

**REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR  
NATIONAL DRUG  
OBSERVATORIES IN THE  
CARIBBEAN**



**THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS  
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Georgetown, Guyana**

# Presentation Outline

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- Introduction, Influencers, Challenges
- The Policy Cycle

# Policy

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- A set of principles guiding decision-making
  - **Public Policy**: policy of governments
  - **Health Policy**: health promotion, health protection, health services (plus...)

# The Basis of Policy

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- **Values** - Important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable
  
- **Ideology** - System of ideas that explains and lends legitimacy to actions and beliefs of a social, religious, political, or corporate entity.
  
- **Politics**
  
- **Evidence**
  - Not usually the main influence on policy, but worth fighting for

# Influencers of Policy Making in Government

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# Policy Instruments

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How are these policy decisions reflected?

- Legislation and regulations
- Taxation and financial incentives
- Information and coordination
- Provision of direct service

# Challenges to the Use of Evidence-Based Approach

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- ❑ Speed: to be seen as acting, policy makers are forced to process information quickly
- ❑ Superficiality: Policymakers have to cover many thematic fields and cannot have in-depth knowledge about every issue
- ❑ Spin: Perception is important. Perception guides political decisions
- ❑ Secrecy: Media raises the question of how to relate to evidence that is secret
- ❑ Scientific ignorance: There is growing suspicion towards science and scientist among the public, which will impact policies

From: Vincent Cable speaking on 'Evidence and UK Politics', at Does Evidence Matter?  
ODI meeting series (2004)

# Policy Cycle

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- 1. Assessment of situation of interest
- 2. Assessment of potential interventions
- 3. Policy choices
- 4. Policy implementation
- 5. Policy evaluation



# 1. Assessment of Situation of Interest

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- Demography, population dynamics
- Descriptive epidemiology:
  - Measure the status of the situation of interest
  - Identify trends and patterns
  - Assess risks
  - Assess needs
  - Identify priority targets for policy development
- Analytical epidemiology
  - Individual-level and population-level causes

## 2. Assessment of Potential Interventions

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- Explore the Issue
- Identifying the Drivers and Decision Makers
- Clarifying the Context and Justifying the Intervention

# Exploring the Issue

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- Identify the issue
  - Clearly outline the issue
  
- Why is it a problem? What are the underlying causes of the problem?
  - Ensure the problem is real
  - Potential solutions can be identified and action are focused where they have most impact
  
- What groups does the issue impact upon?
  - All persons likely to be affected by a policy should have the opportunity to engage in the development of policy

# Identifying the Drivers of Change

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- ❑ Identifying all stakeholders
- ❑ Who has decision making authority on the issue?
- ❑ What is/are the driver(s) for intervention?
- ❑ Who has the authority to intervene?
- ❑ How does the issue relate to strategic priorities and goals?
- ❑ Is there a case for intervention?

# Is there a Case for Intervention

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- Alignment with strategic priorities and goals?
- How will the issue be addressed?
  - Legislative
  - Education
  - Encouragement of voluntary change
- Is there a case for intervention?

# 3. Policy Choices

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- Project impact of potential interventions on the situation of interest in the population
  - Computer simulations of different interventions
- Assist the process of consensus development

# Gather Evidence

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- Sources of evidence- local, international, expert
  - Address the following:
    - What is the relevant information/research available
    - How has the issue been addressed elsewhere
    - Key trends and future development impacting the issue
- Analyze the evidence
  - Assess
    - Current position
    - Relative position
    - How the issue will likely develop in the future
      - If something is done
      - If nothing is done

# What Data for What Decision(s)?

<b>Component</b>	<b>Types of Data</b>	<b>Sample questions</b>
Needs Assessment	Consequence and consumption data	What is the nature of substance abuse in the defined area (i.e., magnitude, time trends, populations affected)?
Capacity Building	Resource, Readiness, Other Capacity Data	What capacities exist to address priority problems? Where are the gaps?
Implementation	Service Tracking Implementation Data	What strategies have been shown to be effective to address problem X and/or the factors that contribute to it?
Evaluation & Monitoring	Performance Data Surveillance data on consequences and consumption	Are the strategies being implemented changing what they target? How are they changing?



# Identifying Policy Options

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- Engage stakeholders
- Develop a team to identify potential interventions
- Multi-disciplinary – mix of skills, experience and representation
  - Skills wanted – expertise in area, economic, statistical,
- Orient everyone to the criteria
  - Things the policy must do
  - Things the policy must not do
  - Things the policy could do
- Brainstorm

# Identifying Policy Options (Cont.)

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- Initiate discussions about ideas and recommendations
  - All ideas and recommendations should be compiled from each team member
  - Each member is asked to briefly state one item and present it
  - Each member ranks all options using criteria for evaluation
- Assess risks associated with each idea

# Assessing Risks

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## **Identify:**

- ❑ The risks that are associated with the option
- ❑ The sectors the risk impacts
- ❑ Impact on sustainable development – social and economic
- ❑ Consequences (negative and positive)
- ❑ Chance of risk occurring

## **Ask:**

- ❑ Can the policy be amended to minimize the risk/consequences from occurring ?

# Criteria for Prioritization

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## □ Impact

- What is the magnitude, reach and distribution of benefit and burden
- What population will benefit
- What population will be negatively affected
- Are there gaps in the evidence base

## □ Feasibility

- How likely will the policy be implemented?
- Consider perception of community – social, educational and cultural perspectives
- What are the resource, capacity and technical needs
- How much time is needed?
- Cost

## □ Risks

- What are the risks
- Can they be minimized

# 4. Policy Implementation

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- Help to set targets for the chosen policies
  - To focus potential options we need to know what success will look like
    - Goals: Identify the goals you want. This is the rationale for the policy
    - Objectives: list indicators SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound)
    - Outcomes: list the long term impacts/What will result from the intervention
  
- Inform needs-based resource allocation for health services
  
- Guide development of information systems

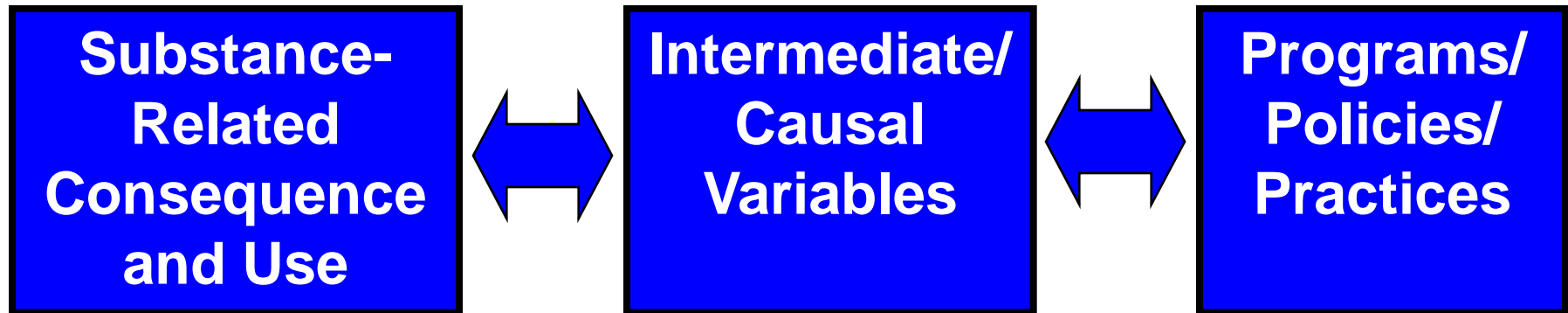
# 5. Policy Evaluation

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- Assess the impacts of policies
- Monitor future health

# Example: Outcome-Based Prevention

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Must address the problem identified

Must address the causal factor(s) believed to be involved

# Substance Use Consumption Patterns

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- ❑ Overall Consumption
- ❑ Acute, heavy consumption
- ❑ Consumption in risky situations
  - Drinking and driving
  - Smoking around young children
- ❑ Consumption by high risk groups
  - Youth, College Students, Older Groups
  - Pregnant women



# Intermediate/Causal Factors (Examples)

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## □ Community Level Factors

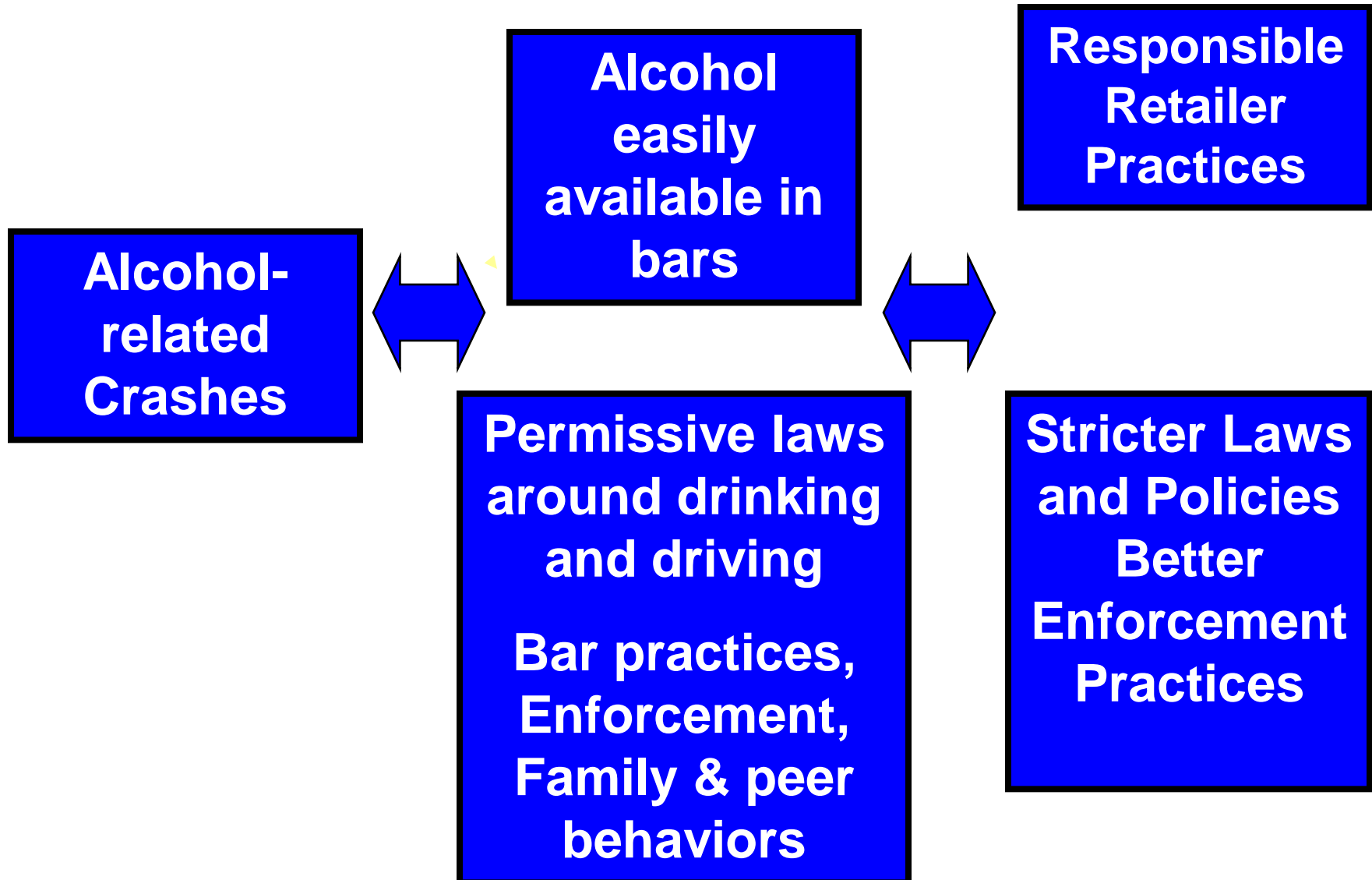
- Availability of substances (price, retail, social)
- Promotion of substances
- Social Norms regarding use
- Enforcement of Policies and Social Norms

## □ Individual Level Factors

- Risk Factors
- Protective Factors

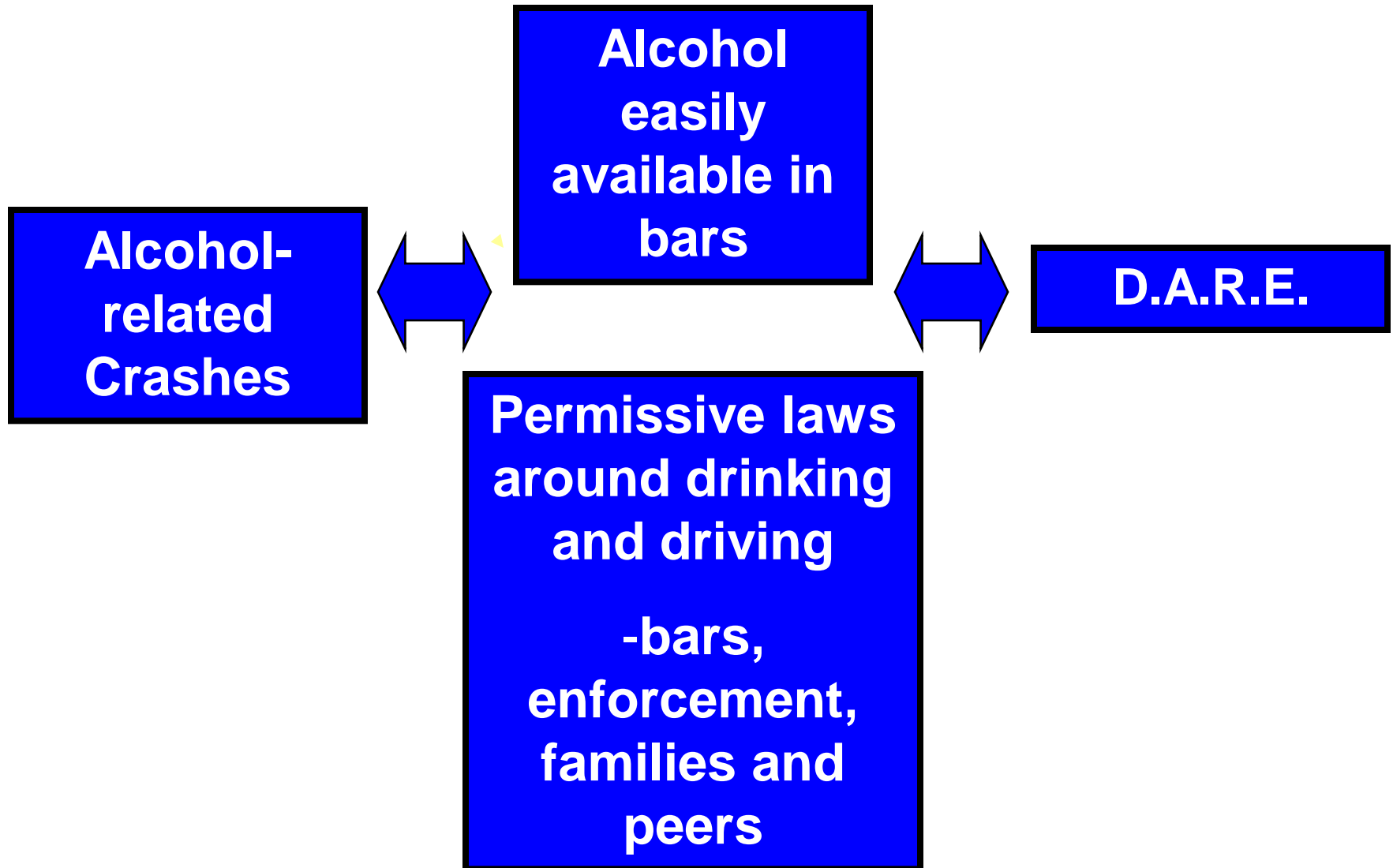
# Strategy Matches **Problem** and **Cause**

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# Strategy Does Not Match Problem and Cause

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# Intervention Strategies

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Providing  
Information

Teaching Skills

Giving Support

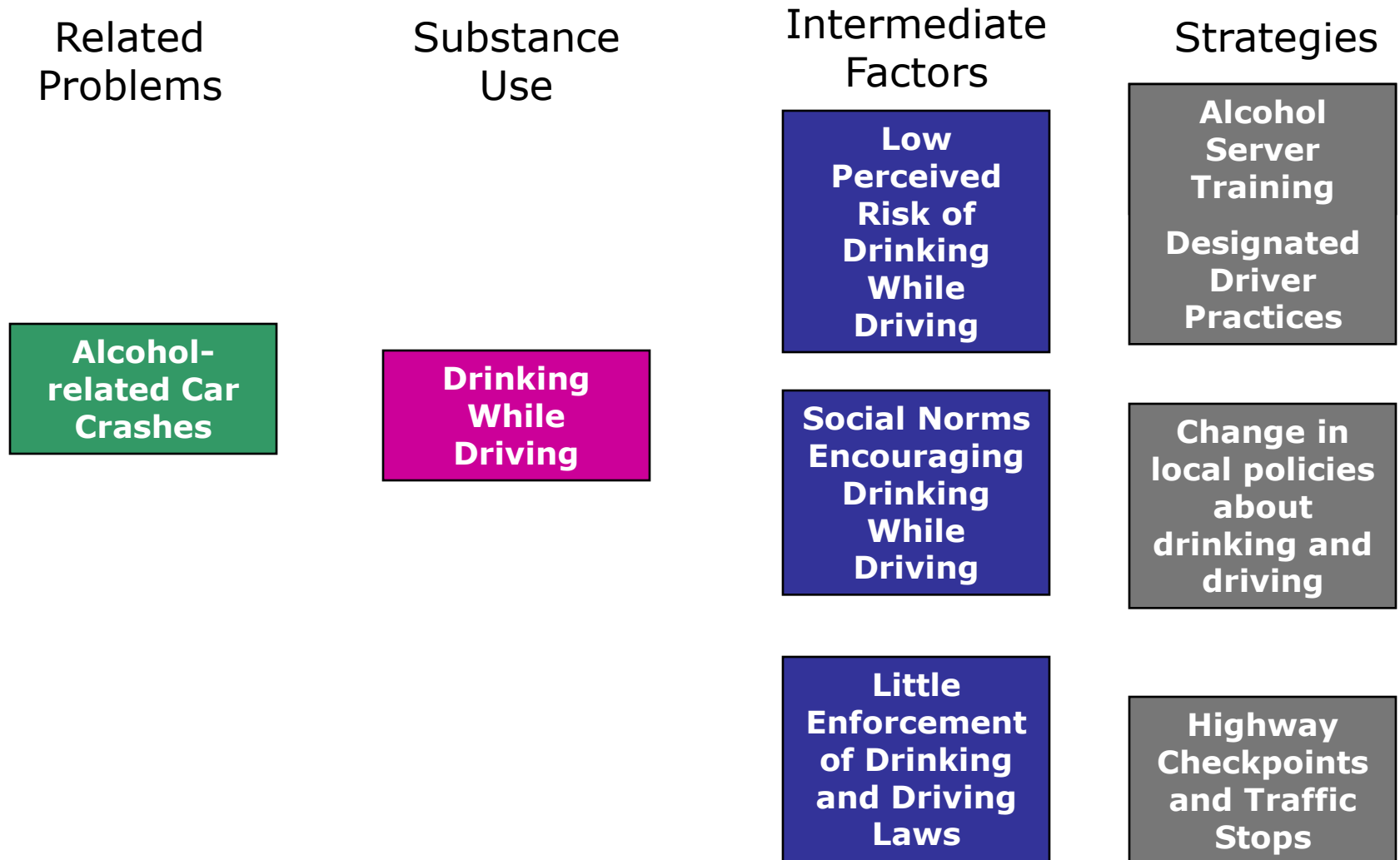
Incentives and  
Penalties

Increasing Access –  
Lowering Barriers

Changing Policies /  
Regulations

Changing the  
Environment

# Comprehensive Analysis for Planning



# Conclusion

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**Situational Analysis**



**Develop Options**



**Prioritize Policy Options**



**Direction/ACT!!!!**

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**THANK YOU**

Questions later???