

# Equity Lens in Public Health

Reducing Health Inequities: The  
Contribution of Public Health Services in BC

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# Partners



National Collaborating Centre  
for Determinants of health

Centre de collaboration nationale  
des déterminants de la santé



University  
of Victoria



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

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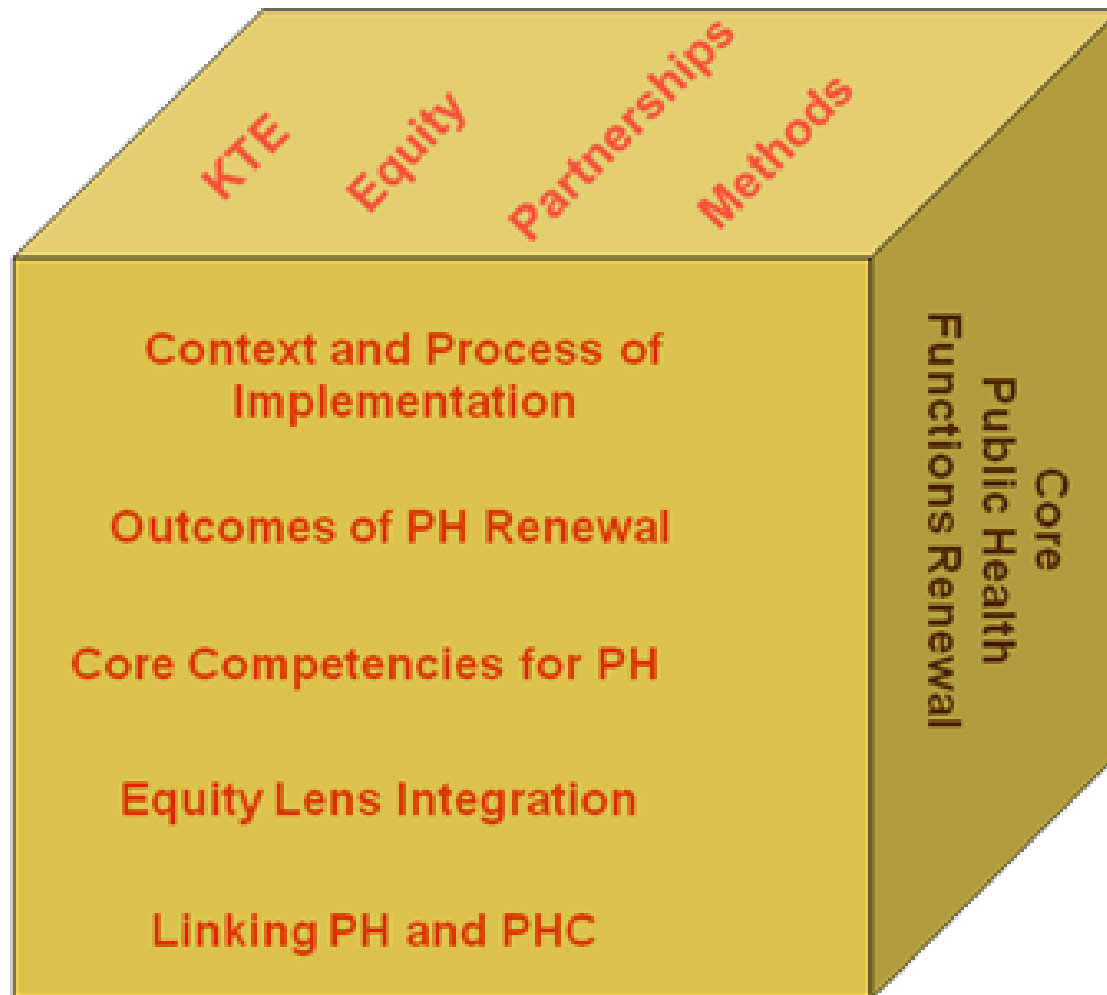
## **PHABC**

Michael Barnes

# CPHFRI: Program of Research Population Health Interventions

- **Population health interventions** are policies or programs within the health sector or between sectors that have the potential to impact health at the population level.
- PHIs are often provided through public health services, or they may involve collaboration across sectors.
- The defining characteristic is population health impact.

# CPHRI Program of Research



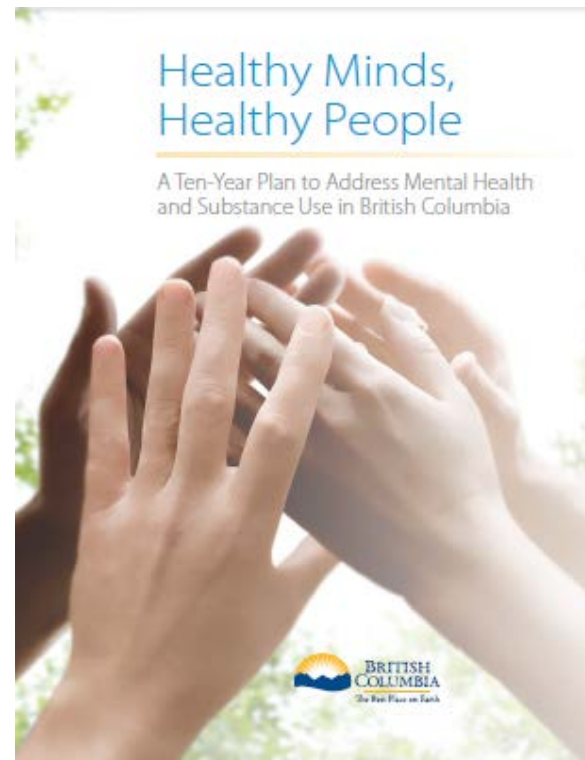
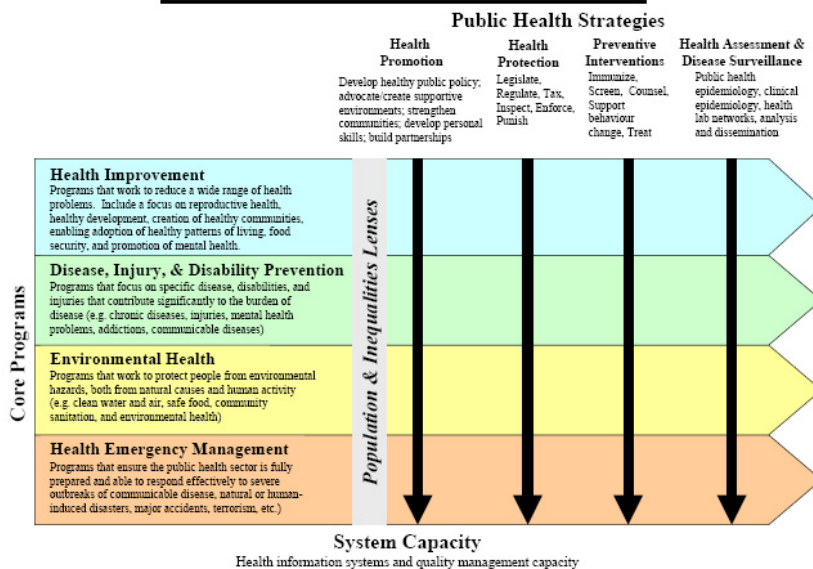
# Purpose of ELPH

The purpose of this program of research is to guide and inform learning about the integration of an equity lens in public health to contribute knowledge of health inequities reduction.

As an exemplar, we will examine the integration of an equity lens in the promotion of mental health and reducing the harms of substance use.

# Population Health Interventions in ELPH Program of Research

## CORE FUNCTIONS FRAMEWORK



# ELPH Grant Goals

- Identify and understand the **contextual influences** that promote uptake of health equity as a priority in the health system;
- Explore the **engagement** of public health with other sectors in health inequities reduction in mental health promotion and prevention of harms of substance use;
- Critically analyze the theoretical and practical utility of existing **equity tools**;
- Develop a theoretical understanding of the **ethical issues** encountered by public health practitioners in their efforts to reduce health inequities for those impacted by social disadvantages.



# Four Inter-Related Studies over 5 Years

1. Assessing health equity priorities and strategies
2. Intersectoral collaboration for health inequities reduction
3. Assessing the theoretical relevance and practical utility of health equity tools
4. Power and ethics in public health practice

# Study 3: Assessing the Theoretical Relevance and Practical Utility of Health Equity Tools

1. What health equity tools are available?
2. What is the theoretical relevance of available tools?
3. What is the practical utility of available tools?

# Definition of an Equity Tool

A document that

- **assesses** the degree to which health equity is included in policies or programs (eg. health equity audits), or
- **measures** health equity, or
- **promotes** the inclusion of health equity in policy or programs.

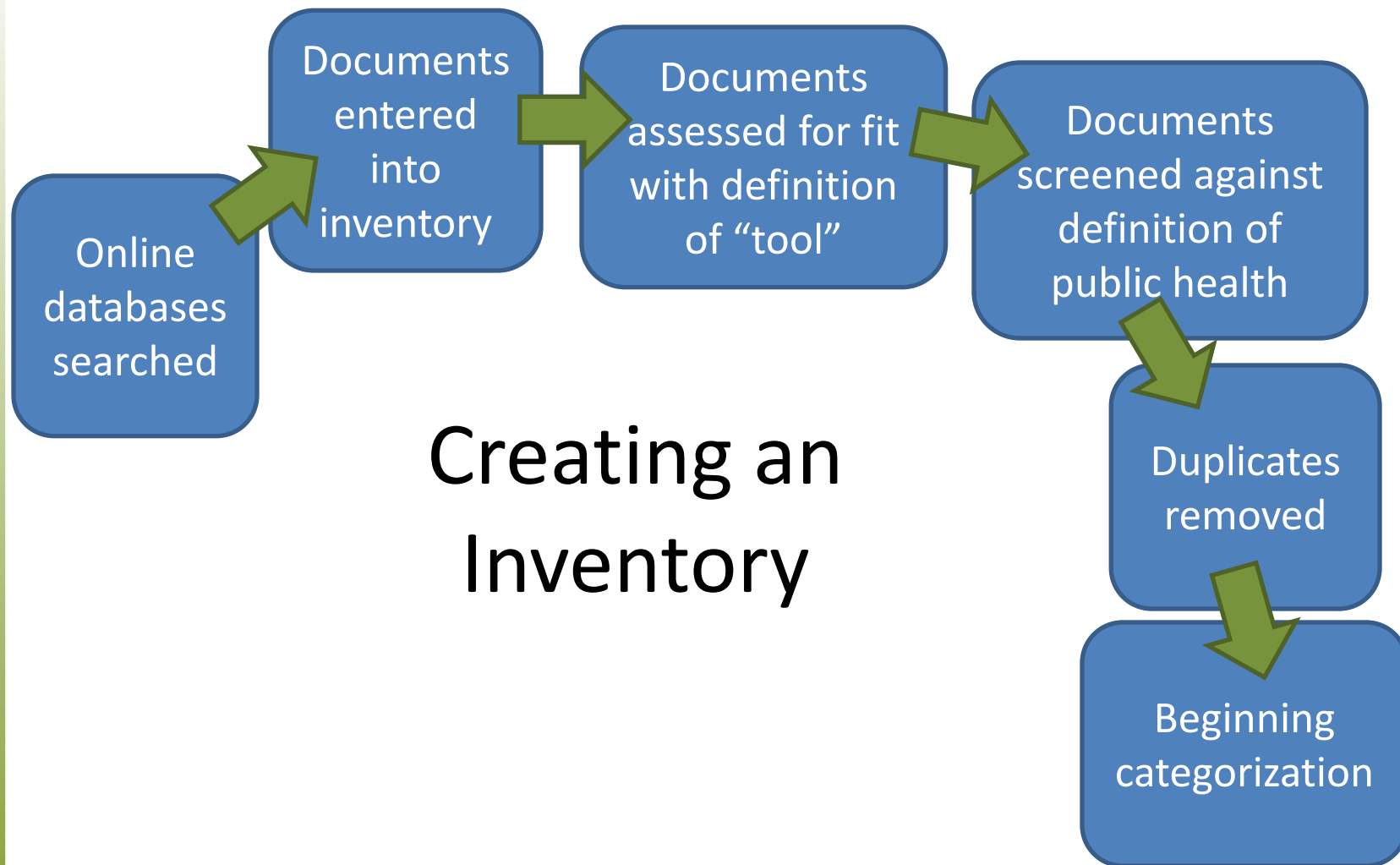
# Document Search Process

- Initial search of online databases using terms related to *health equity*, *health disparity* and *health inequalities* yielded over 500 documents.

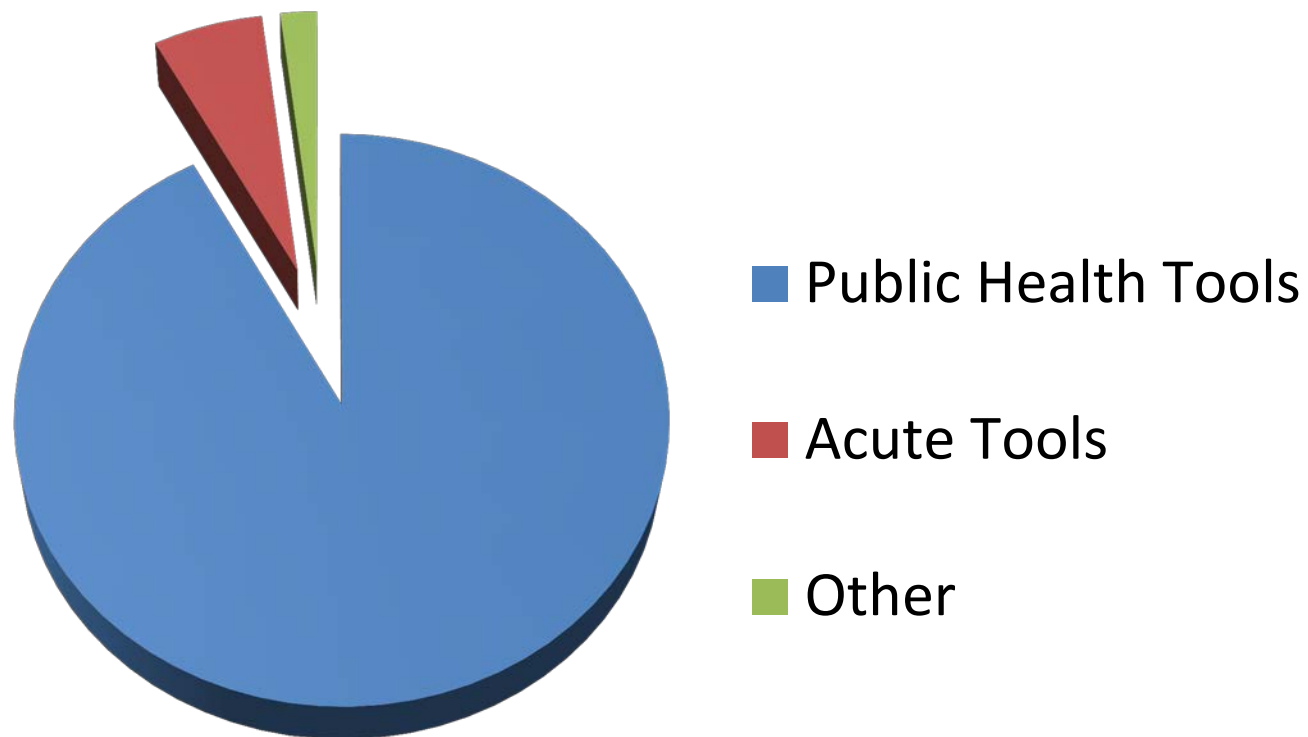
## Search Terms

A word cloud of search terms related to equity and health disparities. The words are arranged in a cluster, with 'health' being the largest and most central. Other prominent words include 'disparities', 'inequalities', 'disparity', 'inequality', 'equity', 'assessment', 'framework', 'lens', 'model', 'audit', 'gauge', 'guide', 'impact', 'tool', 'checklist', 'focused', and 'model'. The words are in various shades of blue and green, and their sizes vary, indicating their relative frequency or importance in the search results.

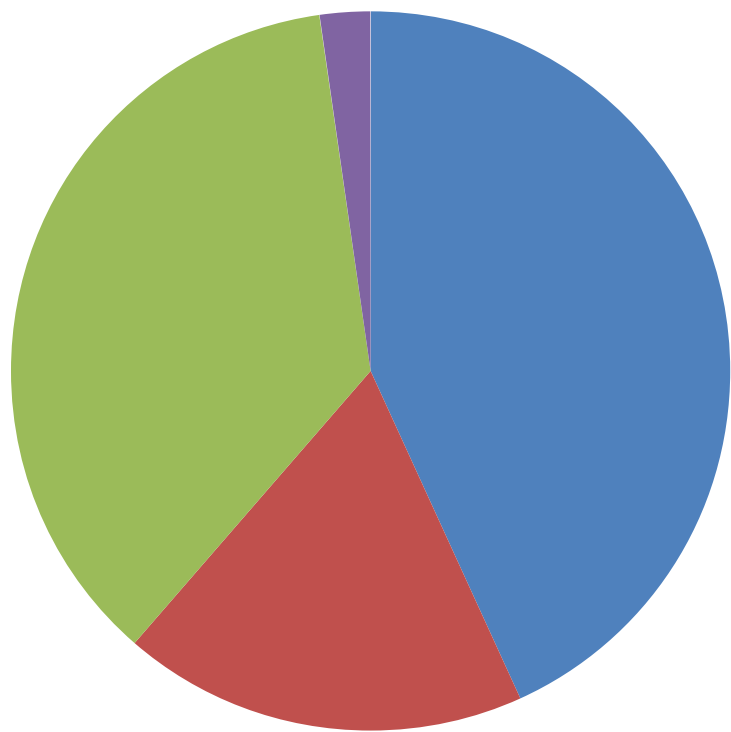
impact  
disparity health  
inequality guide gauge  
tool assessment  
equity checklist inequalities audit  
framework lens  
model



## Unique Tools by Area



# Beginning Categorization



- Assessing Policies and Programs
- Measuring Health Equity
- Conceptual Orientation and General Guidance
- Other



# Assessing Theoretical Relevance

Does the tool address:

1. Social conditions that shape health outcomes
2. Determinants of inequities (e.g. racism, gender bias, and so on).
3. social, historical and cultural roots of disadvantage
4. distribution of power in both the production of inequities and policy processes

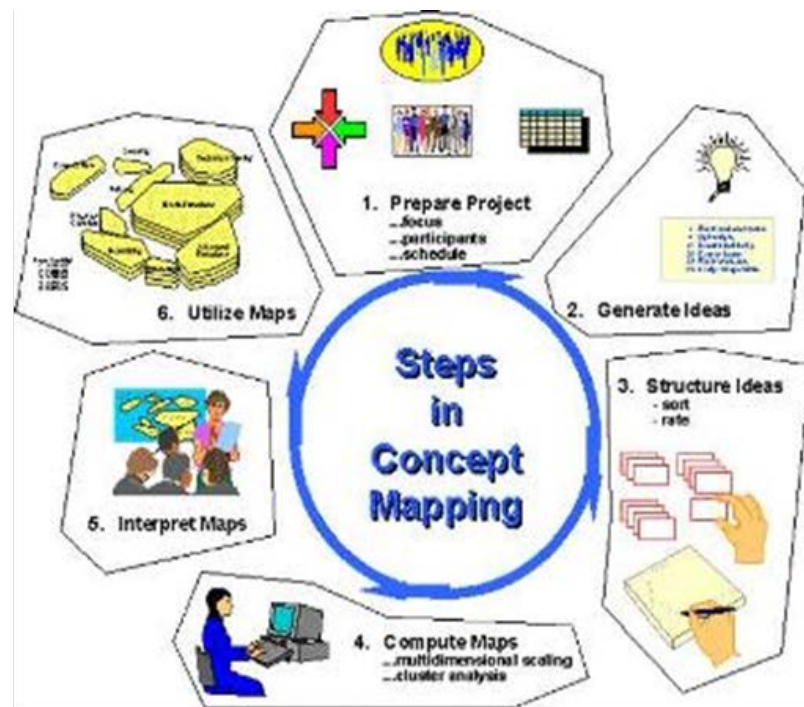
(Pauly et al., under review)

# Theoretical Guidance

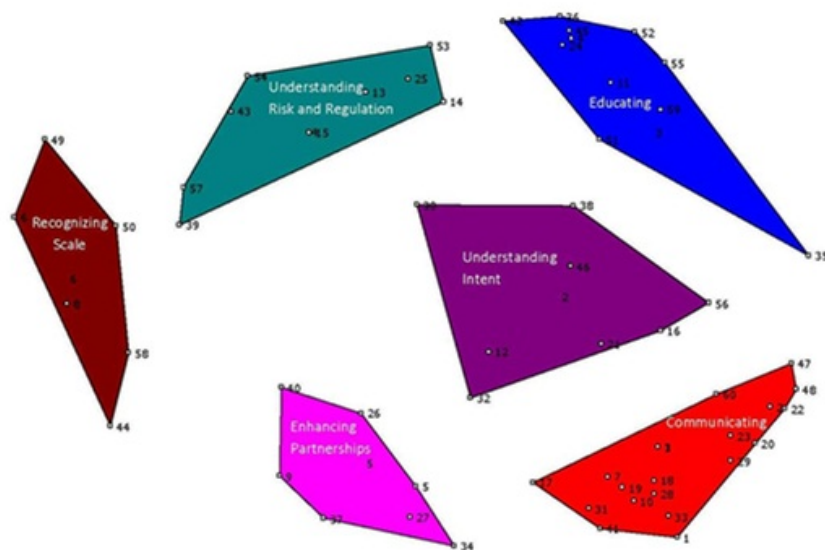
1. What theoretical perspective(s) underpin the tool?
2. Are the theoretical underpinnings clear?
3. What tools are theoretically suited to different levels/spheres of application?

# Assessing Practical Utility

Concept Mapping with public health practitioners engaged in developing and implementing health authority health equity plans, promotion of mental health, and prevention of substance use programs



# Assessing Practical Utility



This will lead to the development of a set of criteria (generated by practitioners) for assessing the practical utility of equity tools.

## How Practitioners Can Use This Research

- Year 3 workshop on health equity tools rated for theoretical relevance and practical utility.
- Practitioners will have both produced and be able to use knowledge of equity tools and identify the best tool for what they want to do.

# Funders



Public Health  
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Agence de santé  
publique du Canada

# Website

[www.uvic/elph](http://www.uvic/elph)