

# INCLUDING PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS IN DRUG POLICY AND HARM REDUCTION SERVICES: A SCOPING REVIEW

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **Supervisory Committee:**

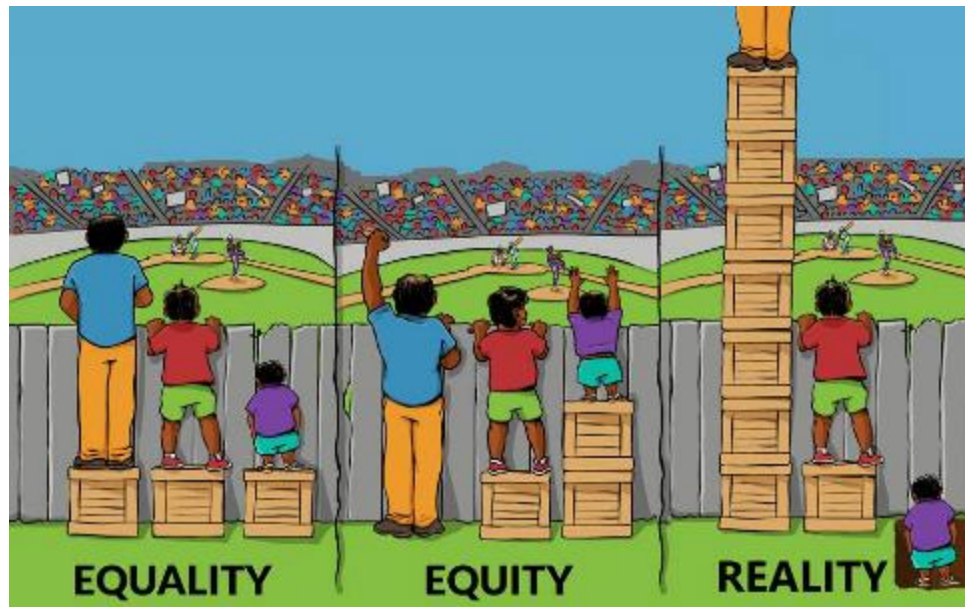
- **Dr. Bernadette Pauly – Department of Nursing**
- **Dr. Eric Roth – Department of Anthropology**

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- **Uvic's Graduate Student scholarship**
- **CARBC's Interdisciplinary Substance Use and Addictions Research Graduate Student Scholarship**

# BACKGROUND

- **People who use drugs (PWUD)**
  - Experience poorer health outcomes
    - Higher rates of HIV, HCV, neuropsychiatric conditions, endocarditis, overdoses, suicides (Taylor & Room, 2006; Patra et al., 2007)
  - Inequities in health
    - “Systematic differences in health between socioeconomic groups” (Whitehead & Dahlgren, 2006, p.2)



# BACKGROUND (CONT'D)

- **Stigma & marginalization**
  - Exacerbated by repressive drug laws and policies (Room & Reuter, 2012)
    - Leads to increased criminalization, incarceration, and social exclusion (Treloar et al., 2011)



# USER INVOLVEMENT

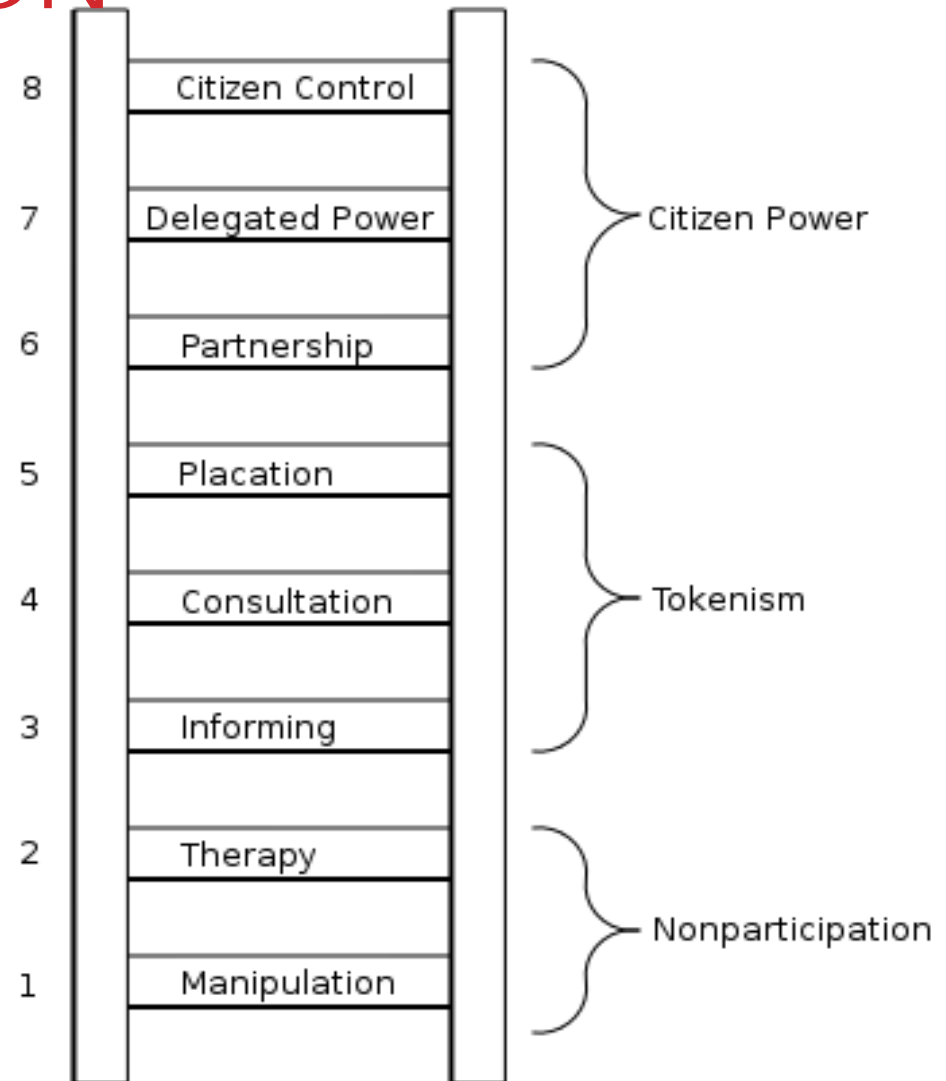
- **Eliminating health inequities: a public health and social justice priority (Commission on the Social Determinants of Health (CSDH), 2008)**
- **Traditional harm reduction initiatives do not always address root causes of substance use (Pauly, 2008; Smye, 2011)**
- **User involvement = greater equity in health (Hall, 2006, 2009; Taylor 2008, 2009)**

# USER INVOLVEMENT

- **Challenges uneven power relations that exist at the decision-making tables (Whiteford, 2011, pp. 47)**
- **Provides presence and voice at the decision-making tables for policies, programs, and services that affect (or will affect) them (Norman & Pauly, 2013)**
- **Shared decision-making power in a non-discriminatory and non-stigmatizing way (Belle-Isle, 2016)**

# A LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

**Sherry Arnstein (1969)**



# RATIONALE

- **Considerable body of evidence acknowledging the importance of involving PWUD in harm reduction (Ti et al., 2012; Marshall et al., 2015)**
- **Gap in the knowledge base**
- **My thesis research**
  - Scoping review
  - Conceptually map the literature of PWUD engagement in drug policy and harm reduction services



# SCOPING REVIEWS

- **An effective methodology to provide a ‘lay of the land’**
- **Following the five-stage framework of Arksey and O’Malley (2005)**
  - Stage 1: Define research question(s)
  - Stage 2: Identify relevant studies
  - Stage 3: Study selection
  - Stage 4: Charting the data
  - **Stage 5: Results**

# STAGE 1: IDENTIFY THE RESEARCH QUESTION

## **Scoping review objective:**

- To summarize and conceptually map literature relating to involvement of PWUD in policy and harm reduction initiatives

## **Research Question:**

**“What is known about the involvement of PWUD in decisions related to drug policy and harm reduction services within the peer-reviewed literature?”**

# STAGE 2: IDENTIFY RELEVANT STUDIES

## Five databases

- (MEDLINE, CINHALL, Academic Search Complete, Social Work Abstracts, & PsychInfo)

## Search terms (three “categories”)

1. User involvement terms
  - Peer engagement, capacity building, community mobilization, drug user union, peer-run organization, etc.
2. Drug/substance use terms
  - Injection drug use, meth use, crack use, heroin use, illicit drug use, etc.
3. Policy/Service provision terms
  - Drug policy reform, drug law reform, overdose prevention, safer crack use, safer meth use, supervised injection, supervised consumption, take-home naloxone, etc.

# STAGE 3: STUDY SELECTION

## **Primary inclusion criteria**

- Peer reviewed articles
- Published between 2006-2016
- English language
- Includes involvement/engagement of people who use illicit drugs (current or former users)
- Discusses involvement in relation to drug policy or service delivery

## **Secondary inclusion criteria**

- Harm reduction
- Articles of original research
- Case studies or program evaluations

# STAGE 3: CONT'D

**3200 articles identified through database searching**



**2708 records after duplicates removed**



**2116 records screened**

**(592 excluded after title/abstract review)**



**329 Full-text articles assessed for eligibility**



**43 studies included**

# STAGE 4: CHARTING THE DATA

## Information extracted from each article includes:

1. Source
  - Author(s), year of publication, and journal
2. Description of population and setting
  - WHO is being engaged? WHAT are they being engaged for?
3. Type of participation identified according to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation
  - HOW are they being engaged?
4. Study findings and implications
  - Was there a shift in decision-making power? Who makes the final decisions?

# STAGE 5: COLLATING, SUMMARIZING, AND REPORTING RESULTS

- **Barriers/challenges**

- Systemic-level
  - Repressive drug laws
  - Harsh political environments
  - Stigma
- Organizational/Program-level
  - Stakeholder concerns & negative perceptions of peers
  - Tensions between peers and program staff
  - tokenism

# STAGE 5 (CONT'D)

- **Facilitators/success factors contributing to meaningful involvement**
  - Systemic-level
    - Recognition by local health authorities
    - Support from police, community
    - Political support
  - Organizational/Program-level
    - Peer training
    - Skilled facilitation
    - Positive organizational cultures



# CONCLUSION

- **The need for more meaningful and sustainable dialogue between stakeholders and PWUD**
- **Expand opportunity for PWUD to be included at decision-making tables**