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SUBSTANCE USE AND FEAR OF STIGMA AMONG GENDER AND SEXUAL MINORITY INDIVIDUALS

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CLARK
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ACBS World Conference

Outline

- Background
- Present Study
- Results
- Implications



15 mins

Disclosure: No Support



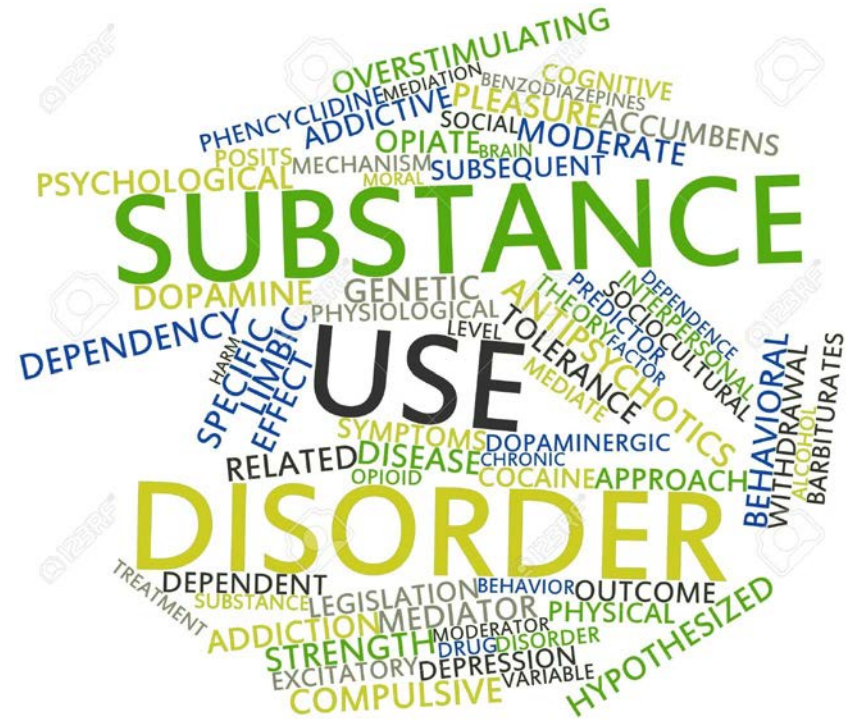
Madeline Benz

- I have not received and will not receive any commercial support related to this presentation or the work presented in this presentation.



Background: Costs and Prevalence

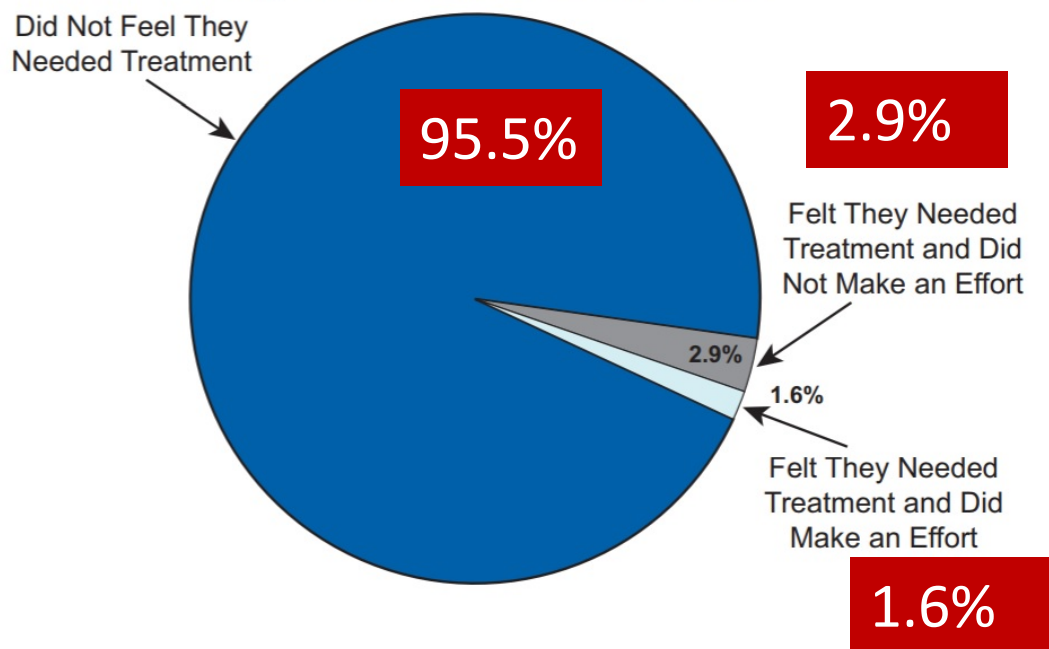
- Problematic alcohol use leads to 3.3 million deaths each year (WHO)
- At least 15.3 million individuals have drug use disorders (WHO)
- Substance use may peak among ages 18–25 years (World Drug Report 2018)



Background: Help-Seeking (SAMHSA, 2013)



Figure 7.10 Past Year Perceived Need for and Effort Made to Receive Specialty Treatment among Persons Aged 12 or Older Needing But Not Receiving Treatment for Illicit Drug or Alcohol Use: 2013



20.2 Million Needing But Not Receiving Treatment for Illicit Drug or Alcohol Use

Gender/Sexual Minorities (GSM)

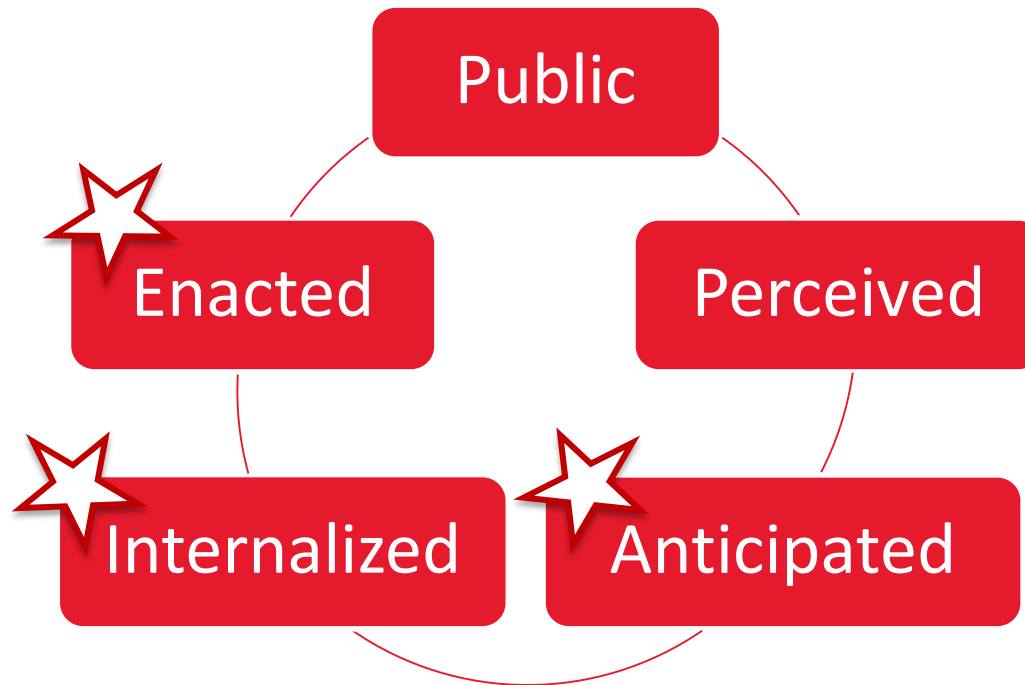


- Among individuals who identify as a gender or sexual minority (GSM):
- More substance use & less help-seeking



Question: Why these discrepancies?

- Goffman (1963): Stigma is ‘an attribute that is deeply discrediting...turning a whole and usual person to a tainted and discounted one’



Using this model for GSM stigma:

“If they wanted to, they could accept their gender”

“There is something wrong with me”

“I’m a sinner”

“They are immoral, so I can’t treat with respect”

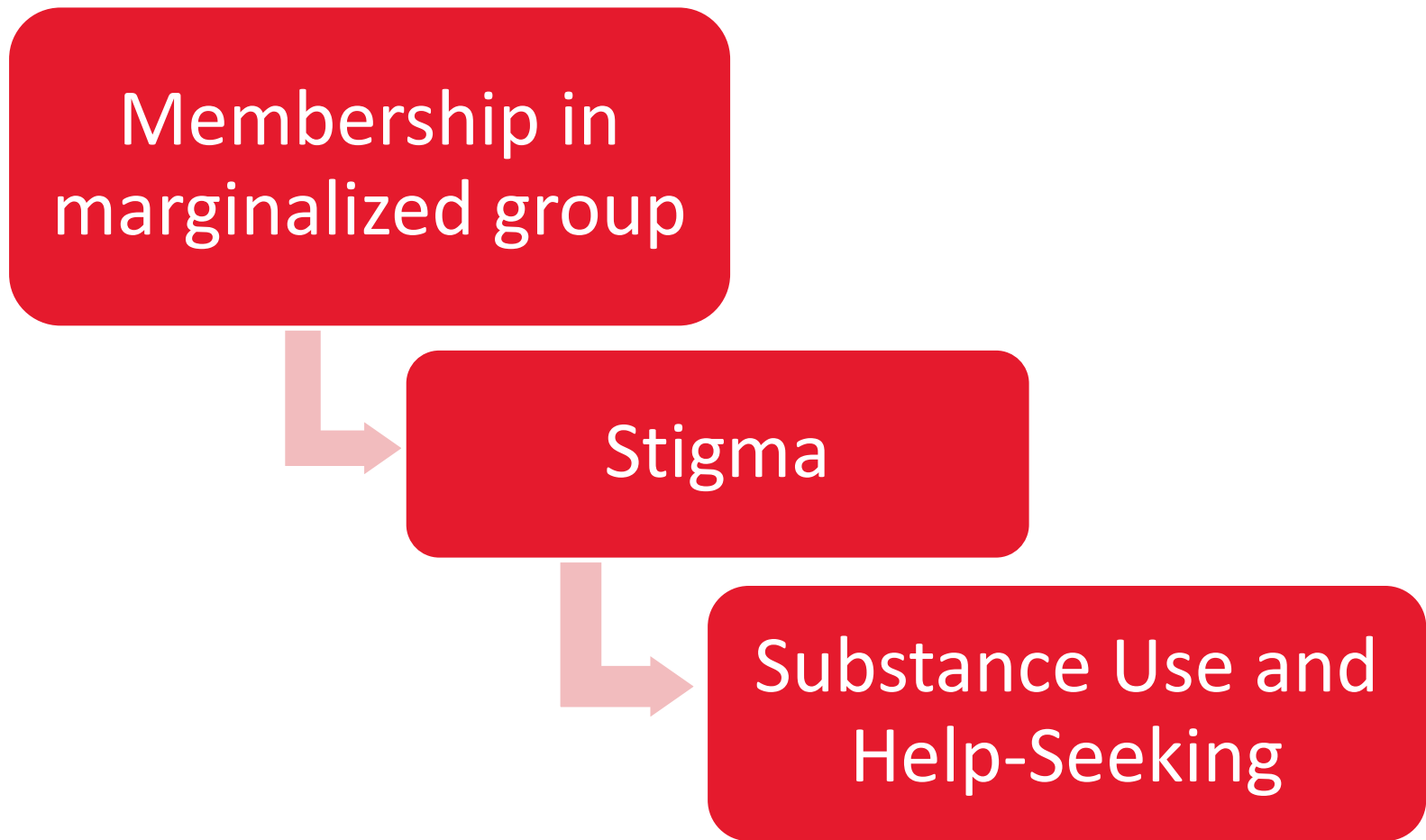
“Being gay is a choice”



“I don’t want to treat a tranny”



Minority Stress Model (Meyer, 2003)



The Present Study



Objective

- To examine the impact of **fear of gender/sexual minority-related stigma** on **substance use severity** and **help-seeking intentions and behaviors** in a community sample of young adults

Hypotheses

- **Fear of Gender/Sexual Minority Stigma** will predict:
 1. substance use severity
 2. intentions to seek treatment
 3. previous help-seeking behaviorabove and beyond gender/sexual minority stigma



Methods

- Study design:
 - Subset of larger study sample (n=168 full sample)
 - Anonymous, online survey using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk)
 - Criteria:
 - 18-24 years old
 - score of 8 or above on the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Task OR score of 6 or above on the Drug Abuse Screening Test
 - National sample of individuals with a history of substance use problems

*Language note: GSM stigma = gender/sexual minority stigma
SU = substance use



Participants

Table 1. Participant Demographics ($n = 67$)

Gender Identity

Male

31.3%

Female

53.7%

Trans binary/nonbinary

13.4%

Sexual Orientation

Lesbian/Gay

26.8%

Bisexual

64.2%

Queer/Other

9.0%





Participants (continued)

Table 1 (continued). Participant Demographics ($n = 67$)

Age (<i>SD</i>)	22.85 (1.23)
Race	62.7% White
Marital Status	67.2% Single
Employed Full Time	56.7%
Degree	47.8% some college
Income 10,000 – 49,000	49.3%



Methods: Measures

Substance Use Severity

- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Task (AUDIT)
- Drug Abuse Screening Task (DAST)

Stigma

- Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS)
- Adapted EDS

Help-seeking

- History of help-seeking (professional or non-professional)
- Intentions to seek help in the next year (professional or non-pro)



Measures

Table 2. Sample Characteristics	Full Sample n=168	Only GSM n=67	Non-GSM N=101	
Measure		Mean (<i>SD</i>)		
AUDIT	17.15 (7.57)	15.46 (7.01)	18.23 (7.75)	+
DAST	8.18 (6.31)	9.01 (6.36)	7.63 (6.25)	
Intentions to seek help for SU	37.98 (19.72)	33.43 (15.37)	40.93 (21.66) p<.01	-
Measure		Percentage		
Sought help for SU	40.4%	32.8%	45.2%	-
Overdose	21.1%	25.4%	18.3%	+



Measures

Table 2 (continued). Sample Characteristics ($n = 67$)

Measure	Mean (<i>SD</i>)	
AUDIT	15.46 (7.01)	Intermediate severity/high risk
DAST	9.01 (6.36)	
EDS (GSM stigma)	28.42 (11.71)	> Middle of scale
Fear of EDS (fear of GSM stigma)	19.93 (8.76)	
Intentions to seek help for SU	33.43 (15.37)	Low intentions
Measure	Percentage	
Sought help for SU	32.8%	
Overdose	25.4%	



Results: Bivariate Correlations

Table 3. Correlations (*n* = 67)

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. AUDIT	-	.42**	.25**	.16	.39**	.31*
2. DAST		-	.09	.35**	.25*	.24
3. Intentions to HS			-	.28*	.26*	.32**
4. Sought Help				-	.32**	.28*
5. Fear of GSM Stigma					-	.78**
6. GSM Stigma						-



Results: Fear of Stigma and SU Severity

$F(2,64) = 5.83, p = .005; r^2 = 15.4\%$

Table 4. Multiple Regression: Predictors of AUDIT Scores among GSM ($n = 66$)

	Variable	B	β	p
Block 2	GSM Stigma	.01	.02	.92
	Fear of GSM Stigma	.30	.38	.04



Results: Fear of Stigma and Help-Seeking Intentions

$F(3,63) = 3.18, p = .03; r^2 = 13.2\%$

Table 5. Multiple Regression: Predictors of Intentions to Seek Help among GSM ($n = 66$)

	Variable	B	β	p
Block 3	AUDIT	.39	.18	.17
	GSM Stigma	.40	.31	.12
	Fear of GSM Stigma	-.08	-.05	.81

Results: Fear of Stigma and Past Help-Seeking

$\chi^2(3) = 12.55, p = .006$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = .238$

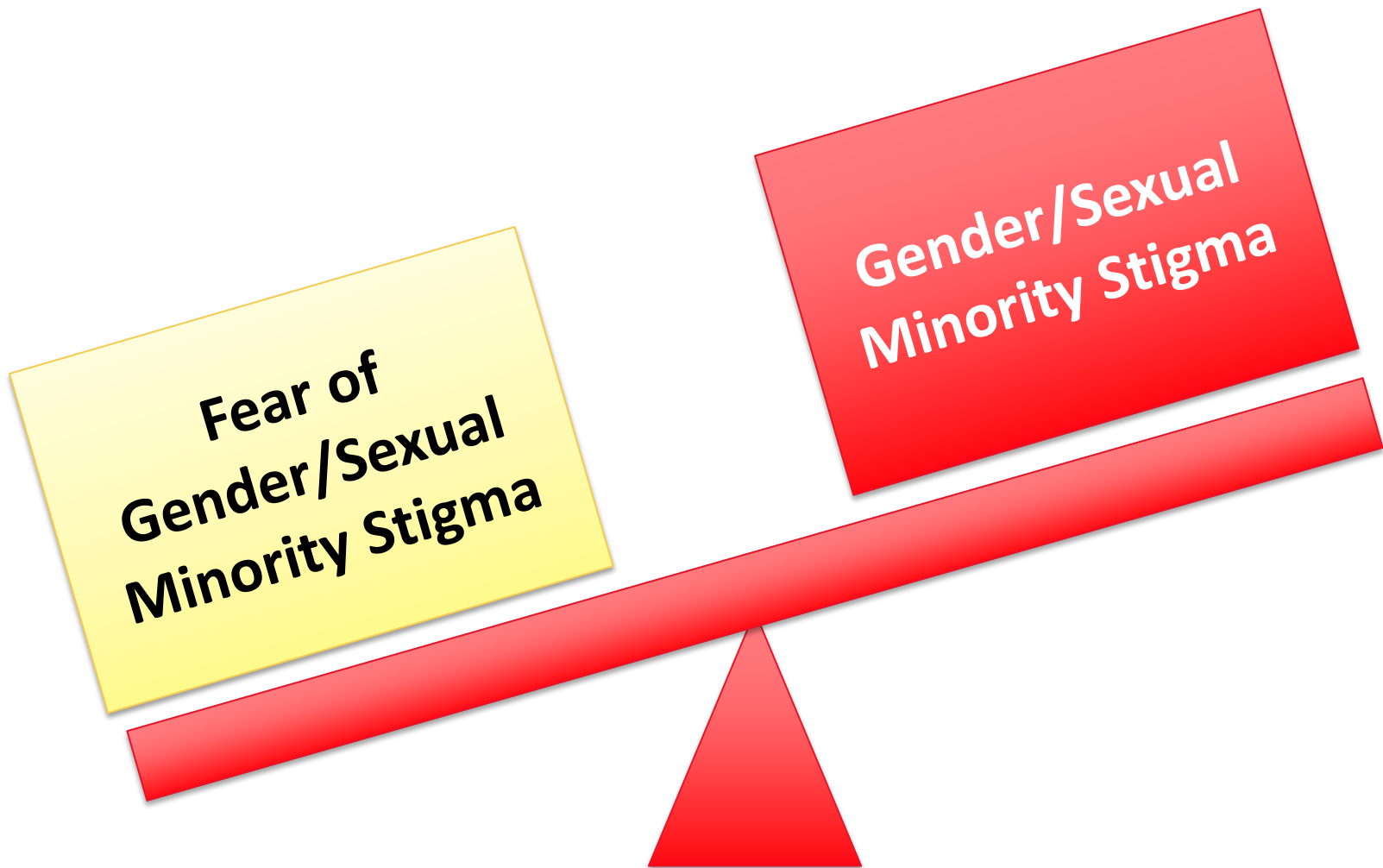
Correctly classified 68.7%



Table 6. Logistic Regression: Predictors of Past Help-Seeking Behavior Among GSM ($n = 66$)

	Variable	B	Exp(B)	p
Block 3	DAST	.11	1.11	.02
	GSM Stigma	.01	1.01	.85
	Fear of GSM Stigma	.06	1.06	.25

Discussion of Main Findings: SU Severity



Discussion of Main Findings: SU Severity

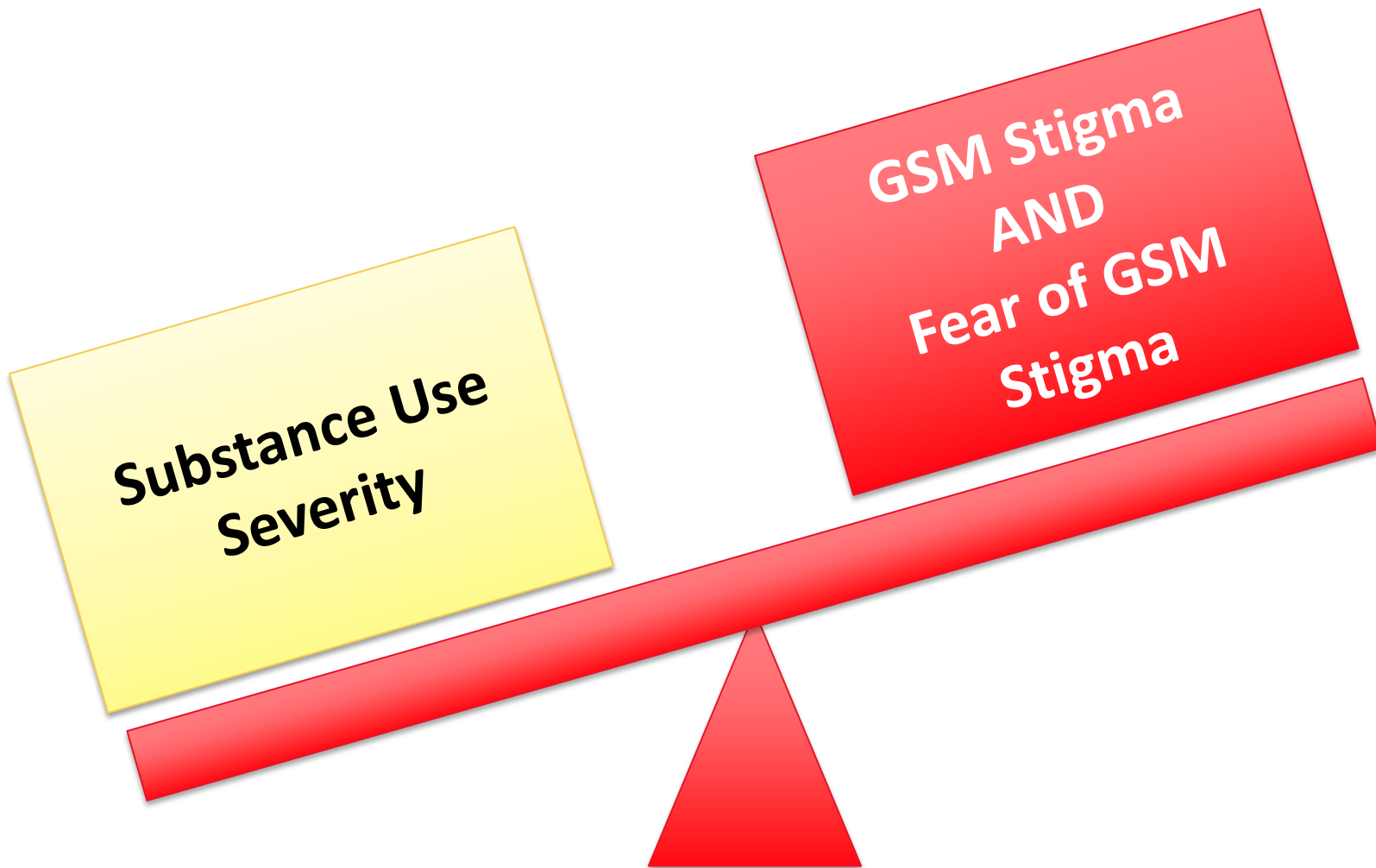


**More Fear
of GSM
Stigma**



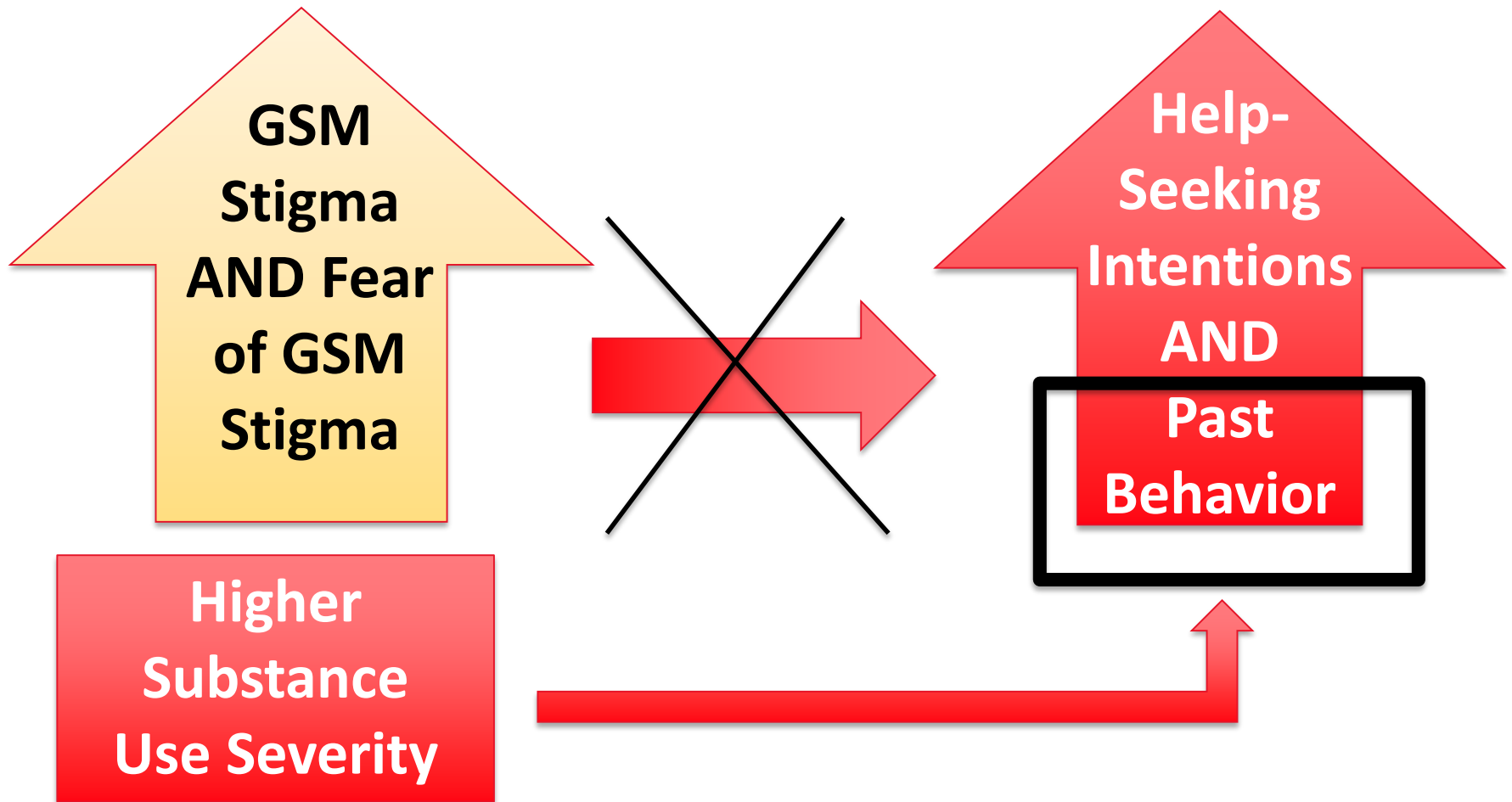
**Increase
Alcohol
Use
Severity**

Discussion of Main Findings: Help-Seeking





Discussion of Main Findings: Help-Seeking





Strengths and Limitations

- Non-clinical sample
- Fear of stigma
- Intentions to seek help does not always lead to behavior
- Small sample size



Key Takeaways

“Stigma” overall may not always be a barrier to treatment seeking



Need to understand the nuances and function

Fear of Stigma may play a role in Substance use severity



Need to explore different avenues of influence

Research and Clinical Implications



Research

- need to measure both **experience of stigma** AND **reactions to stigma**
- May help develop **strategies to increase treatment-seeking**

Clinical

- certain reactions to stigma may lead to increased SU severity
- Understanding reactions to stigma may help with treatment plan

THANK YOU!

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