



THE BIG PICTURE

Key Outcomes from [The Big Picture](#) Project

Substance use disorder in young people in Assam, India:
using participatory visual methods to understand
their experience of risk, resilience and recovery.

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GCRF call

New social and cultural insights into mental, neurological and substance use disorders in developing countries

University of Leeds

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University of Brighton

Dr Rebecca Graber (School of Applied Social Sciences)

Consultants, Steering Group & Advisory Group

Pan India and UK

September 2018 for 30 months

The problem in context

Substance Use Disorder (DSM-5, Abuse & Dependence; *Hasain et al, 2013*) : Complex



National MH Survey India 2015-16: SUD 22%

- Poor services & utilisation, & poor treatment outcomes.
- Alcohol Use Disorder: largest **treatment gap** of the major mental health conditions (86.3%).
- Need for research, awareness raising & advocacy

The problem among young people

- 13% of people using substances in India are children and adolescents (*Childline Foundation*)
- *India MH Survey*: strengthening of **youth** mental health research and addiction management
- **Assam**: adolescent SUD classified as urgent problem ~70% prevalence.



Funders wanted a focus on
RESILIENCE, YOUTH-
CENTERED & MULTI-TIERED.



PhotoVoice



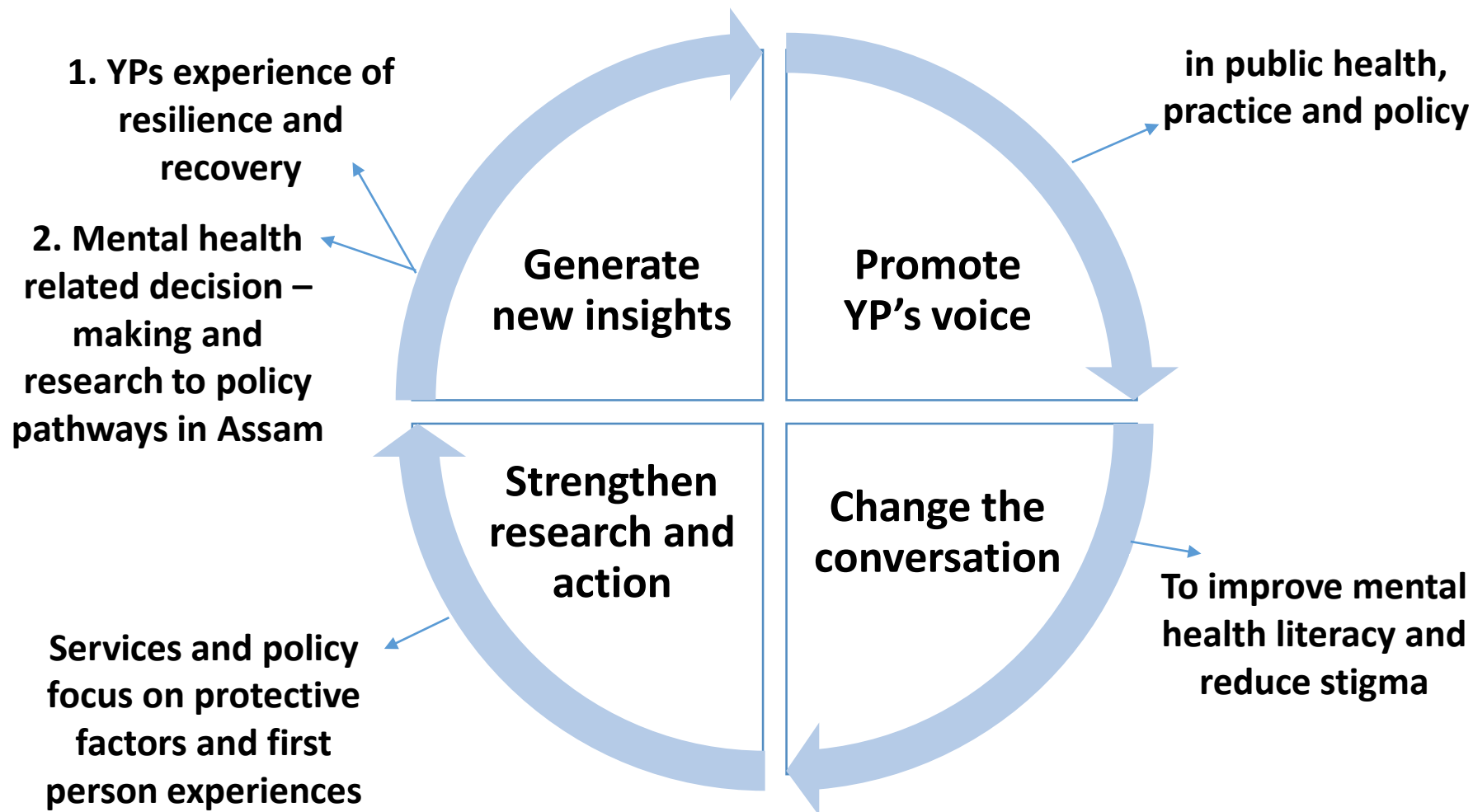
Filmmaking



Global health systems analysis



Our aims





Research questions



RQ1: What can we learn from **young Assamese** people's **experience** to **mitigate risk** and **promote resilience to substance use, treatment-seeking, and recovery**?



RQ2: How does substance use – one's own and/or others - affect **peer relationships, families, communities and the life opportunities** of young Assamese people from their perspective?



RQ3: Do young Assamese people experience **stigma and discrimination** in relation to cultural perceptions of youth substance use and, if so, what forms does this take?







Also want to build public knowledge and compassion



Also want to build public health awareness on staying substance free



PhotoVoice



Poster Campaigns



Film-Making



Impact – Social Media – Community Screening – Policy Makers

Why PhotoVoice?

PhotoVoice



Longstanding criticisms of semi-structured interview

Researcher introduces / influences data

Caught in our own echo chamber; barrier to new insights

Hard to engage young people (power, expectations)

Ethics – true informed consent?

Hard for YP to articulate / express / represent lived experience

Participant-led

1

Participant given photo task

“Take photos or find images that help me to understand what it is like for you to resist drug use / come through recovery?”

1-2 weeks to complete



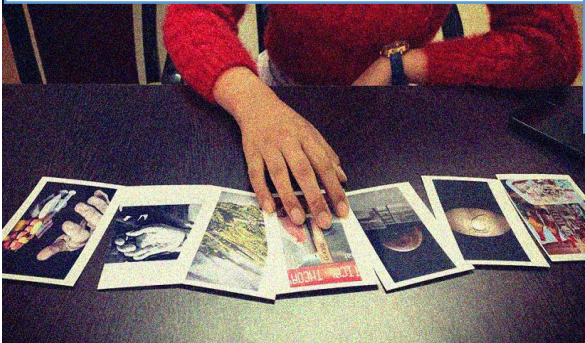
Narrative and image data

2

Bring (send) images to interview

Work through each image in turn

Opens up avenues for researcher to ‘dig deeper’ whilst still being participant-led



New insights

3

Analysis of narrative interview

Kept ‘close’ to participant by images

Photos helps communicate to new audiences

Retains ‘the person’

PhotoVoice (Photo Elicitation Interviews)

Engages typically hard to reach populations. Empowers stigmatized and vulnerable persons to create knowledge and re-frame debates. Critical given unacceptable MH inequalities.

Advance preparation & makes the abstract concrete (e.g. struggle, pressure, shame, resilience)

Surfaces rich description of the *conditions* that make the experience is (Ashworth, 2003)

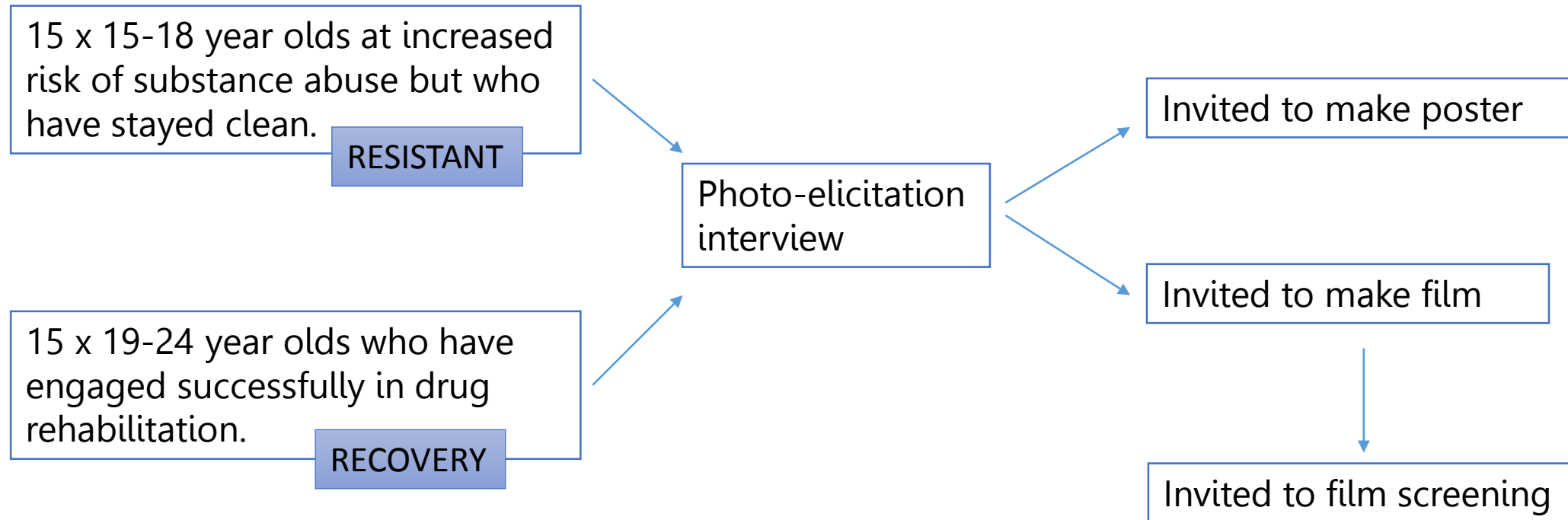
Crosses participant-researcher psychological boundaries

'Breaks the frame'

Longer, enjoyable, therapeutic (Bates et al, 2018)

Evocative material to support analysis, public engagement and advocacy





How do some young people who self-define as being at-risk of substance use manage to resist?

They described the **risk** as either ever using or getting drawn into casual use and **resilience** as not ever using or stopping after casual use.

Our analysis focused on identifying

- what was escalating risk (**risk factors**)
- what factors meant the risk was always low or was de-escalated at critical times (**protective factors**).
- where the critical points were when the young person demonstrated / encountered either risk or resilience

Risk and protective factors span

- **Intrapersonal**
- **Interpersonal**
- **Situational / contextual / cultural**

*“I would describe
my life as...
destroyed...”*

Samba, aged 18y



Participant-created
image; led the focus
on his empty
experience of first
drug use

Emotion-focused
resilience (rather
than behavioural)

Could we have got
this with a Q&A style
interview? Would
this have been
ethical to ask about
prior use?

*“This is where
my brother used
drugs...”*

Jasmine, aged 18y



Participant created
image – led the
focus on toxic
neighbourhoods

Makes it ‘real’ –
builds emotional
engagement,
essential for
analysis of lived
experience

Issue not
introduced into
the data by the
interviewer

PhotoVoice – meeting some of the assumptions....



“When I sent these pictures, I was not sure what I would say, how it would come out. Will it be okay if I send these or should I send more or less? After the interview I felt that these photos were meant to be – it was a perfect way to explain my story.”

POSTERS → IMPACT

- [Impact Event](#)



The Big Picture impact event_Day 1

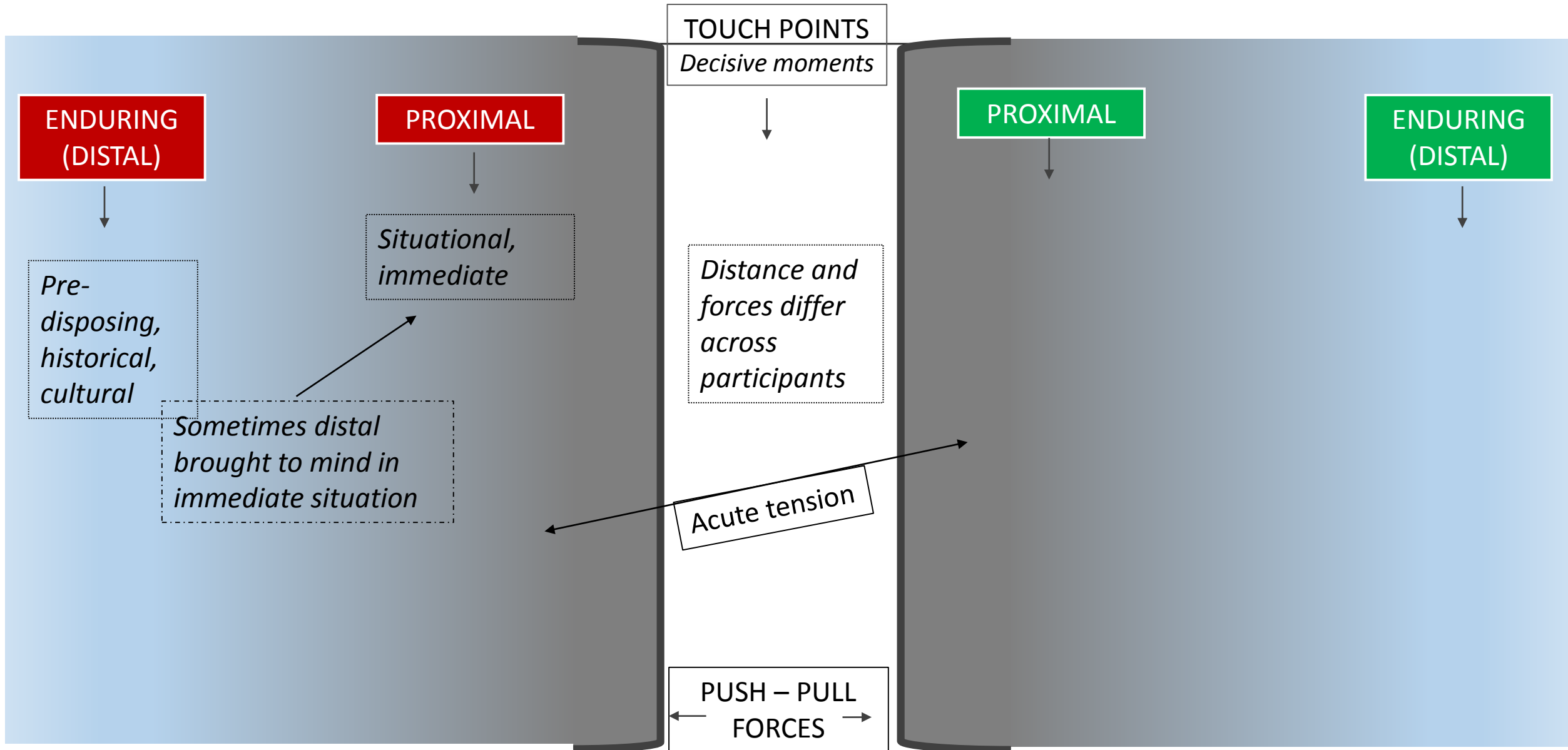
Qualitative Data Analysis



- Thematic Analysis
- Team of analysts
- Engaged partner organisations

RISK FACTORS

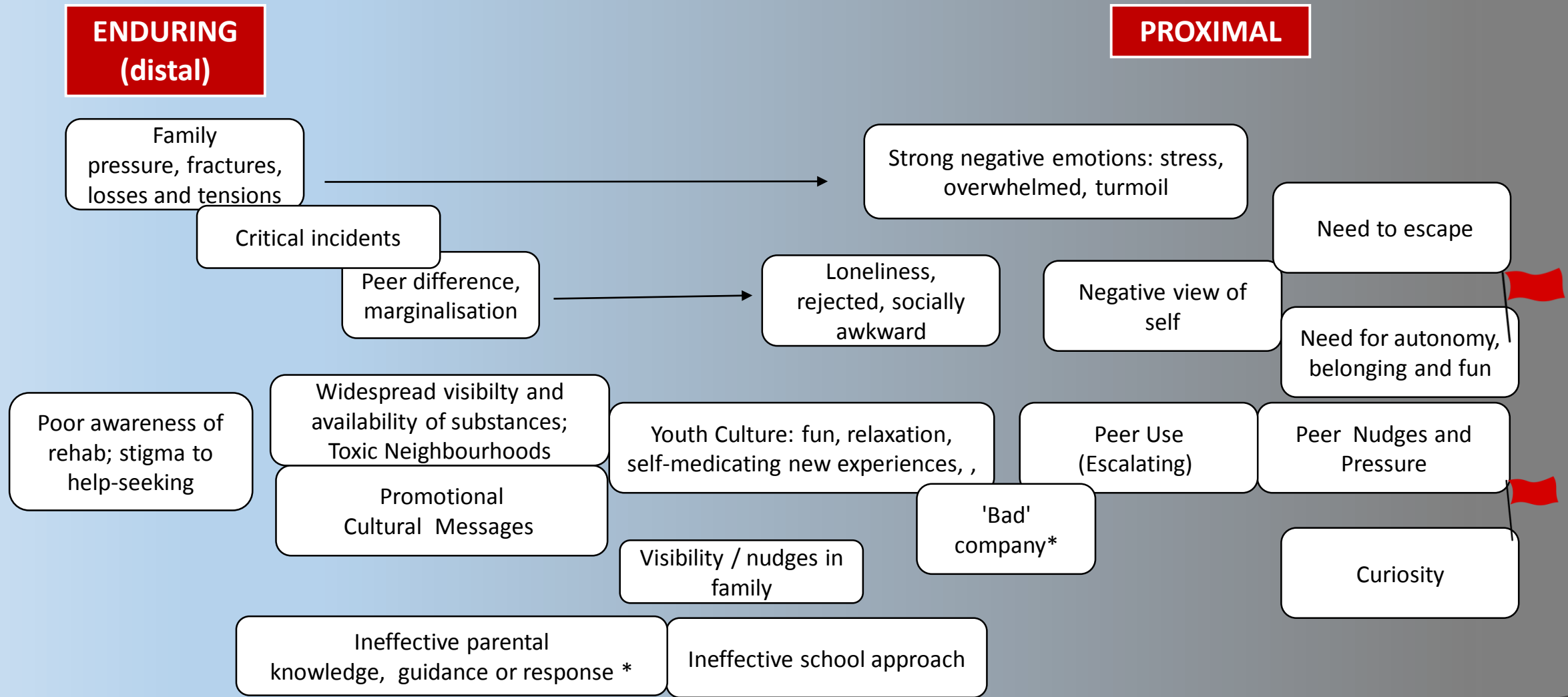
PROTECTIVE FACTORS



RISK FACTORS



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



PROTECTIVE FACTORS



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

TOUCH
POINTS
*Decisive
moments*

PROXIMAL

**ENDURING
(distal)**

Forseeing and fearing
consequences

Up close and personal
experiences

Hollowness of
use

Repulsed by substances
One Sip Effect

Knowledge and understanding
of use and addiction

Searching out
information

Parents as pillars

Avoidance &
exit strategies

Good and similar
friends / relationships

Solidifying one's position /
comfortable being different

Aware and critical of
youth culture and SU

Prepared and
able to say no

Ways to cope with
strong feelings

Influential people

Values, Mindset & Resolutions

Hard line in school

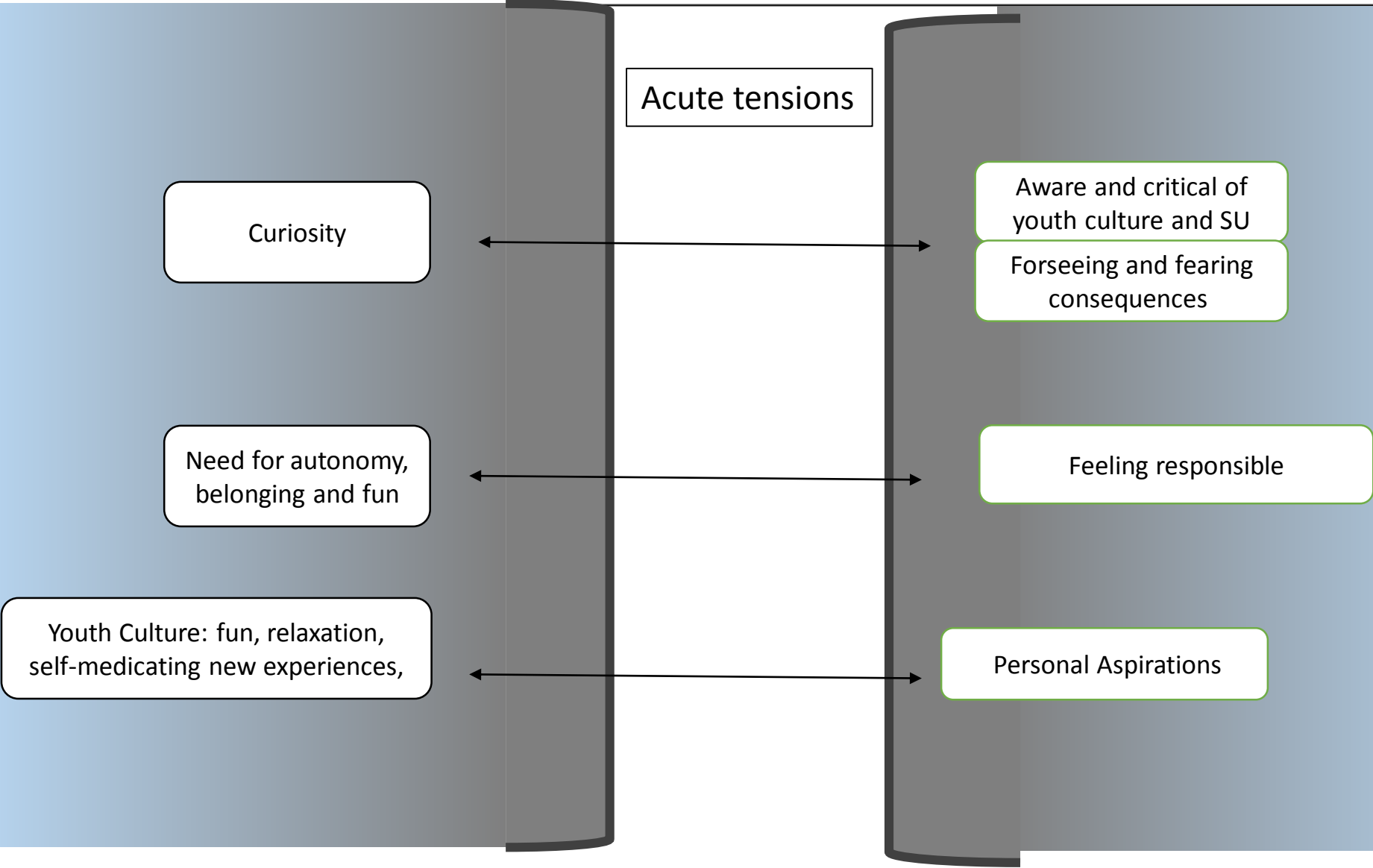
Reflective not impulsive

Feeling responsible to self and
family; perceiving choice

Can't access
substances

Personal Aspirations for
Self and Life

RISK FACTORS





KEY OUTCOMES RECOVERY GROUP



How do young people successfully recover from substance misuse?

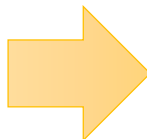


Analysis identified recovery can be a winding path with round-a-bouts difficult to exit and cul-de-sacs providing no way forward (outcomes from inductive analysis).

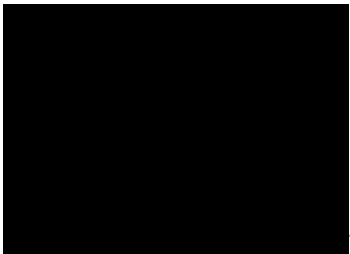


MAPPED phases

Paper under review in Qualitative Health Research



[Project Resilience Website](#)



ANIMATION



Film-Making

[Diary of a recovering drug addict](#)



Trailer Diary of a recovering drug addict

Film-Making

[A different path to recovery](#)



Trailer A Different Path to Recovery

FILMS → IMPACT

Impact Event



The Big Picture impact event_Day 3

- [Empowering process - Ratul](#)



The Big Picture impact event_Day 3 Ratul



THE BIG PICTURE

