Close to the Street: Ethics of Access to Health Care

- Ethnographic methodology
- Informed by social constructionism, critical and feminist theory

- Participant observation/Interviews
  - Approx 200 hours of field work in Three settings (2 CHC’s, 1 ED)
  - 24 formal interviews
Climate of Distrust

- Reluctance to Access Healthcare
- Loss of Faith in the System
- Surviving the Streets
- Culture of Fixing
Forging linkages of trust in a climate of distrust is a central feature of enhancing access to healthcare for those who are street involved.
Linkages in the Chain of Trust

• Developing Trusting Relationships Over Time

• Linking to a Climate of Trust

• Extending the Chain of Trust

Building interpersonal and system trust over time
Developing Trusting Relationships Over Time

• Respect
  - “I just want a doctor that respects me and treats me like a person”

• Accepting without Judging
  - “Like you know (the street nurse) accepts the fact that I’m a junkie and I’m going to be a junkie the rest of my life.”
Developing Trusting Relationships over Time

• Outreach/Reaching Out
  - “But we have to do outreach. Because if you don’t do outreach, you’re missing all these people.”

• Harm Reduction
  - “You’re figuring out who they are, where they’re at at moments, and how to work together. So, you meet whatever few little goals you have even if you know, a good night’s sleep that night. It’s not about telling them what’s good for them. And so that definitely is absolutely relevant in my mind about what I think/see as harm reduction everywhere.”
Linking to a Climate of Trust

• “So sometimes, just initiating that contact and bringing them down. Then they put a face to [the counselor] if they meet him.”

• “Everyone who works from the front staff to the [counselor], we all have our own role to play….and the other people to fall back on.”
Forging Linkages: Extending the Chain of Trust

Nurses acted as ‘advocates’ and helped to facilitate access for individuals by forging linkages with other healthcare providers, community agencies and hospitals.