



National Collaborating Centre
for Determinants of Health

Centre de collaboration national
des déterminants de la santé

Harm reduction – what is working?

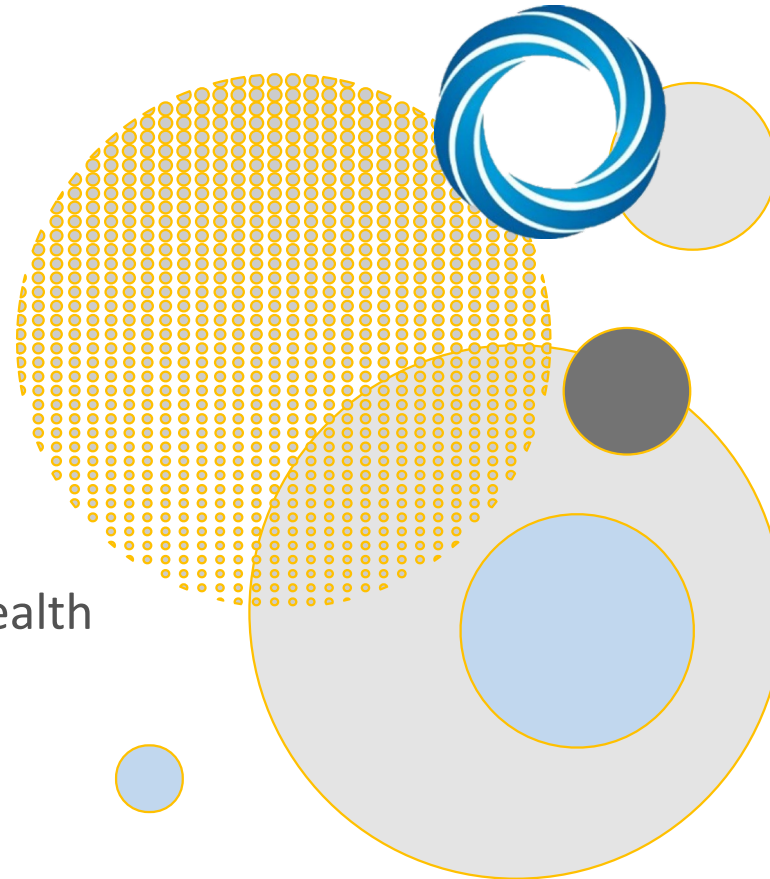
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Land Acknowledgement

The NCCDH is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. This territory is covered by the “Treaties of Peace and Friendship” which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) peoples first signed with the British Crown in 1725. The treaties do not deal with surrender of lands and resources but in fact recognize Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) title and establish the rules for what is to be an ongoing relationship between nations.



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Positioning myself

Thank you to the EQUIP health care team and the Community Addictions Peer Support Association (CAPSA)



Presentation Overview

- 1 Substance use health approach
- 2 What harm reduction is (and is not)
- 3 Promising initiatives

Substance Use



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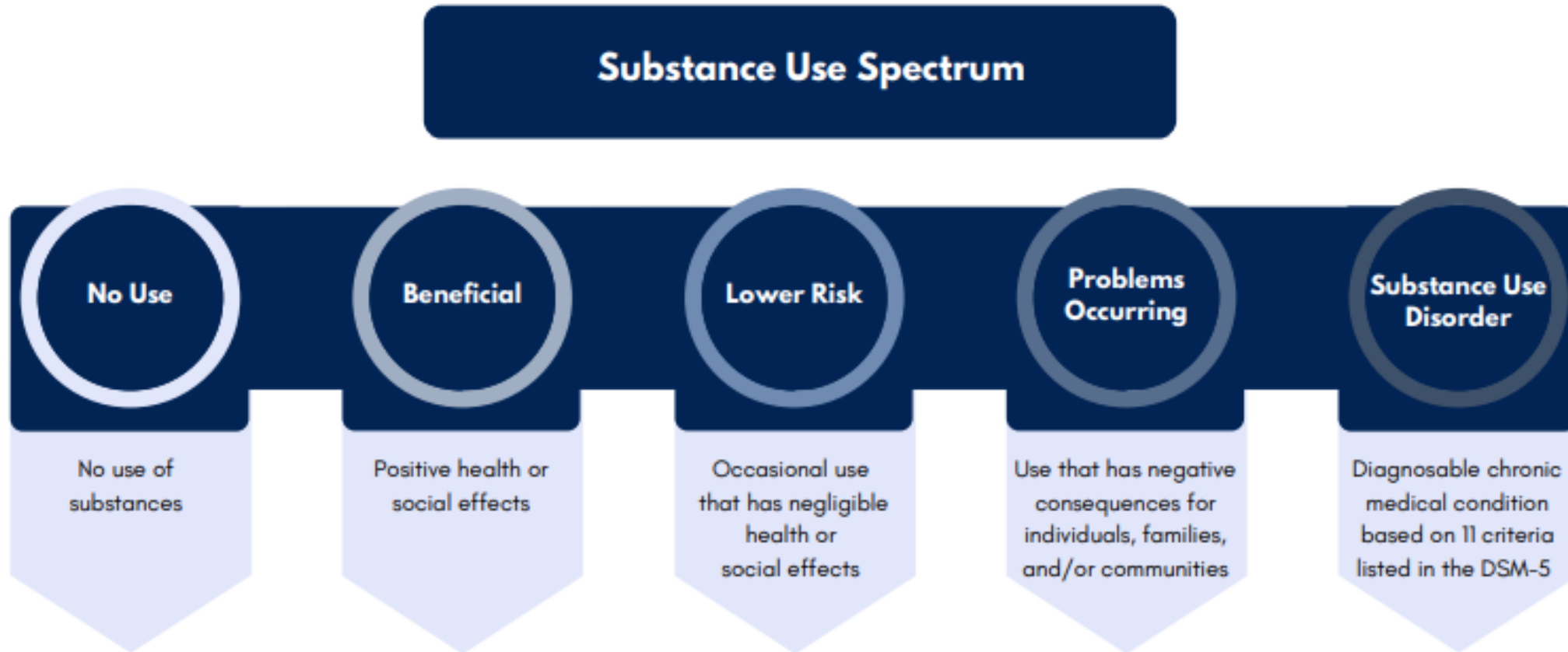


Image credit: CAPSA's Understanding Substance Use Health documents.

Substance Use Health



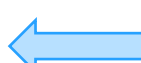
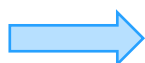
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SUBSTANCE USE HEALTH

IS AS NECESSARY AS PHYSICAL HEALTH
& MENTAL HEALTH

Service
provider

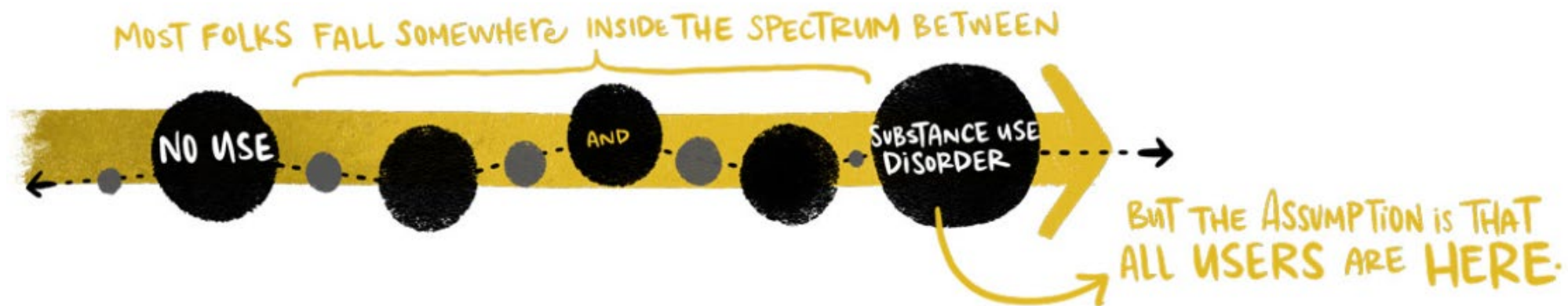


Person who
uses substances



Substance Use Stigma

- Is “the insidious practice of dehumanizing others” – Dr. Tam, 2019
- Impacts access to and quality of care
- Results from, and perpetuates, criminalization of some substances





Harm Reduction “stamps out stigma”

- Acceptance instead of judgement
- A movement for social justice AND practical activities to reduce harms associated with drug use
- Abstinence not required

“Harm reduction transforms us. It softens us. Fear is replaced with love. When you remove the stigma, you see humans.” – Hannah Klassen, last week



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Harm Reduction history

- Originated in community with activists and peers
- Reducing harms caused by systems
- Cautionary note: empty statements are harmful



What looks promising in Kingston, ON

- Researchers piloting “Peer to Community” model to promote community integration
- Support Not Stigma Initiative includes harm reduction training for service providers





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Equity in action across Canada



THE ALEX

Calgary's Assisted Self-Isolation Site integrates health and social supports for people experiencing homelessness

COVID-19 , Housing , Substance use | December 12, 2022



ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

Alberta Public Health meets the challenges of outbreak control in Calgary shelters

Access to health services , COVID-19 , Housing , Intersectoral action , Structural determinants | September 14, 2022



ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES

Mobilizing Opioid Agonist Therapy to bridge gaps during COVID-19

Access to health services , COVID-19 , Food security , Stigma, discrimination , Substance use | August 09, 2022



VANCOUVER ISLAND HEALTH AUTHORITY

Island Health response teams mitigate impacts of COVID-19 in underhoused populations

Access to health services , Community engagement , COVID-19 , Housing , Intersectoral action , Stigma, discrimination , Structural determinants , Substance use | October 05, 2022



Final thoughts

- “the most important thing is mattering” – Maine Resilience Building Network
- “racial equity is at the core of all work that claims to value justice” – National Harm Reduction Coalition
- “because everyone suffers when compassion is undone” – Bud Osborn

Thank you.

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