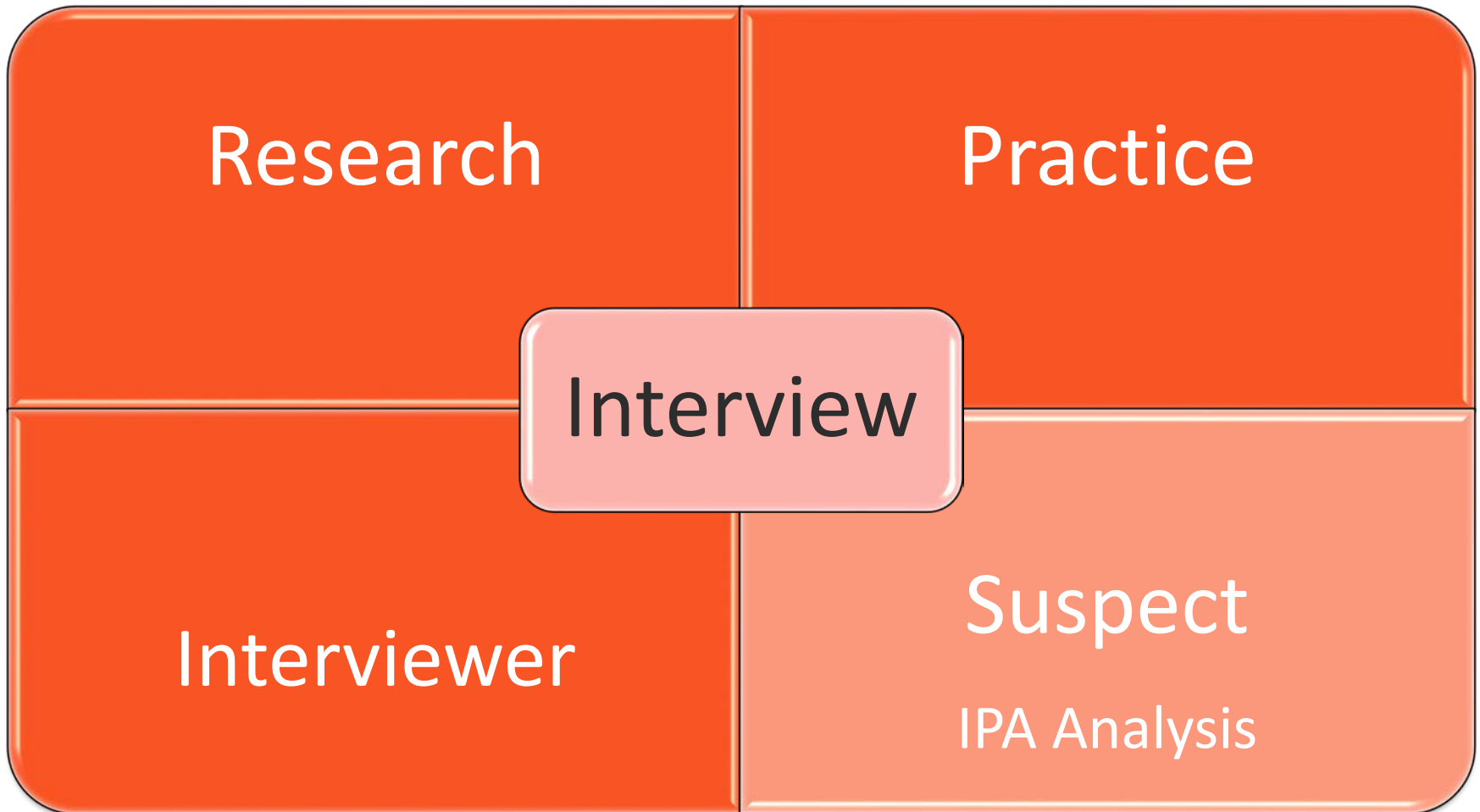
Organisational

- High workloads
- Structure and guidance
- Process
- Scrutiny
- Work/life balance

Personal

- Resilience
- Emotional response
- Motivation
- Victim Focus
- Responsibility

Are current practices in interviewing sexual offence suspects effective?



**The view from the other side, the experience of
the accused in sexual cases: An Interpretative
Phenomenological Analysis**

The view from the other side of the table



- **Method:**

- This study explores the lived experiences of individuals subjected to a sexual offence investigation and interview.
- Four participants recruited through the National Probation Service.
- A semi structured interview with each was analysed using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis methodology.

Key Findings



- The interviewees found the interview process very stressful (often described in emotive language)
- Interviewees were often confused about the custody and interview process and lacked understanding of what was going to happen
- The environment increased stress (cell, temperature, noise, etc)
- Interviewees had the opportunity to give their answers freely
- They perceived that interviewers had already decided on truth

Conclusions



- Limited research on the impact of PJ within interviewing processes;
- Current research indicates the potential benefits of a positive, prosocial interviewer approach;
- Investigators recognise the benefit of positive behaviours;
- Sexual offence interviews are frequently emotionally difficult;
- Interviewees are often stressed, anxious and poorly informed.

Adhering to PJ principles benefits investigative interviewing objectives

Voice; Transparency; Fairness; Impartiality

Thank you for listening

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