

Building Community through our Family Support Centers

featuring Dr. Al Condeluci
Berkshire County Arc, Multicultural Community Services,
Pathlight, and DDS Central/West Region



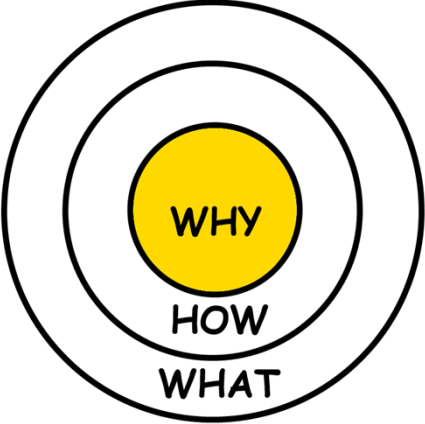
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Today's Agenda

- * Introduction
- * Overview and Key Strategies
- * The Three Pilot Projects
 - * 5 Minute Break
- * Interactive Panel Discussion
- * Final Thoughts and Recommendations

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Background




We understood *why*
The question was *how?*

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The Critical Nature of Social Capital for Families

Al Condeluci, PhD



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What Do Families Want

- * To Participate
- * To Contribute
- * To be Included
- * To be treated with Value
- * To be Safe
- * To be Respected
- * To have lots of Friends – Social Capital

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Social Capital is.....

Friendships and relationships we develop and grow as we become members of various communities.

These relationships actually make our lives better!

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Social Capital creates 3 values:

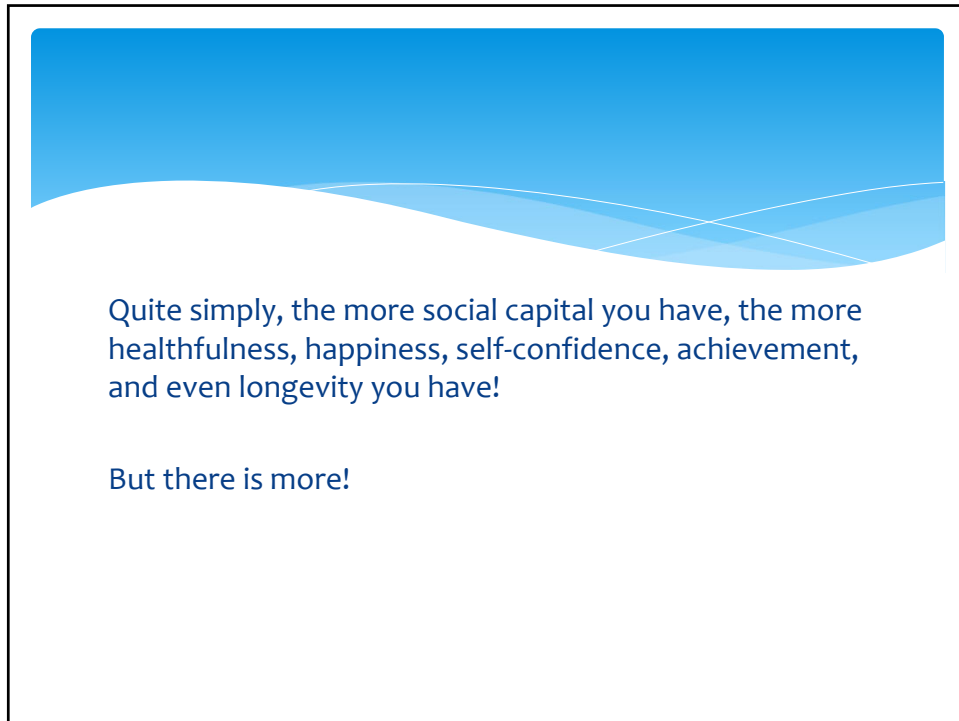
- * Informational – things we learn from friends
- * Emotional – knowing we have friends behind us
- * Instrumental – actual things we get from friends

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Interdependence

Social Capital is best understood from the framework of Interdependence. All people have strengths and weaknesses – Interdependence is when we use our strengths to build relationships that help us in other parts of our lives

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Quite simply, the more social capital you have, the more healthfulness, happiness, self-confidence, achievement, and even longevity you have!

But there is more!

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Social Capital is also related to:

- * Tolerance – giving people a chance
- * Honesty – being truthful
- * Kindness – being nice
- * Compassion – caring about people
- * Fairness – doing the right thing
- * Integrity – being counted on

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Finally, Social Capital assists with

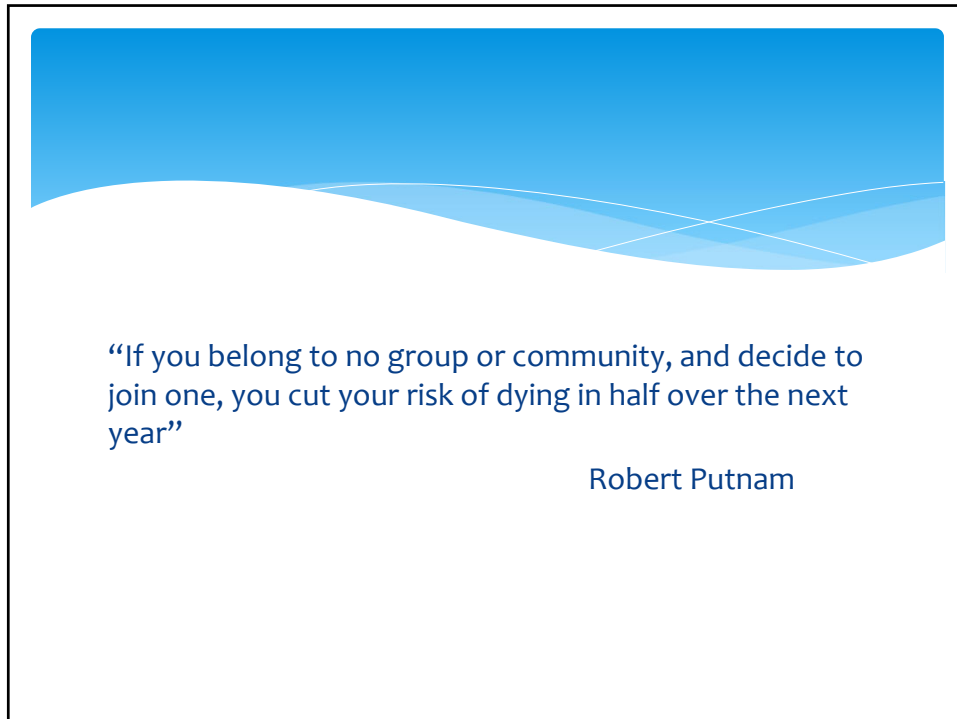
- * People getting jobs
- * People keeping jobs
- * Helping people solve problems
- * People being safe
- * People being psychologically stable
- * People framing their identity/self confidence
- * People advancing/achieving

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“Without friends, the world is a wilderness”

Wadsworth

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

Robert Putnam

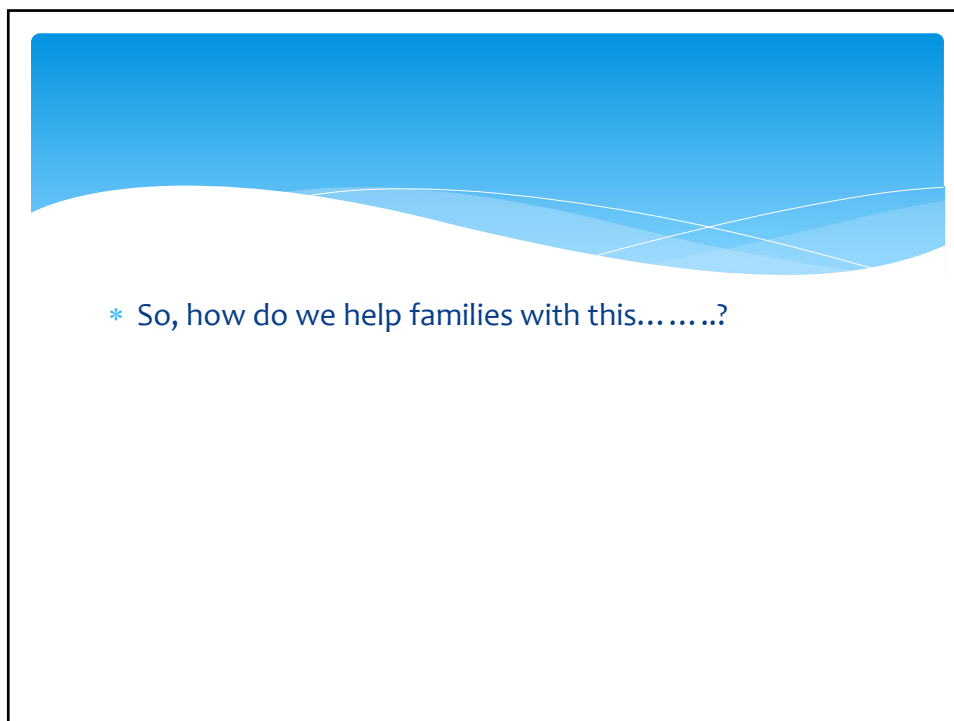
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Where we find Social Capital

- * Family
- * Neighborhood
- * Religious venues
- * Work
- * School
- * Clubs, Groups, and Associations

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Chatham/CLASS/Mamre Findings 2016/17

- * Children with disabilities are less likely to stay connected with others via the internet.
- * Families w/disability are more likely to report not receiving enough support.
- * Children w/disabilities tend to not see their school friends outside of school.
- * It appears that Families w/disability are less likely to get support from other family members.

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Major Reasons for Not Engaging

- * Economics – Disability is expensive and families have less disposable income
- * Logistics – Planning to engage can be complex and have multiple ramifications to consider
- * Stigma – Quite simply, families often do not feel welcomed in the engagement process

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Why

- * It appears that social reactions may be negative
- * Families w/disabilities do not feel as welcomed
- * Families w/disabilities have less disposable dollars
- * The energy/time necessary to engage is burdensome
- * Accessibility of engagement venue
- * Lack of support to assist in engagement
- * Families w/disability are more tired

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The Net Result

We have lost the focus on getting families engaged and have created more Center-based options. These programs are nice, but they do not achieve the generic connections that are not only beneficial to families, but change the attitudes and assumptions of the greater community!

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To this end....

- * We need to renew our commitment to engagement
- * Families need to be supported as they connect
- * Supports need to be both formal and informal
- * We must assist families in developing more social capital

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4 Steps to Social Capital

- * Identify families key areas of interest/affinities
- * Find the matching cluster/venue in community
- * Understand how communities behave
- * Finding a gatekeeper to acceptance

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Gatekeepers

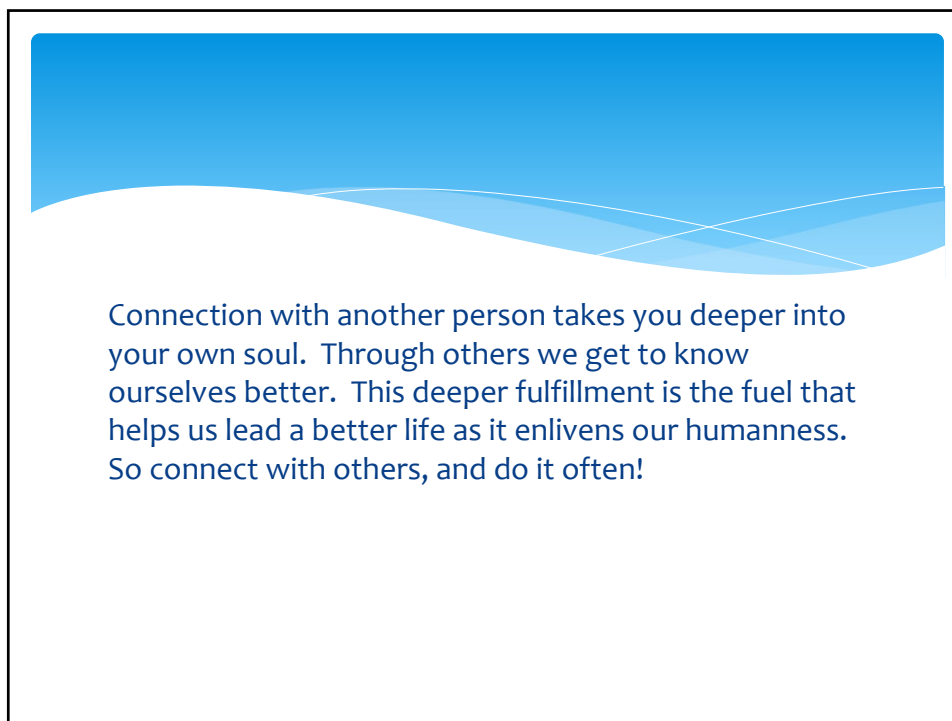
A natural player in a community who has influence on other members. They might be formal or informal players who set the tone for what others do in the community

Key theories – Social Influence/Value juxtaposition

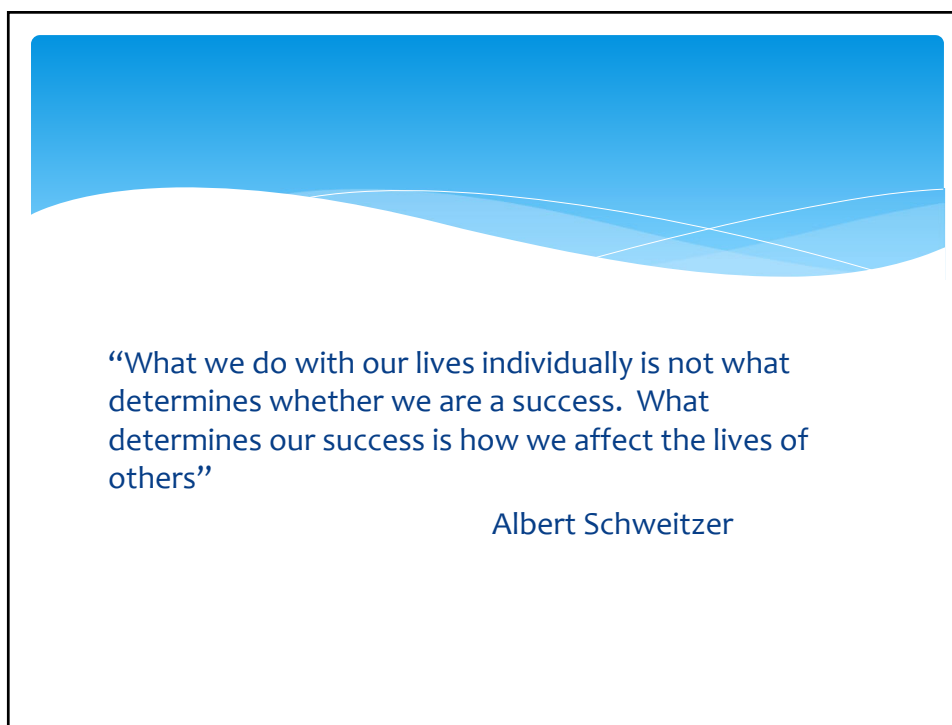
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The magic of Social Capital is when similarity overrides difference and creates a bridge. Through this bridge people begin to relate and that synergy promotes an upward effect for all.

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Thanks to Everyone Involved!

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