

# From Avoiding Risk to Nurturing Resilience

Shifting our upstream approach to youth substance use

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This interactive workshop explores the implications involved in shifting the traditional upstream metaphor to focus on nurturing resilience.



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## In Irving Zola's public health parable:

A Good Samaritan, after pulling several drowning people from a river, goes upstream to find out why so many people are falling into the river.

- What are the strengths of this parable for public health practice?
- What are the limitations of this parable for public health practice?



## Simple causal story



## A public health challenge

When it comes to understanding substance use by young people, we tend to concentrate on the behaviour of youth and the inherent risks related to the substances they use.

**We ignore the implications of the fact that people from disadvantaged social groups who drink moderately experience more alcohol-related harm than those who drink heavily but come from more advantaged areas.**

How can we explain this?

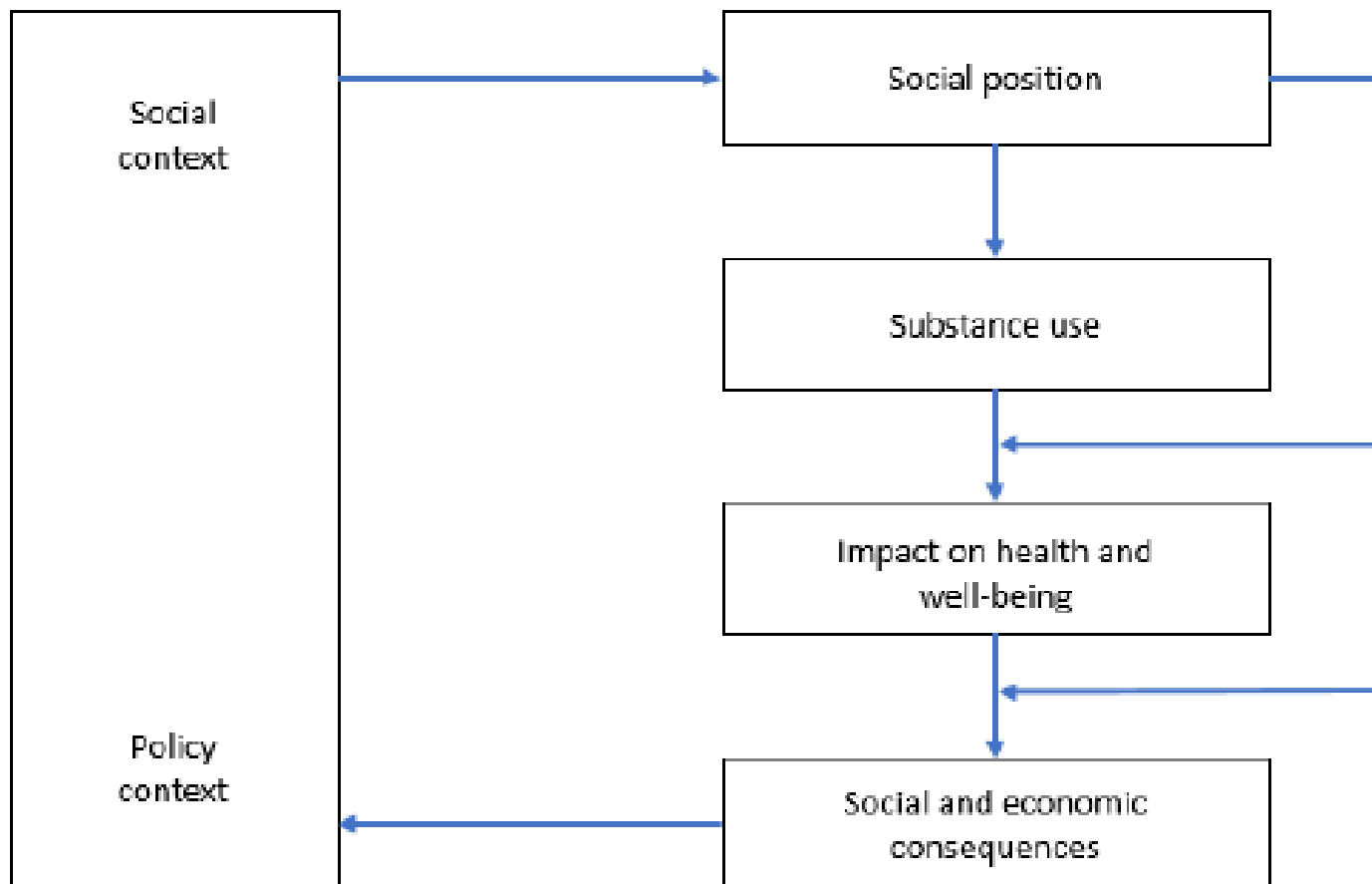


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*“The failure of policy-makers to see young people in all their diversity ... paves the way for inadequate and inappropriate responses to ... substance use ...”*

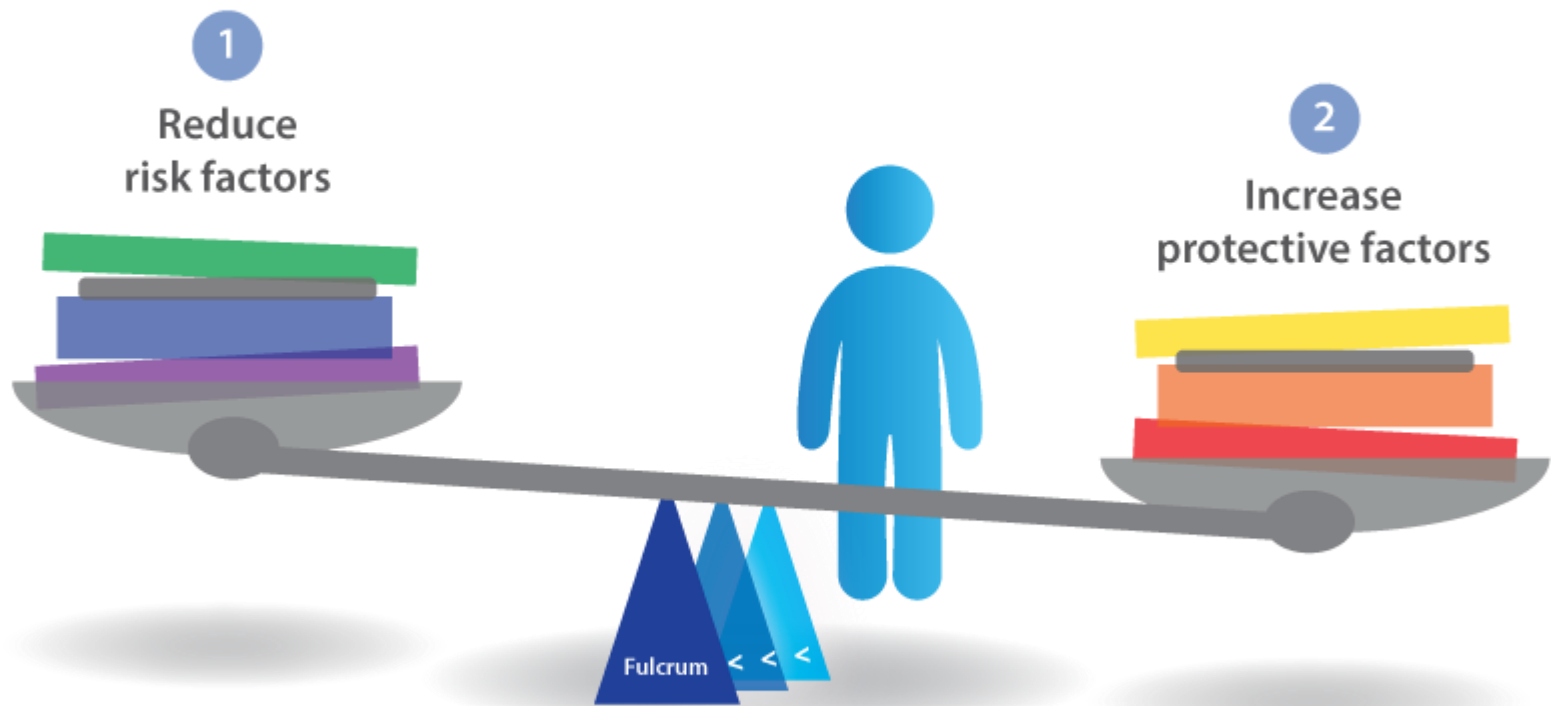


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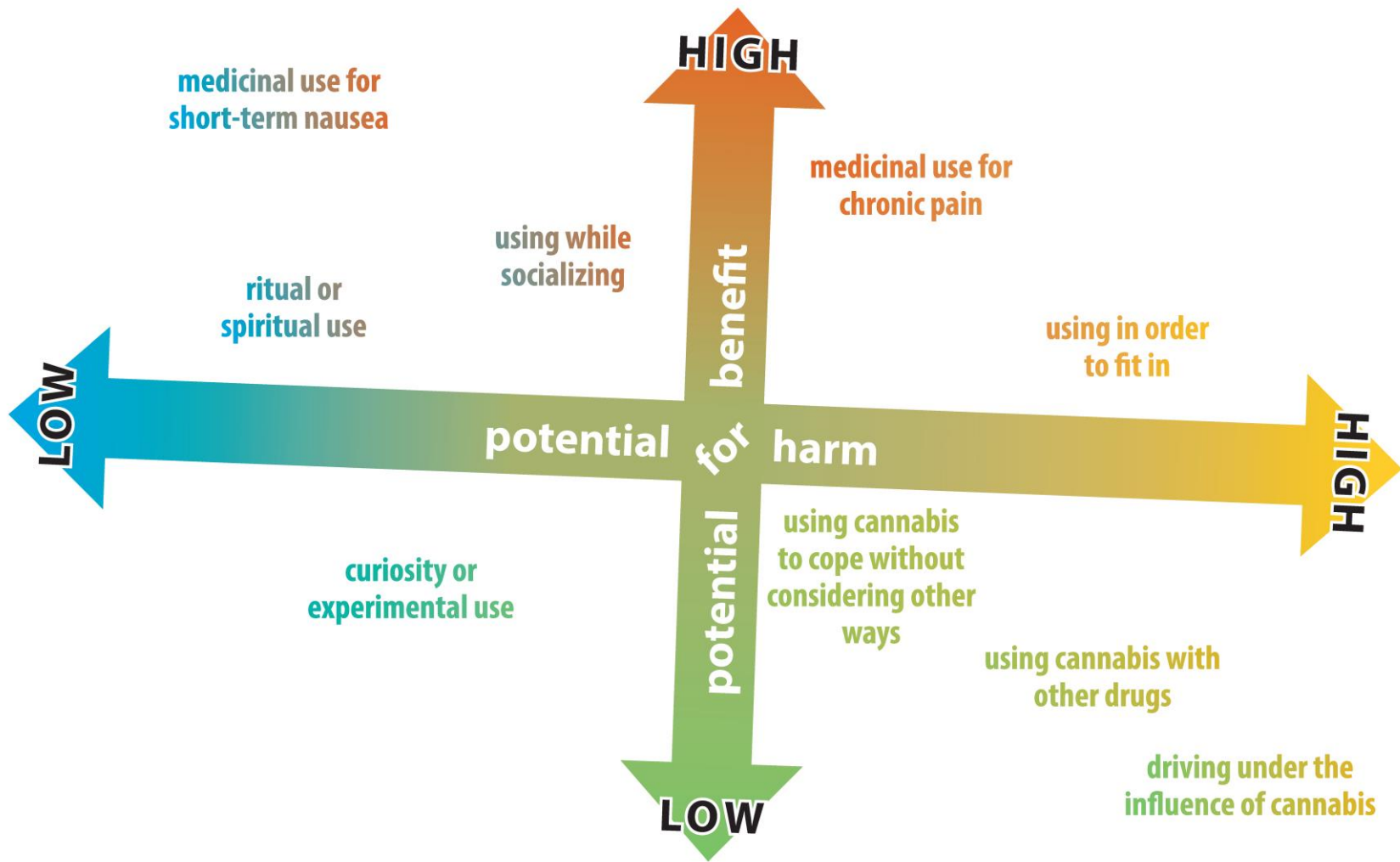
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**3 Build capacity/resilience (promotive factors)**





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# Policies and actions

(to address the needs of young Canadians related to psychoactive substance use)

- Ensuring young people have equitable access to the resources (individual, community, societal) needed for health and well-being
- Nurturing young people's capacity to make wise choices, that is, choices that fit with *their* goals, values and situations
- Supporting the developing autonomy of young people by removing constraints imposed by unjust social and structural factors, and maximizing their opportunities for choice



# Thank You

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