



APCS

Asia-Pacific **Chemsex** Symposium

Pleasures, Policies, Possibilities

From Need to Action:

Establishing Integrated Sexual Health Services
for Individuals Engaged in Chemsex

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Disclaimer

- I'm not an expert in chemsex (still learning)
- I'm pro harm reduction
- Striving for better care for the community

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Learning from clients....

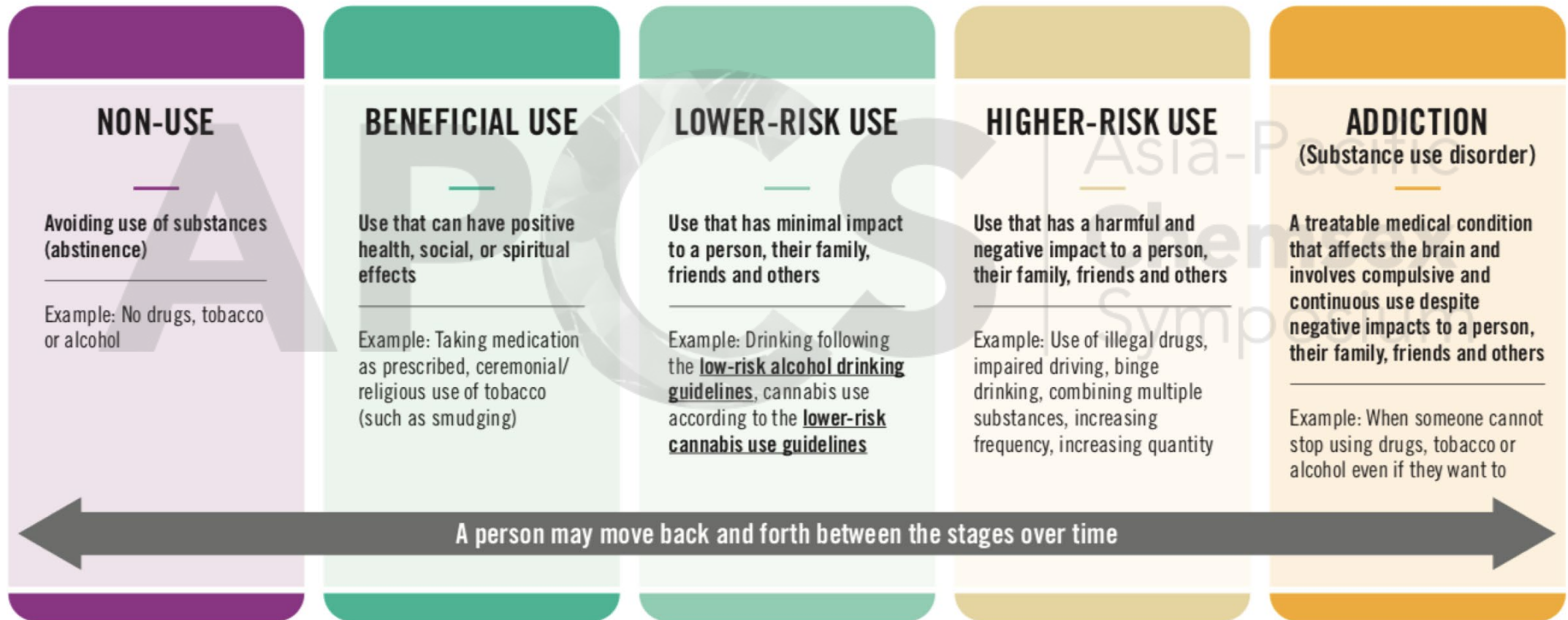
“I’m sorry, I’m not too familiar with this, can you tell me more about it please?”

- Confident
- Ensure confidentiality
- Non-judgemental
- Friendly language/ community slang
- Normalizing diverse sexual activities
- Focusing on sex-positive harm reduction

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SUBSTANCE USE SPECTRUM

People use substances, such as **controlled and illegal drugs**, **cannabis**, **tobacco/nicotine** and **alcohol** for different reasons, including medical purposes; religious or ceremonial purposes; personal enjoyment; or to cope with stress, trauma or pain. Substance use is different for everyone and can be viewed on a spectrum with varying stages of benefits and harms.



Government of Canada (2022). Substance use spectrum. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/substance-use-spectrum-infographic.html>

Until...

“Hi doctor, I am very scared.
I think I’m going to die”

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Feeling hopeless (as the client) as no established chemsex services in Malaysia...

How can I help/support them?

Potential consequences of chemsex

- Chemsex does not always lead to problems
 - Most of them engage safely with minimal impact on their lives and function.
- However, chemsex can be associated with adverse outcomes

	Rosinska et al., 2018 [28]	Glynn et al., 2018 [29]	Evers et al., 2019 [30]	Achterbergh et al., 2020 [31]	Curtis et al., 2020 [32]	Guerras et al., 2020 [33]	García-Pérez et al., 2022 [34]	Guerras et al., 2022 [35]
PS						OR. 1.8		aPR 3.5
CAI		OR 1.55	52%	66.8%	aPR 1.11	OR 6.5	46%	aPR1.7
CAR			56%					
HNP	OR 7.4	OR 2.4	OR 2.92	Median 8 vs. 5	aPR 2.11	OR 1.6	Median 33 vs. 15	aPR1.5
SG			32%				OR. 9.8	
CS			19%		aPR 1.43			

OR, odds ratio; aPR, adjusted prevalence ratio; PS, paid for sex; CAI, condomless anal insertion; CAR, condomless anal receptive; HNP, high number of partners; SG, sex in group; CS, casual sex (unknown name).

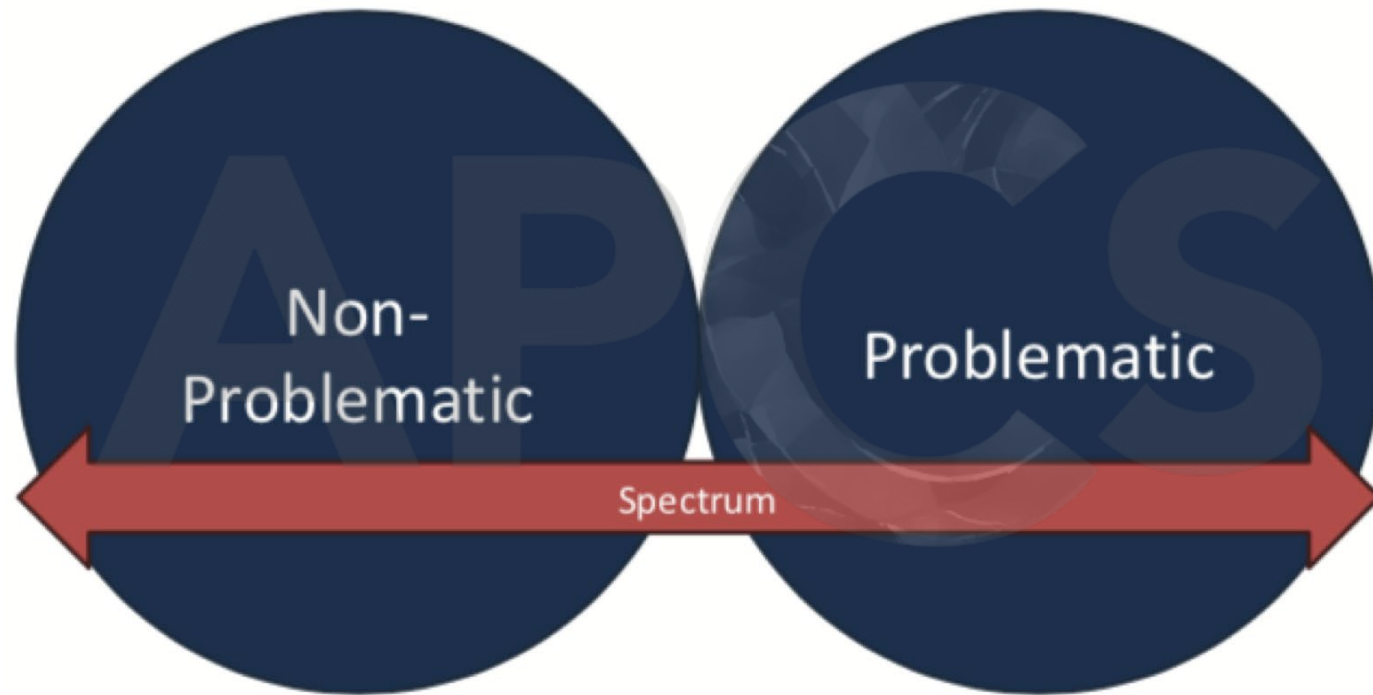
Coronado-Munoz M et al. *J. Clin. Med.* 2024, 13, 1812

Table 4. Psychiatric symptomatology/disorders over population sample totals.

Study	Psychiatric Pathology	Psychosis	Substance Abuse/Dependence	Anxiety	Depression	Suicidal Ideation	Suicide Attempt	ADHD
Bourne et al. (2015) [29]	16.7% ^a	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gavín et al. (2021) [31]	72.1% ^b	37.2% [*]	100.0% ^d	4.7% [*]	20.9% [*]	-	-	-
Dolengevich et al. (2020) [32]	46.3%	10.1%	46.3%	3.5%	13.7%	-	-	3.1%
Ballesteros et al. (2016) [33]	60.0% ^b	6.7%	100.0% ^d	6.7%	13.3%	-	13.3%	5.7%
Batisse et al. (2016) [34]	50.0% ^c	31.4% [*]	31.4%	-	-	-	-	-
Schreck et al. (2020) [35]	26.0%	-	88.2%	8.8% [*]	-	2.9%	-	-
Bohn et al. (2020) [36]	-	13.2% [*]	-	8.3%	11.9%	12.7%	9.6%	-
Hibbert et al. (2021) [37]	-	7.7% [*]	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dolengevich et al. (2019) [38]	-	15.3% [*]	19.0%	26.9%	33.3%	15.3%	13.8%	-

Moreno-Gamez L. et al. *Behav. Sci.* 2022, 12, 516

With high prevalence and potential harm → need for integrated services

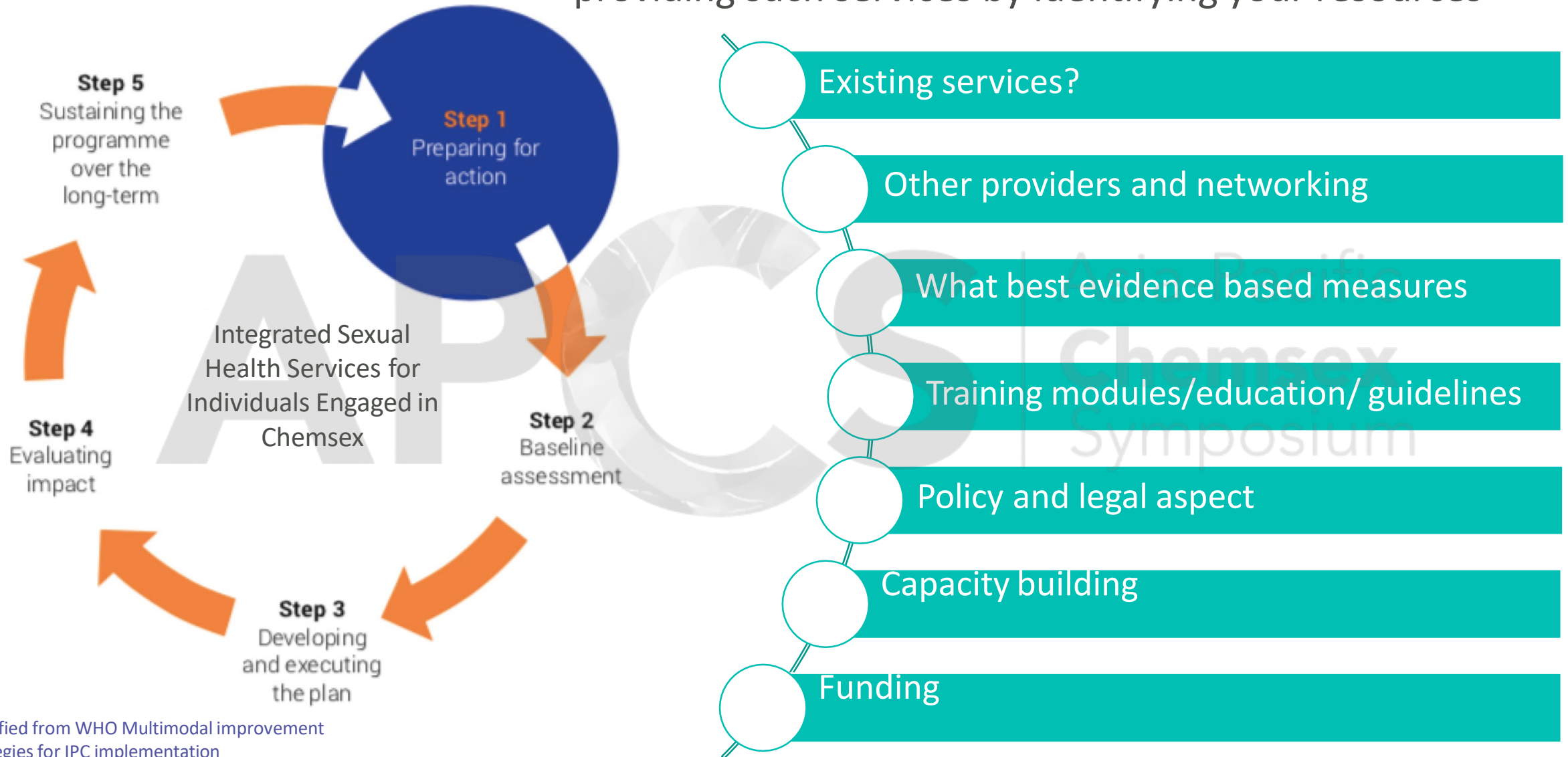


Person-Centred:
Individuals are empowered (with knowledge, skills, social support, resources) to decide what problematic means.

Bryant J, Hopwood M, Dowsett GW, Aggleton P, Holt M, Lea T, et al. The rush to risk when interrogating the relationship between methamphetamine use and sexual practice among gay and bisexual men. *International Journal of Drug Policy*. 2018;55:242-8.

Slide credit: Rayner Tan

To understand the internal and external capacity of providing such services by identifying your resources



Modified from WHO Multimodal improvement strategies for IPC implementation

How can I help you?

Knowledge on
safer sex and harm
reduction

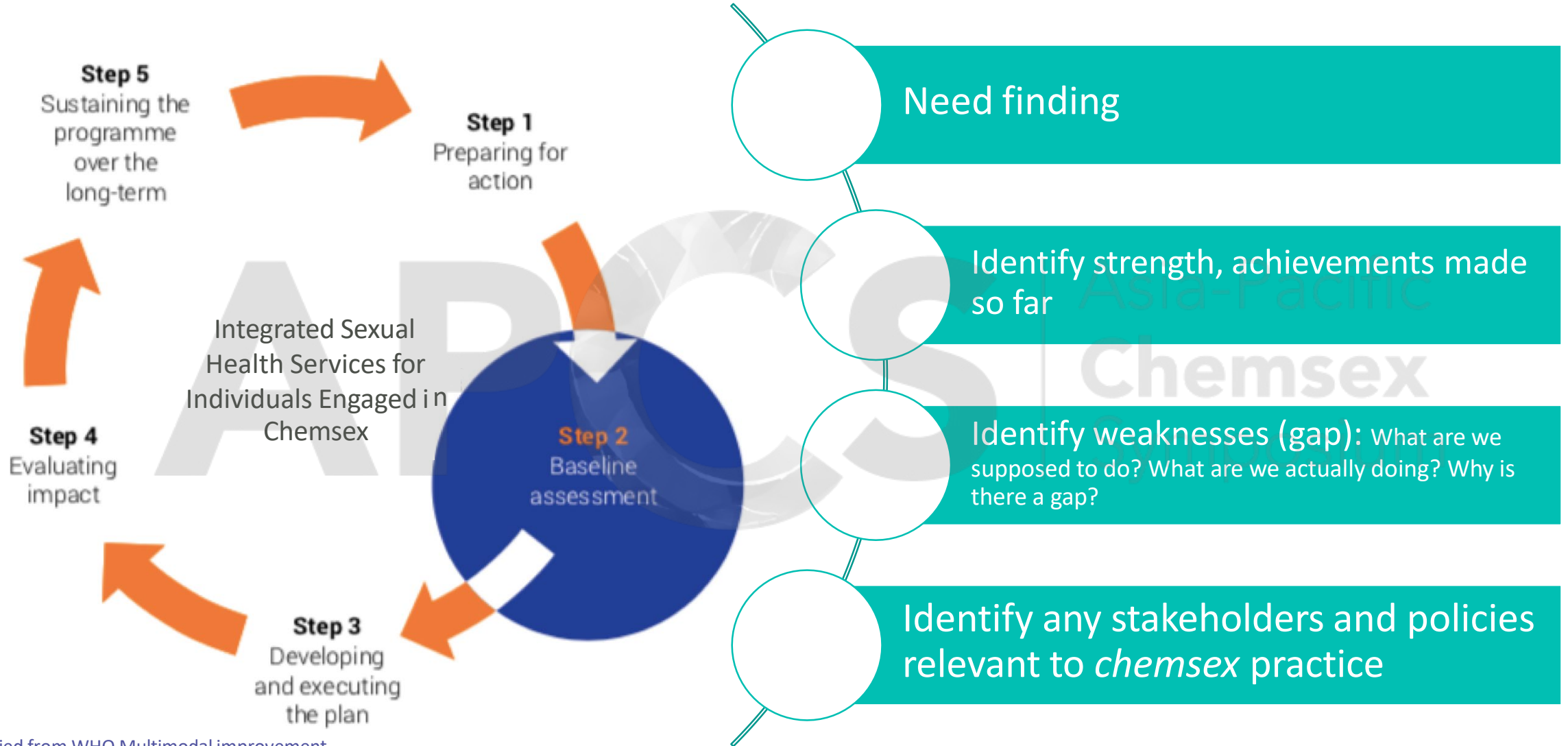
Emergency
support services

Screening and
assessment
(online vs offline)

Professional
support: clinicians,
psychologists

Peer-support or
support group

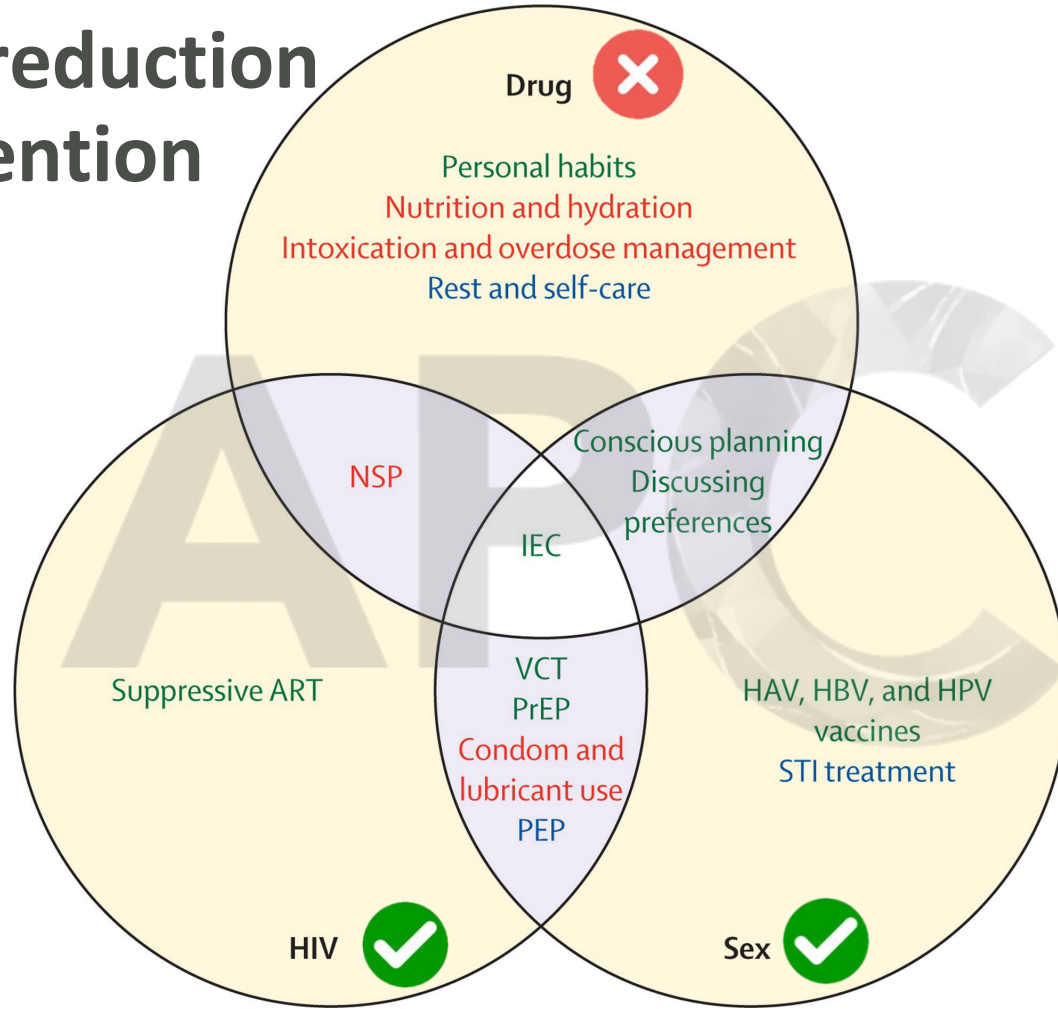
Legal assistance
and support



Modified from WHO Multimodal improvement strategies for IPC implementation

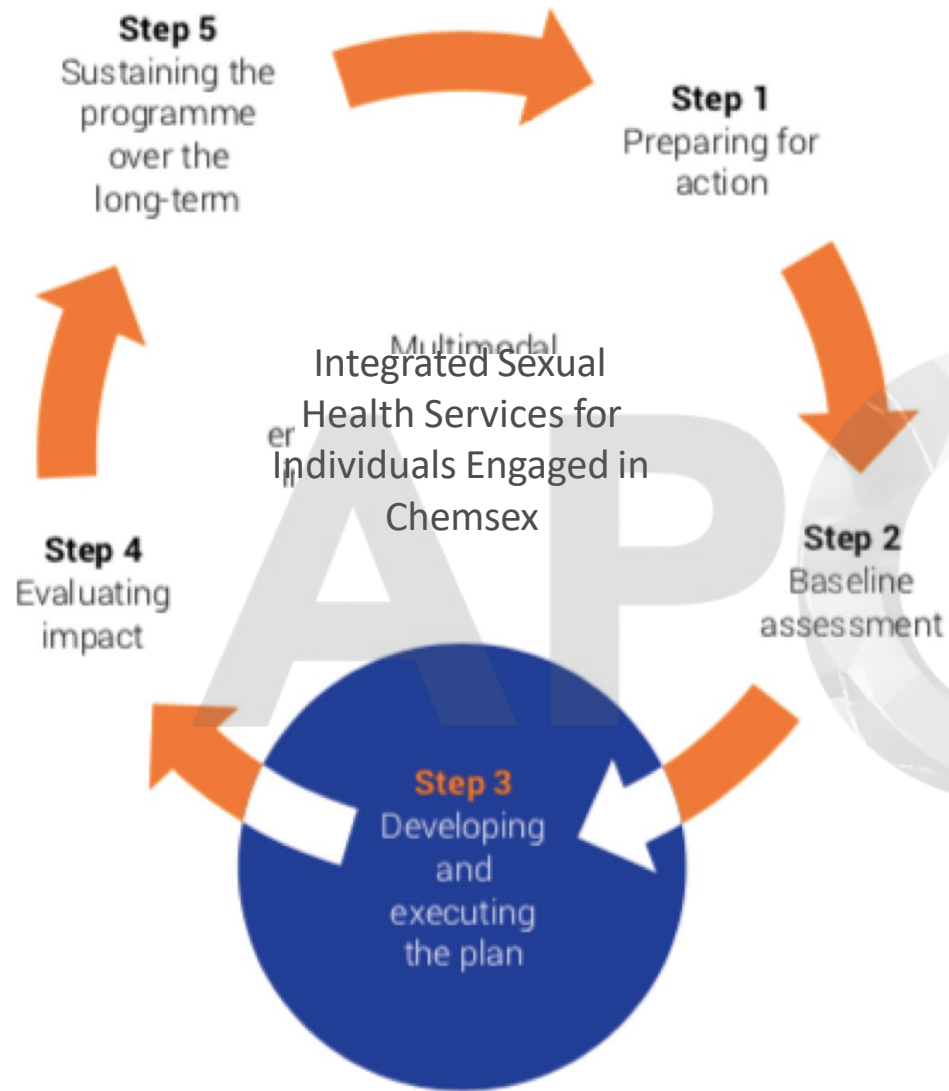
■ Before the chemsex session ■ During the chemsex session
■ After the chemsex session

Harm reduction intervention



-  Other physical health
-  Mental health
-  Psychosocial/ spiritual health
-  Right and legal support
-  Advocacy

Strong, Carol et al. The Lancet HIV, Volume 9, Issue 10, e717 - e725



Developing small-scale integrated HIV/STI and chemsex services in UMMC (integrated to HIV/STI clinic)

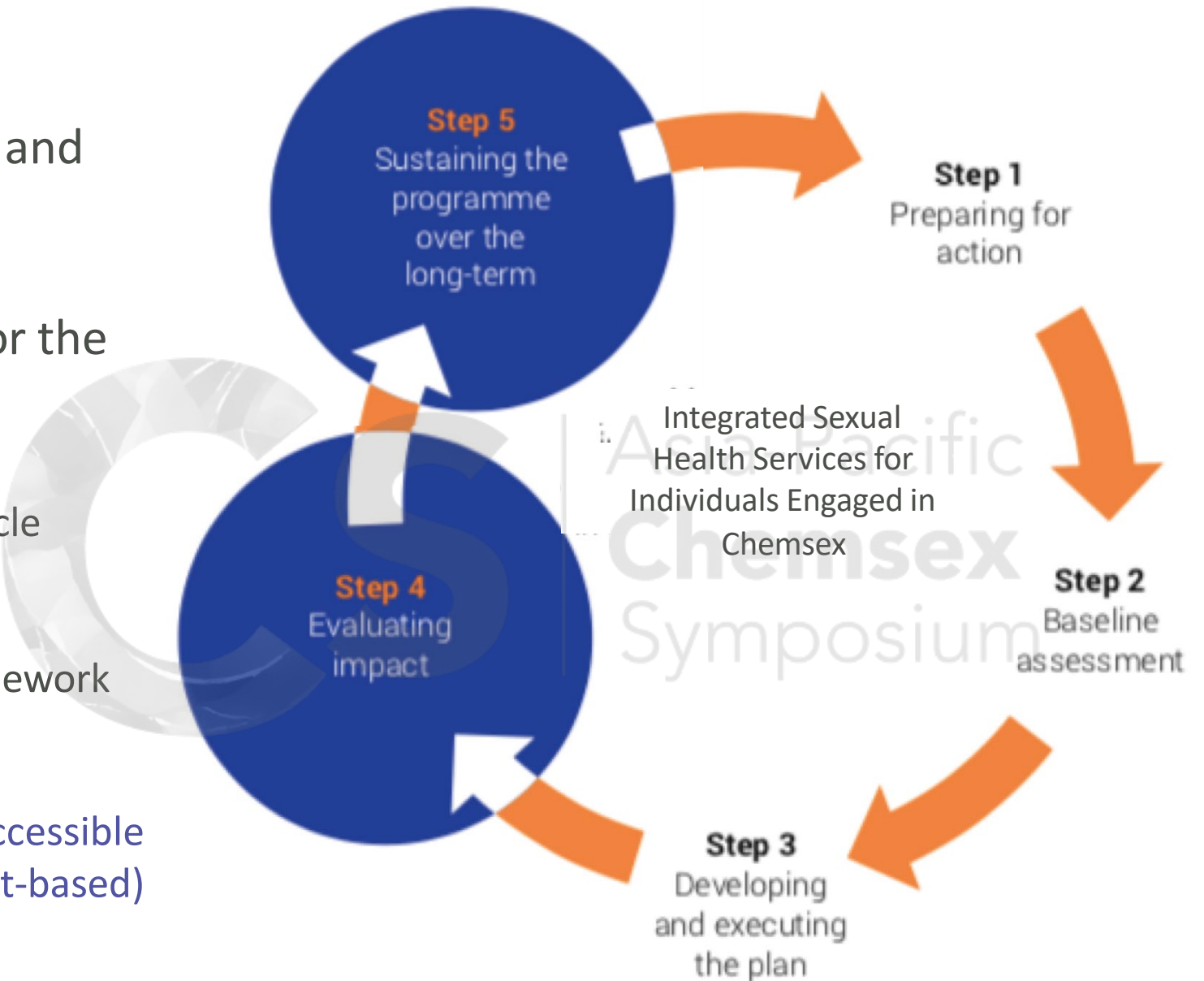
- Screening: ASSSIST
- Brief intervention and motivational interview
- In-house psychologist: CBT, MI
- Chemsex action plan and care plan
- Referral to psychiatrists and other healthcare
- Awareness, education, self-help strategies, information education and communication.

Learning: Decide on the intervention based on the baseline assessment (co-designed with community)

Modified from WHO Multimodal improvement strategies for IPC implementation

- to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the program
- To determine whether the intervention is appropriate for the target population
- Example of framework:
 - PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) Cycle
 - RE-AIM (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, Maintenance) evaluation framework

However,
 Lack of effectiveness as not really accessible
 (hospital/ clinic setting, appointment-based)
 Follow up issues
 COVID-19



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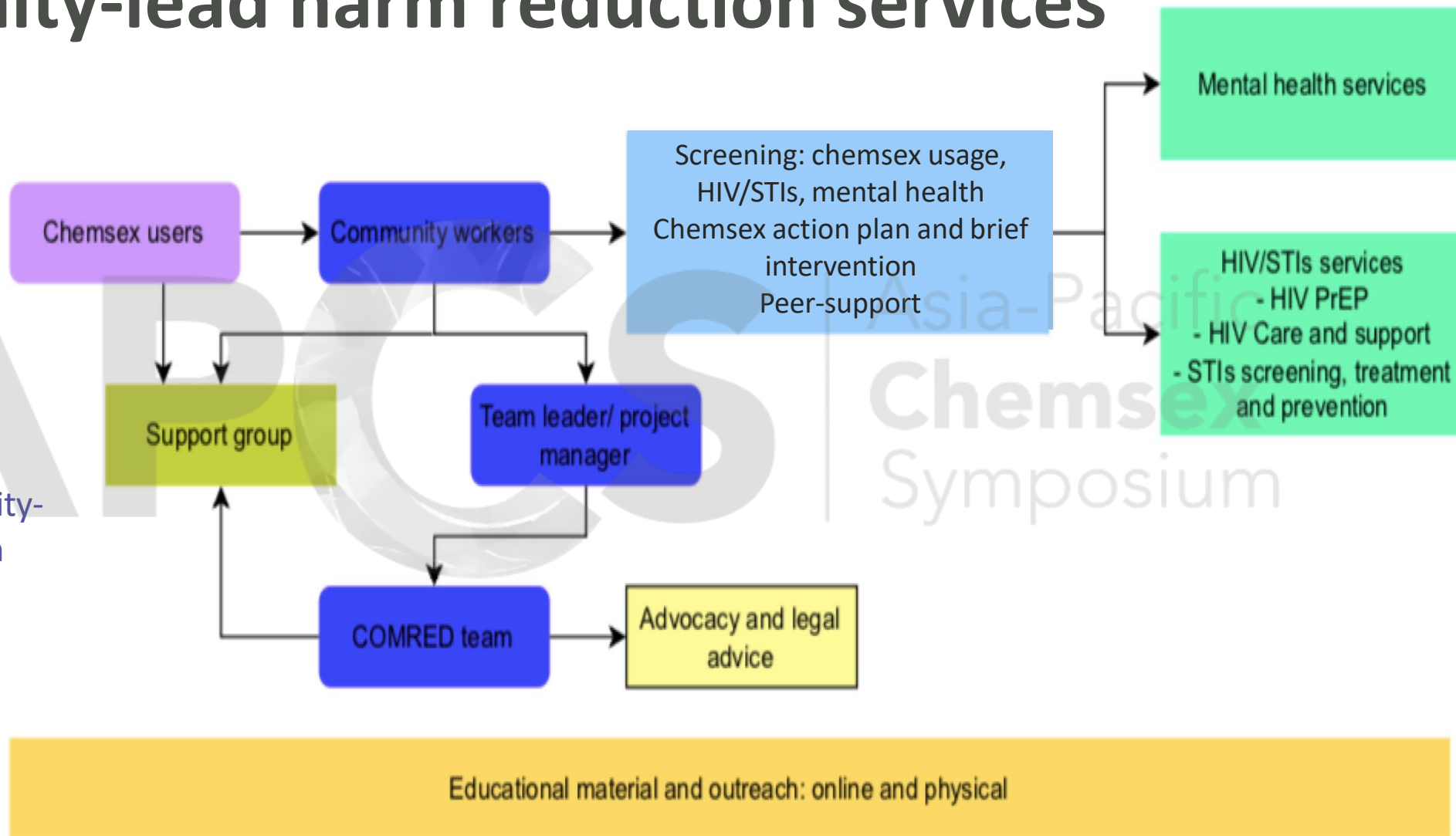
Modified from WHO Multimodal improvement strategies for IPC implementation

Community-lead harm reduction services



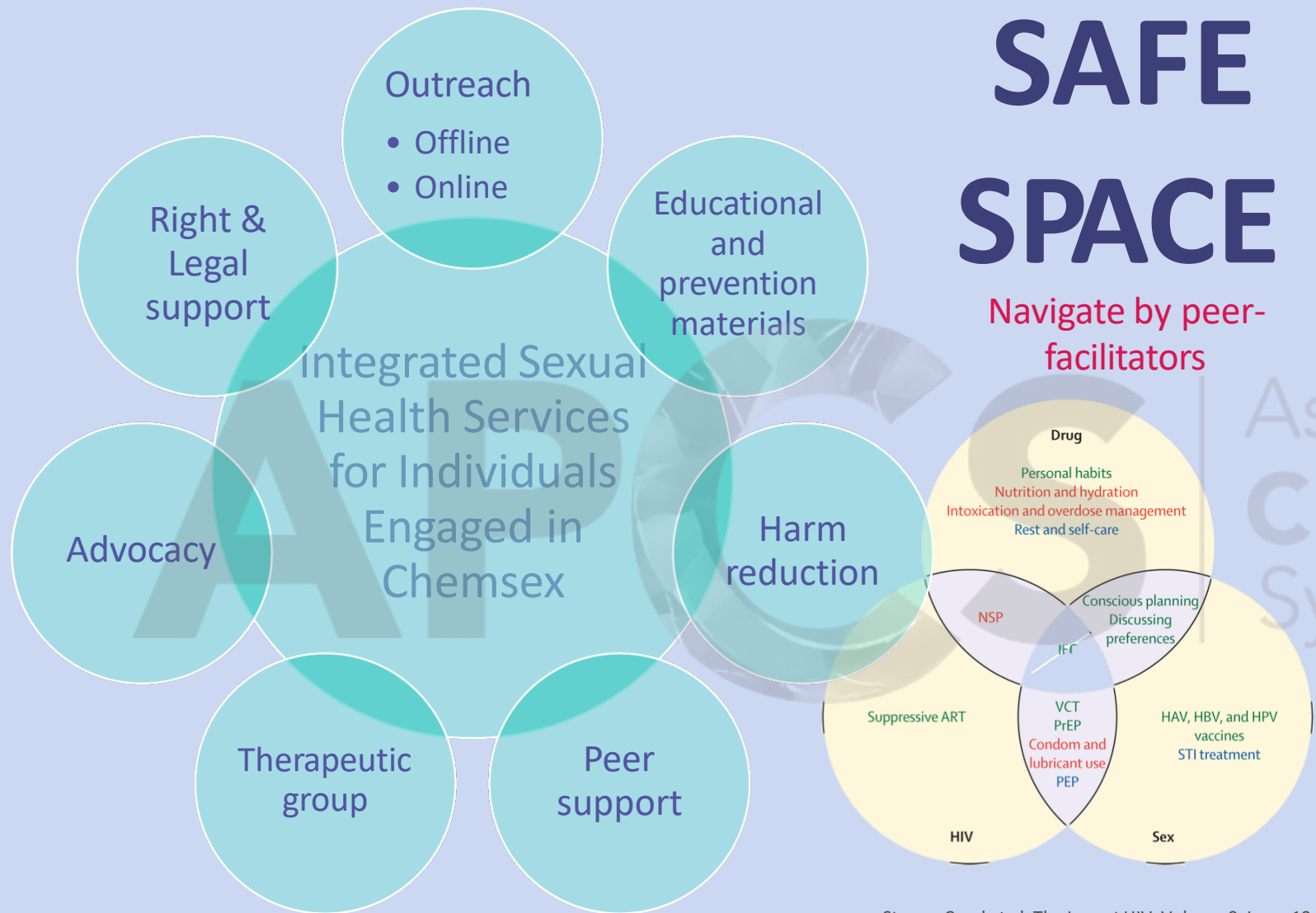
Objectives:

- to develop and implement a community-led for harm reduction
- As capacity building



SAFE SPACE

Navigate by peer-facilitators



Collaborative efforts

- Communities
- Providers
- Stakeholders
- Researchers
- Funders
- Etc..

Modified from Laura Nevendorff et al. *Chemsex in Asia: A Community Manual on Sexualised Substance Use among MSM*. 2021

Strong, Carol et al. *The Lancet HIV*, Volume 9, Issue 10, e717 - e725

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Thank you

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6-7 November 2024 | Bangkok, Thailand

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