

“A Thin Description”: The need for greater involvement of PWUD in substance use research

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A 'Thin Description'

- ▶ Research that lacks context / social context
 - ▶ Surface level; superficial
 - ▶ Misses perspective of the actors themselves and how they understand their world
 - ▶ Misunderstands how and why decisions are made, or actions are taken

Problems with 'Thin Descriptions'

- ▶ We misunderstand behavior
 - ▶ Rely on researchers' assumptions more than with actual behavior
- ▶ Hard to create or implement effective policy or practices
 - ▶ MMT misaligned to needs of patients' needs
 - ▶ Patient dissatisfaction in MMT
 - ▶ Low rates of uptake and retention in MMT

Incorporating insiders

- ▶ Research led by people with lived/living experience
- ▶ Research that gives meaningful roles to community members
 - ▶ How is the issue framed?
 - ▶ What is 'the problem'?
- ▶ Research that helps build the capacity of community members
 - ▶ Training in methods
 - ▶ Support for people who want to pursue school
- ▶ Greater use of qualitative and ethnographic methods

Negotiating research as a person with living experience





The end

Thank you!