

The Importance of Social Capital

Al Condeluci, PhD

United Cerebral Palsy of Pittsburgh,
Pennsylvania, USA

Social Capital

- Refers to relationships we develop and grow within the context of the various communities we join or associate with.
- What makes these relationships unique are that they support or prop us up in areas we are not strong or capable

The Magic Wand

- If you could wish for 3 things for yourself or for someone you love, what would they be?

Top Answers

- Healthfulness
- Happiness
- Longevity

And all are tied to – Social Capital

- QUITE SIMPLY, THE MORE SOCIAL CAPITAL YOU HAVE, THE MORE HEALTHFULNESS, HAPPINESS, AND LONGEVITY YOU HAVE!

BUT THERE'S MORE...

Social Capital is also Related to:

- Tolerance
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Compassion
- Fairness
- Integrity
- Forgiveness

Social Capital Assists With:

- People getting jobs
- People keeping jobs (getting along)
- Getting around in the community
- Finding places to live
- Receiving food, other needed supports
- Keeping psychologically stable

- Social Capital represents the resources available to individuals through their social affiliations and membership in community organizations. It refers to aspects of social relationships that act as resources for individuals and facilitate collective action for mutual benefit.

“If you belong to no groups and decide to join one, you cut your risk of dying in half over the next year”

Robert Putnam

Major Domains in Relationships

- Acquaintanceships – people we know
- Friendships – people we do things with
- Covenant – people we love

4 Steps to Social Capital

1. Identify our key areas of interest/affinities
2. Find the matching cluster or community
3. Understand how communities behave
4. Find a gatekeeper to acceptance

Gatekeeper

- Is someone who is natural to the community who has some influence on others.
- They might be formal, or informal leaders who set the tone for what others do in the community.

Image Juxtaposition

- When the image of something positive, after positioned next to something negative, devalued, or new to a community, creates a positive effect on that new thing.
- This rise in value can happen with ideas, products, or people.

We must find ways to meet or match
people with gatekeepers in community
– and –
we must become gatekeepers in our
own communities!

Magic of Community

- When similarity overrides difference and creates a bridge.
- Through this bridge people begin to help each other and that synergy creates an upward effect for everyone involved.

The Bridgebuilder

“An old man going a lone highway, came to a
chasm deep and wide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim, that
chasm caused no harm to him.
But when safe on the other side, he built a
bridge to span the tide.”

"Old man, said a pilgrim near, you are wasting
your time building here.

You never again will pass this way, your journey
will end at the close of this day.

You have crossed the chasm deep and wide, why
build you this bridge at even tide.

The builder lifted his old gray head, good friend in
the way that I've come, he said.

There follows after me this day, a youth whose feet
must pass this way. This stream which has been
nothing to me, to the fair-haired youth, a pitfall
might be.

Yes, he to must cross in the twilight dim, good
friend I am building this bridge, for him!"

Social Capital Action Steps

- ✓ Stay as connected with friends and family as possible
- ✓ Achieve better outcomes by including friends and family into your healthcare plan
- ✓ Keep active and involved in your community and with friends and family