Building Social Networks and Relationships: Research and Best Practices

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“Person-Centered Planning”

• The term “Person-Centered Planning” refers to:
  – A family of approaches
  – to organizing and guiding community change
  – in alliance with people with disabilities and their families and friends

  - O’Brien & Lovett, “What is Person-Centered Planning?”
SOCIAL CAPITAL

The personal and collective power of people with disabilities and organizations to

• further their full inclusion within the community
• to access social support networks
• and to increase their quality of life

- Walker et al.
3 types of Social Capital

1. Bonding
   -- benefits of friendship, trust, solidarity, access to resources

2. Bridging
   -- networks of association, collaborative group relationships; linkage to external assets & information

3. Linking
   -- networks and institutionalized relationships across societal divides
Self-Determination Values

- FREEDOM
- AUTHORITY
- SUPPORT:

The arranging of resources and personnel – both formal and informal – that will assist an individual with a disability to live a life in the community rich in community association and contribution
• RESPONSIBILITY:

The acceptance of a valued role in a person’s community through competitive employment, organizational affiliations, spiritual development and general caring for others in the community . . . .
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Research in Integration

Starting in 1960’s – studies of lives in institution vs. community life

Some physical integration issues studied:
- Location & use of community resources
- Recreation/Leisure programs/activities

Typical Findings regarded physical integration:
  e.g., More severe the degree of impairment, person less likely to participate in community activities
Started to distinguish difference between:

- PHYSICAL integration, and
- SOCIAL integration
Research in SOCIAL integration

Adults: Living with families vs. community homes:

1. For people living at home:
   • majority of social networks are family members

2. For people living out of home:
   • Social networks are more often peers
   • Typically have a higher number of activities in the community than people living at home
Social Networks

Adults: social network tends to be others with disabilities and family members

1988 Horner study of social networks:
On average people with I/DD had 12.25 people in their lives:
- 5.5 paid providers
- 2.4 family
- 2.0 peers
- 1.9 coworker friends with disabilities, and
- .45 neighbors
Hayden et al. 1992 study of community homes:
Of all the “best friends” –
- Only 4 % were non-paid community member
- 60% did not have even one friend that was a non-disabled community member
Many people still

ISOLATED

and

LONELY
SCHOOL INTEGRATION

Myths:
1. Physical presence translates into social relationships
2. “It should happen naturally”
3. The “social skills” of the special education student determines their friendships
   
   (documented with school integration, probably also applies with adults)
SCHOOL – APPROACHES to promote Social Inclusion

1. Peer mentoring/buddy programs

2. Inclusive classrooms

3. Inclusion facilitator

4. Emphasis in IEP goals
Factors affecting Greater Social Inclusion in Schools – Latest Research

“Table” Model: 4 Legs of the Table affect success:

1. Child repertoire

2. Peer skills support and expectations

3. Social ecology
   - cooperative learning,
   - non-specialized curriculum that promotes belonging and respect for diverse learning styles

4. Adult mediation –
   - Peer planning (circles of friends, Maps)
   - “Goldilocks” model (not too much, not too little, just the right amount of intervention and support, prompting and fading)
GUIDING AND ORGANIZING
COMMUNITY CHANGE for
Greater Social Inclusion

EXAMPLES OF ONE-on-ONE APPROACHES
– Volunteering (foster grandparents, Best Buddies, etc.)
– Citizen Advocacy
– Peer Mentors (schools)

ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACHES
– Schools
– Faith Communities
– Human Services Agencies
APPROACHES found successful for Adults

1. Community leisure/recreation programs

2. Casual contact

3. Participation in typical social institutions: churches, community arts groups, community associations (as early as 1967)
Key Factor

Regular, ongoing social contact, such as:

1. Community associations and groups
2. Faith communities

Shift thinking from “Activities” to:

Who are they going to
get to know there?
FOUNDATION for:
Opportunities for Relationships

1. SAME PLACE
   SAME PEOPLE
   OVER TIME

2. SOME BASIS FOR CONNECTING & EXCHANGE
   OPPORTUNITIES TO:
   SHARE INTERESTS
   CONTRIBUTE
   BE CONTRIBUTED TO

Activity
Tools/Methods Supporting Social Integration/Social Capital

- Person-centered planning circles
- Social Inclusion facilitators (Abery & Fahnestock, 1992)
- Community Mapping (Carlson, 2000)
Post-School Supports for Social Integration/Social Capital

• Promoting continued use of family & child’s social network after child leaves school

• Continued movement toward employment in typical integrated job settings
2003-08 U of Minnesota Project Results
Gains in Community Friendships, Group Membership & Social Roles

• Community friends: 16% to 78% by end

• Group membership: 2% to 42%

• Community social roles: 3% to 36%

- (Amado et al., 2010)
SEVEN APPROACHES
TO CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS/
SUPPORTING FRIENDSHIPS/PROMOTING SOCIAL CAPITAL

OVERALL QUESTION:

Where are the Opportunities for Relationships?

A. CONNECTING WITH INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

1. Who are the people who are already acquaintances, who could be asked to get to know the person better?

2. Where are people who would appreciate receiving this person’s gifts?

3. Who might be/where could we find an interested person who could be asked to get to know the person better?
SEVEN APPROACHES TO CONNECTING

• B. COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP (BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL)

4. Where are the associations, clubs, and groups?
   - formal
   - informal

5. Where are all the community places where people engage in one of this person’s interests?

6. Where are there community places that are hospitable and welcoming?

7. Where are there community places the person can fit in, just the way they are?
WHAT COMMUNITY MEMBERS RECEIVE from befriending people 
(Amado, 2010)

- “adding joy to my life”
- “helped me see the whole person”
- “a learning experience in becoming more compassionate”
- “love”
- “compassion”
- “more folks to make friends with”
- “connections of the heart go far beyond words”
Approaches to Support Social Inclusion in Employment

- Supporting relationships with co-workers
- Reducing “job coach” interference
LARGER COMMUNITY-WIDE APPROACHES TO INCLUSION

(bridging & linking social capital)

1. Chicago – neighborhood organizations and leaders (Asset-Based Community Development)
2. Building Social Capital
3. Seattle -- Department of Neighborhoods
4. Model Communities (DHSS)
5. Community Member Forums

REFERENCES
1. www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html
2. www.cpn.org/topics/community/regenerating.html
3. www.cityofseattle.net/neighborhoods/involve/ or call 206-684-0464
4. www.hcbs.org/files/16/787 or jay.klein@unh.edu
   www.hsrcd.org/pdf/friends.pdf
   Angela Novak Amado, 651-698-5565, amado003@umn.edu
CONCLUSIONS

1. A self-determined life includes:
   relationships, social networks

2. People might hear “Social Capital”
   differently than they hear:
   “Love”
   “Friends”
   “Relationships”
   “Belonging”
CONCLUSIONS

3. Physical Integration is not the same as Social Integration ("Inclusion" "Belonging")

4. “Community Participation” and “Community Activities” are different than PEOPLE and FRIENDSHIPS

5. Social Inclusion/Social Capital CAN be impacted