

Public Health Approach to Substance Use: Evidence and Best Practices

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December 8, 2023

Sudbury, Ontario

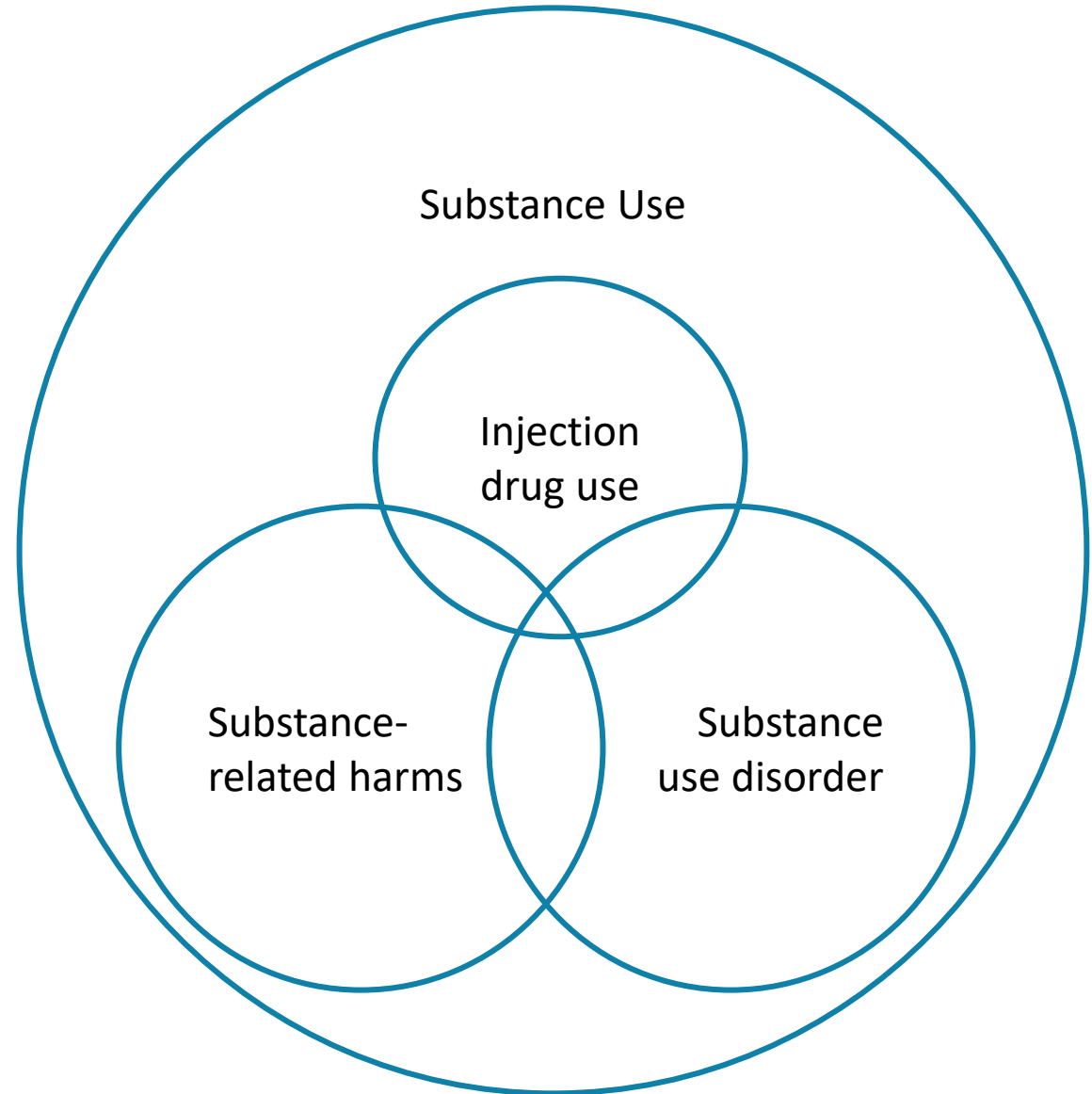
Key Messages

- The toxic drug crisis is a whole of society issue
- There is a need to counter stigma and discrimination to establish meaningful engagement with most affected groups
- Communities know their own needs best and responding to these may have the most impact

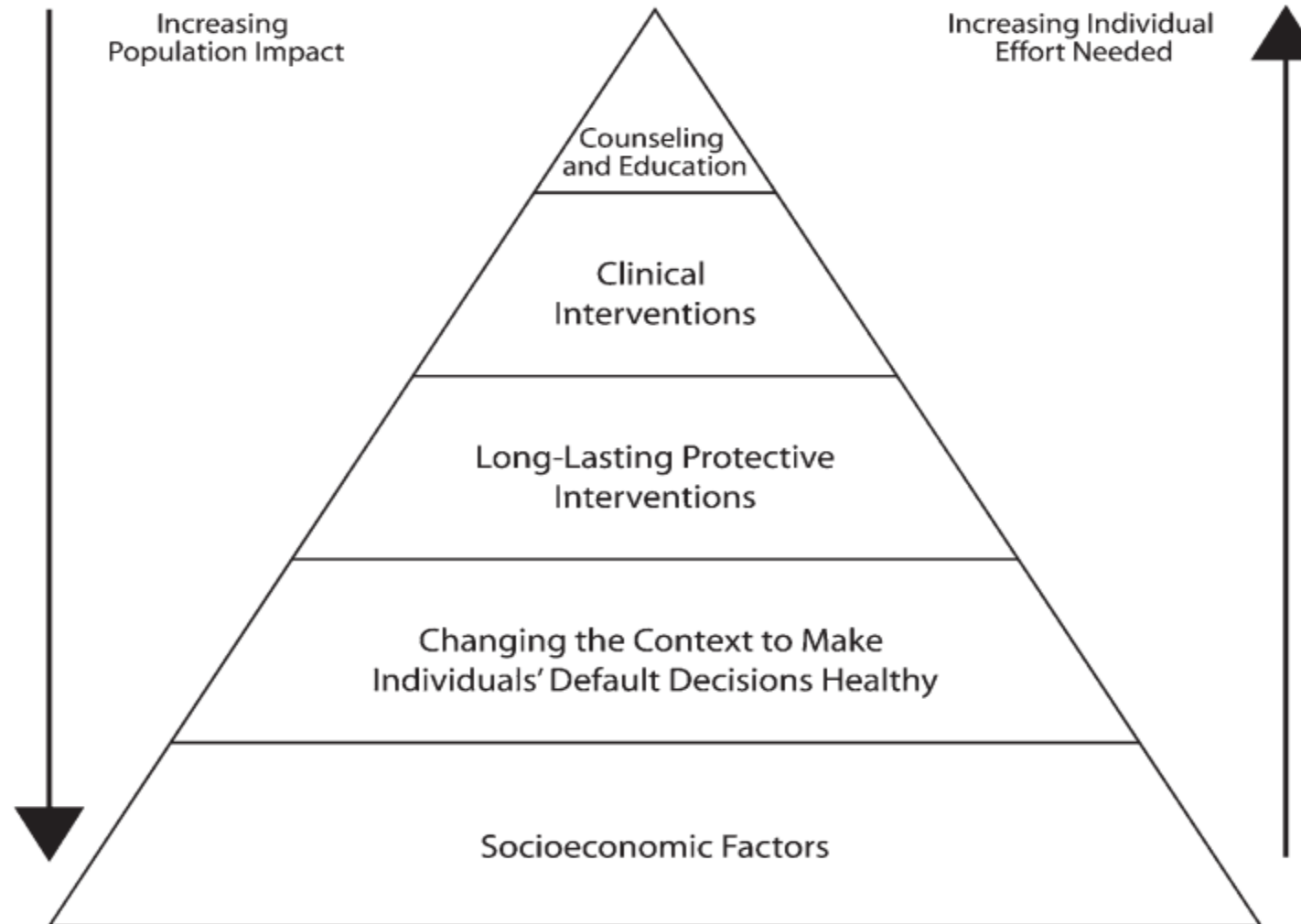
Terms

- Substance use
- Substance use disorder
- Substance-related harms
- Injection drug use

- **Non-stigmatizing language**



Public health approach: Health Impact Pyramid



<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2836340/pdf/590.pdf>

Public health approach to substance use

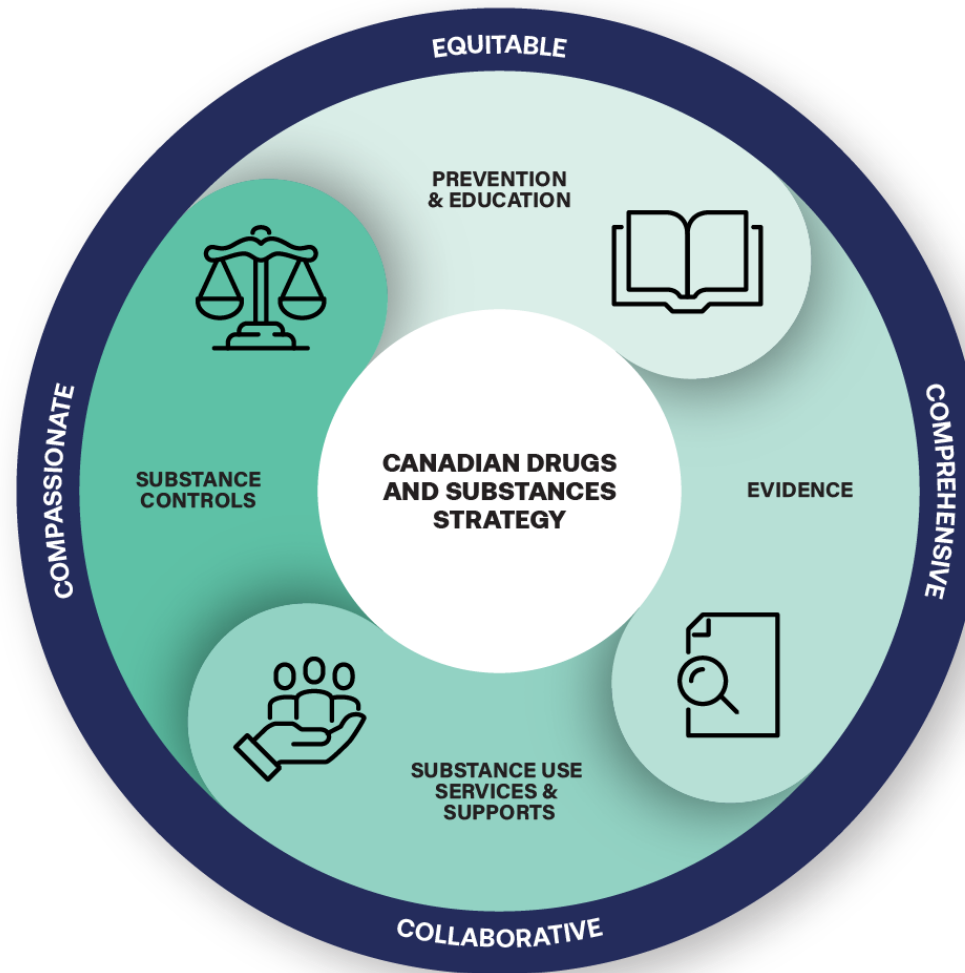


Image Source: Health Canada. Canadian drugs and substances strategy [Internet]. Ottawa, ON: Government of Ontario; 2023 [cited 2023 Nov 22]. Available from: https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/canadian-drugs-substances-strategy.html?utm_campaign=hc-sc-drug-strategy-23-24&utm_medium=vanity-url&utm_source=canada-ca_drug-strategy

Collaborative: Multi-sector approach

**"Nothing about us
without us"
is our guiding
principle**

http://capud.ca/?page_id=135

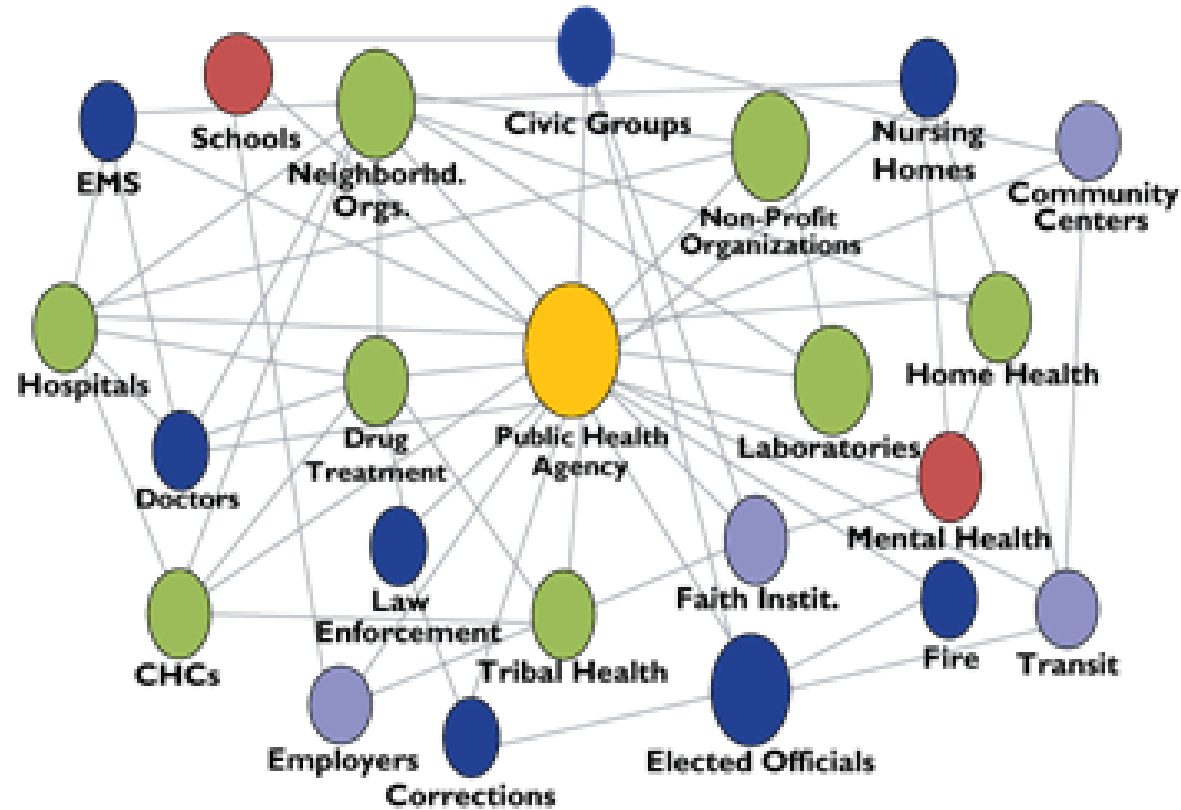


Figure 1: The Public Health System

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The public health system and the 10 essential public health services [Internet]. Atlanta, GA: Centres for Disease Control and Prevention; [updated 2017 Sep 20; cited 2017 Oct 10]. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/stltpublichealth/publichealthservices/essentialhealthservices.html>

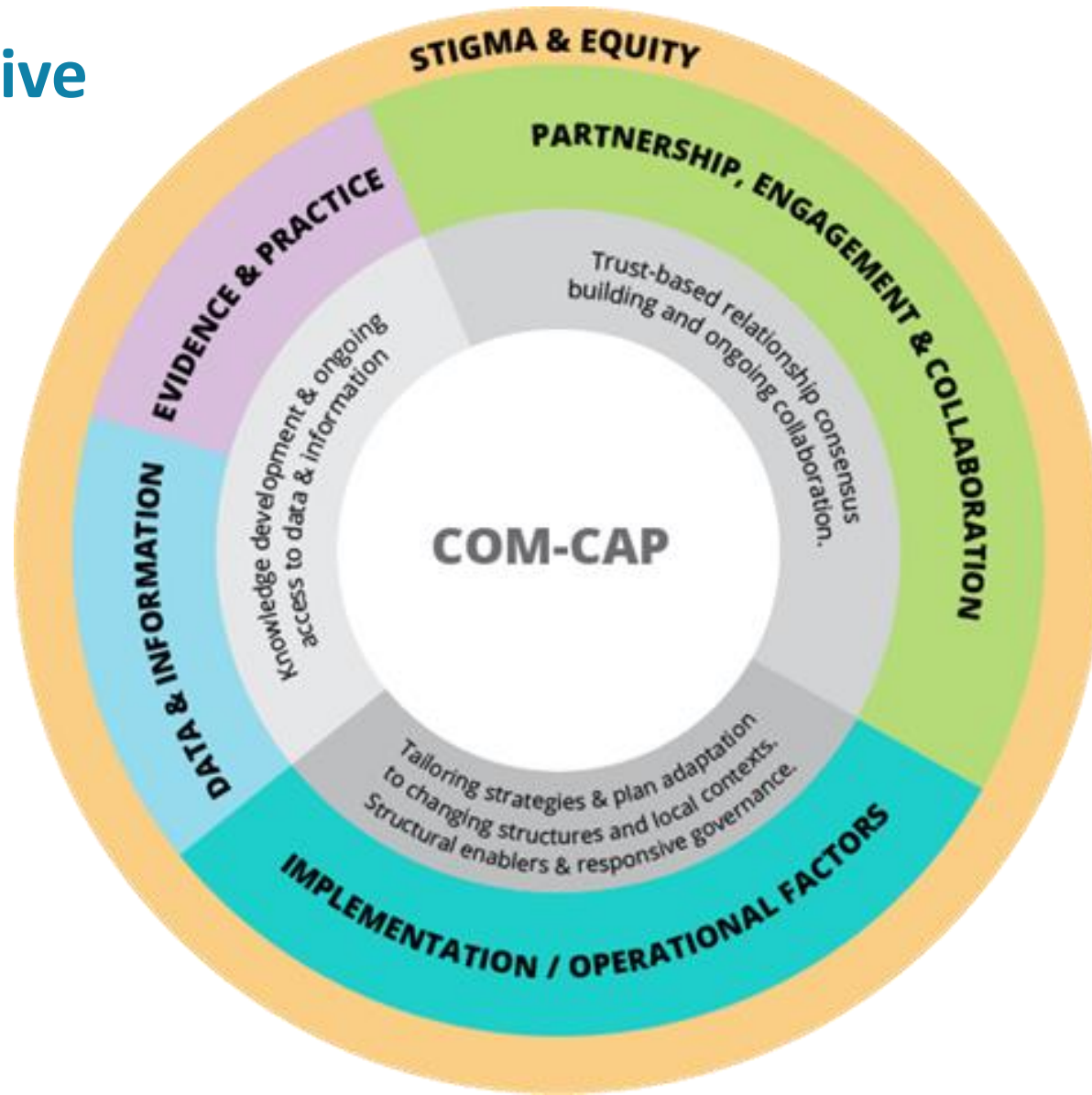
Collaborative: Multi-sector approach

Table 2 Categorisation of partners in community opioid-related plans

Sectors	No. of 100 plans
Healthcare	61
Law enforcement	60
Public health	44
Government	40
Addiction treatment services	40
Non-profit organisations	36
Mental health services	32
Corrections	26
Public	23
Emergency medical services	21
Education	20
Fire services	16
Harm reduction	16
Pharmacy	15
Social services	15
Recovery services	14
Antidrug/substance use prevention coalitions	12
Health services research and evaluation	11

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35854231/>

Comprehensive



<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Health-Topics/Health-Promotion/Substance-Use/COM-CAP?tab=1>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9296108/>

Compassionate: countering various levels of stigma

Individual

- The person with the lived experience

Interpersonal/Social

- Person-to-person
- Includes family, friends, and fellow community members

Institutional

- Health system organizations

Population/Structural

- Broader cultural (ex. media) and policies/laws

Compassionate: stigma-related interventions

Interventions can be applied to multiple levels of stigma...

Language and Terms

- Use of proper terminology and language
- Avoiding harmful nomenclature

Training/Skills-Based

- Educational resources for people involved in the community
- Examples: modules, videos, motivational interviews

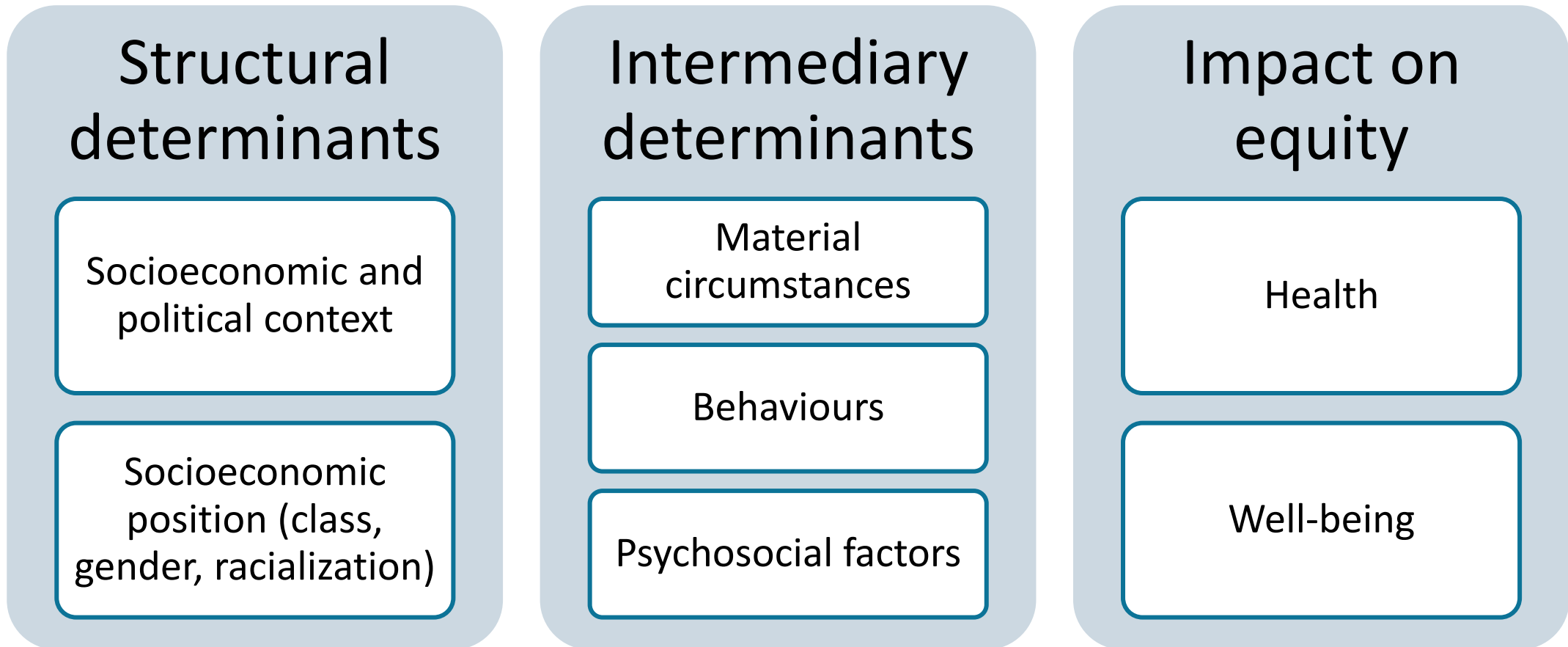
General Education

- Generating an understanding of stigma
- Developing strategies to reduce minimize stigma

Increasing Connection

- Strengthening community ties between stakeholders

Equity



World Health Organization. A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health [Internet]. Geneva: World Health Organization.; 2010 [cited 2022 Feb 23]. Available from:

https://www.who.int/sdhconference/resources/ConceptualframeworkforactiononSDH_eng.pdf

Equity: best practices with diverse populations

Youth

School belongingness a protective factor

School- and family-based interventions

Incarcerated Individuals

Programming for individuals while they are in correctional facilities

Supports upon release to address risk

Indigenous Populations

Recognizing the diversity of Indigenous communities – no standard approach

Holistic health and well-being

Equity: best practices with diverse populations

Gender

Unique needs and experiences of women and gender-diverse persons

Psychosocial supports

Race-Based

Integration of culture, language, ethnicity as well as community supports

Limited literature, highlights need for more research

Housing Status

Unstable housing a risk factor

Intersection of housing status and risk status

Prevention and education: risk and protective factors



Individual

- Genetic predisposition, mental health status, self-control
- Identity (ethnicity, culture)

Community

- Community safety
- Degree of social supports

School

- Engagement in extracurricular activities
- Relationships with teachers and peers

Family

- Parent's relationship with substances
- Family environment and level of involvement

Prevention and education: Icelandic Prevention Model/ Planet Youth

The Guiding Principles

1. Apply a Primary Prevention Approach
2. Emphasize Community Action
3. Engage and Empower Community Members
4. Integrate Researchers, Policy Makers, Practitioners, and Community Members
5. Match the Scope of the Solution to the Scope of the Problem

Application in North America

- Recent implementation in communities such as ‘Planet Youth Lanark County’, ‘Planet Youth New Brunswick’, ‘Integrative Community Initiative Collaborative’ in rural West Virginia
- Very few applications of the Icelandic Model in Canada have centered around opioid use

Substance controls: e.g., Decriminalization in Portugal

Harms of Criminalization

- Disproportionately impacts marginalized communities
- Discernable harms to criminalization
 - Social
 - Economic
 - Health

Benefits of Decriminalization/ Alternatives to Criminalization

- A reduction in drug-related harms in Portugal since decriminalization
 - HIV, Hepatitis C, mortality
- Cost-effectiveness

Substance use services and supports: opioid use disorder guidelines

Withdrawal Management ¹⁻³	Agonist Therapies		Specialist-Led Alternative Approaches
Tapered methadone, buprenorphine alpha ₂ -adrenergic agonists +/- psychosocial treatment ⁴ +/- residential treatment +/- oral naltrexone ⁵	Buprenorphine/ naloxone ⁶ <i>(preferred)</i>	Methadone ^{7, 8}	Slow-release oral morphine ^{9, 10} +/- psychosocial treatment ⁴ +/- residential treatment
	+/- psychosocial treatment ⁴ +/- residential treatment		



If opioid use continues, consider treatment intensification. >>

<<<<<<< Where possible, simplify treatment.

Harm Reduction¹¹⁻¹³

Across the treatment intensity spectrum, evidence-based harm reduction should be offered to all, including:

- Education re: safer use of sterile syringes/needles and other applicable substance use equipment
- Access to sterile syringes, needles, and other supplies
- Access to Take-Home-Naloxone (THN) kits
- Access to Supervised Injection Services (SIS) / Supervised Consumption Services (SCS)

<https://crism.ca/projects/opioid-guideline/>
Also see: <https://www.bmj.com/content/357/bmj.i1550>

Substance use services and supports: harm reduction

Needle
exchange,
supplies,
education

Supervised
consumption
services

Overdose
prevention
services

Drug checking

Naloxone
distribution,
overdose
education

Peer outreach

Mental health/
trauma (care,
referrals)

Social care:
housing referrals

Infection care:
screening,
referrals

<http://www.catie.ca/en/programming/best-practices-harm-reduction>

[https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Evidence Brief Drug Checking 2017.pdf](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Evidence%20Brief%20Drug%20Checking%202017.pdf)

<http://www.bccsu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Drug-Checking-Evidence-Review-Report.pdf>

Substance use services and supports: safer supply

Aim

- Options to secure access to regulated drug supply
- People who do not tolerate or desire OAT, high risk of mortality

Models

- Prescriber-based vs non
- Comprehensive care +/-

Practice

- Several programs across Canada
- Policy/ program guidance documents

Evaluation

- Little published literature → several evaluations in progress → early findings
- Increased connection, reduced use (unregulated), reduced criminal activity

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Scan of evidence and jurisdictional approaches to safer supply. Toronto, ON: King's Printer for Ontario; 2022.

Substance use services and supports: safer smoking

- **Safe Smoking Supplies**

- Safer crack use kits (SCUK) led to clients saving money and a reduction in transmittable diseases & equipment sharing
- High uptake and usage when provided
- Evidence that lack of crack pipe stems in kits and unawareness of kits remain limitations

- **Supervised Smoking Facilities**

- Reduced risk of overdose
- Decrease harms of public drug use
- Improves safety and access to supplies

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Thank you!

- Questions?

For More Information About This Presentation, Contact:

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