

BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL

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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

Interdependence

Social Capital relate to a broader concept of Interdependence. All people have strengths and weaknesses –
Interdependence is when we use our strengths to build relationships that help support our weaknesses.

Social Capital is also related to:

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

Finally, 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

What is Social Capital?

It is nothing more than relationships and friendships that people have in their lives. The natural supports that you have to make your live better.

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

Bonding Social Capital

- These are the relationships that we have a strong connection of similarity. When this strong identity causes us to relate easily and quickly. These commonalities can be ethnicity, religion, age, experience and other factors that make us similar. This basic identification creates an easy empathy and sympathy and sense of security.

Bridging Social Capital

- This is when connect with people who are essentially different from us, but we have some affinity that creates a bridge that we use to relate. These relationships grow us because we begin to accept differences through the security of the affinity that started the connection.

Clusters of Connection

- Family
- Neighborhood
- Religious
- School
- Work
- Clubs, Groups, Associations
- Political Parties

Social Capital key themes

- People you know (by name)
- People you like (similarities)
- People you engage in cluster
- People you engage outside of cluster

Building Social Capital and Natural Supports

- In order to build social capital you must be active (or at least present) in various clusters or communities.

4 Steps to Social Capital

- Identify our key areas of interest/affinities
- Find the matching cluster or community
- Understand how communities behave
- Finding a gatekeeper to acceptance

Identifying Affinities

- Passions
- Hopes
- Skills
- Talents
- Interests
- Capacities
- Fantasies

Finding the Matching Group

- Newspaper
- Television
- Yellow Pages
- Internet – www.meetup.com
- Other social networking web sites
- Ask others
- Observe

How Communities Behave

- Expectations
- Rituals
- Patterns
- Jargon
- Memory (history)

Find the Gatekeeper

- Observe
- Ask
- Introduce
- Support

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.

Types of Gatekeepers

- Proactive – people who are open and reach out to others
- Reactive – people who are closed and see others difference and problems

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.

The magic of community is when similarity overrides difference and creates a bond. Through this bond people begin to help each other and that synergy creates an upward effect for everyone involved.

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

“We must become the change we hope to create.”

- Gandhi

Robert Fulghum

They will tell you: All the trips have been taken.

You will say: I have not been to see for myself.

They will insist: Everything has been said.

You will insist: I have not had my say.

They will tell you: It has all been done.

You will reply: My way is not finished.

But be warned: Any way is long and any way is hard.

Fear not!

You are the gate!

You are the gatekeeper!

You may go through and on and on!

And – fare you well!

In the end, building Social Capital requires:

- Kindness
- Hospitality
- Generosity
- Compassion
- Forgiveness

“Either you are kind, or you’re not.”

Gianna Condeluci

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