How the Power of Social Capital Can Help Youth Thrive

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What is social capital?

How do programs use it?

Poll Question

Do you use the term "social capital" in your work?

- Yes
- No

How does ASPE define social capital?

- Connections, networks, or relationships among people and the value that arises from them that can be accessed or mobilized to help individuals succeed in life

- Produces information, emotional and financial support, and other resources

- Could be with:
  - People like us ("bonding");
  - People different from us ("bridging"); or
  - Institutions/individuals in positions of power ("linking")

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Examples of Social Capital in Action

- Family strengthening
- Faith-based assistance
- Peer supports
- Mentoring
- Systems navigation

Poll Question

Do you currently help youth build or leverage social capital using any of these strategies?

- Mentoring

- Peer-to-peer supports

- Other (comment in the chat)

Research on Social Capital and Economic Mobility Link

Employment

- Strong ties may be more beneficial than weak ties

- Contacts with higher-status individuals may matter more in searching for employment opportunities

Peer Supports

- Evidence of benefits of peer mentoring in education and health; preliminary research shows staff/participants value in other domains

- Peer navigators may impact health treatment outcomes or connection to treatment

- Evidence of positive effects of peer support groups in fatherhood programs on employment and well-being; participants in other domains often report psychological benefits

Scan of Human Services Programs

- Programs don't typically use the term "social capital"

- Programs build and leverage social capital in different ways that can be hard to categorize

- Mentoring and peer-to-peer supports are among the most common social capital strategies

- Social capital is most often one piece of a larger intervention

- Evidence base was very strong for a few programs, but social capital component is rarely evaluated separately

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Measuring Social Capital

Measuring Social Capital

- No single agreed-upon best method or any single question captures all aspects.

Common types of measures:

- Has someone to turn to in emergency
- Has someone in their lives they deeply trust
- Level of community and civic engagement

Social capital measurement example:

- Currently, in your life, are there responsible adults or mentors who pay attention to what's going on in your life?

Key measurement considerations include:

- Positive versus negative social capital
- Program and participant characteristics
- How and when to measure
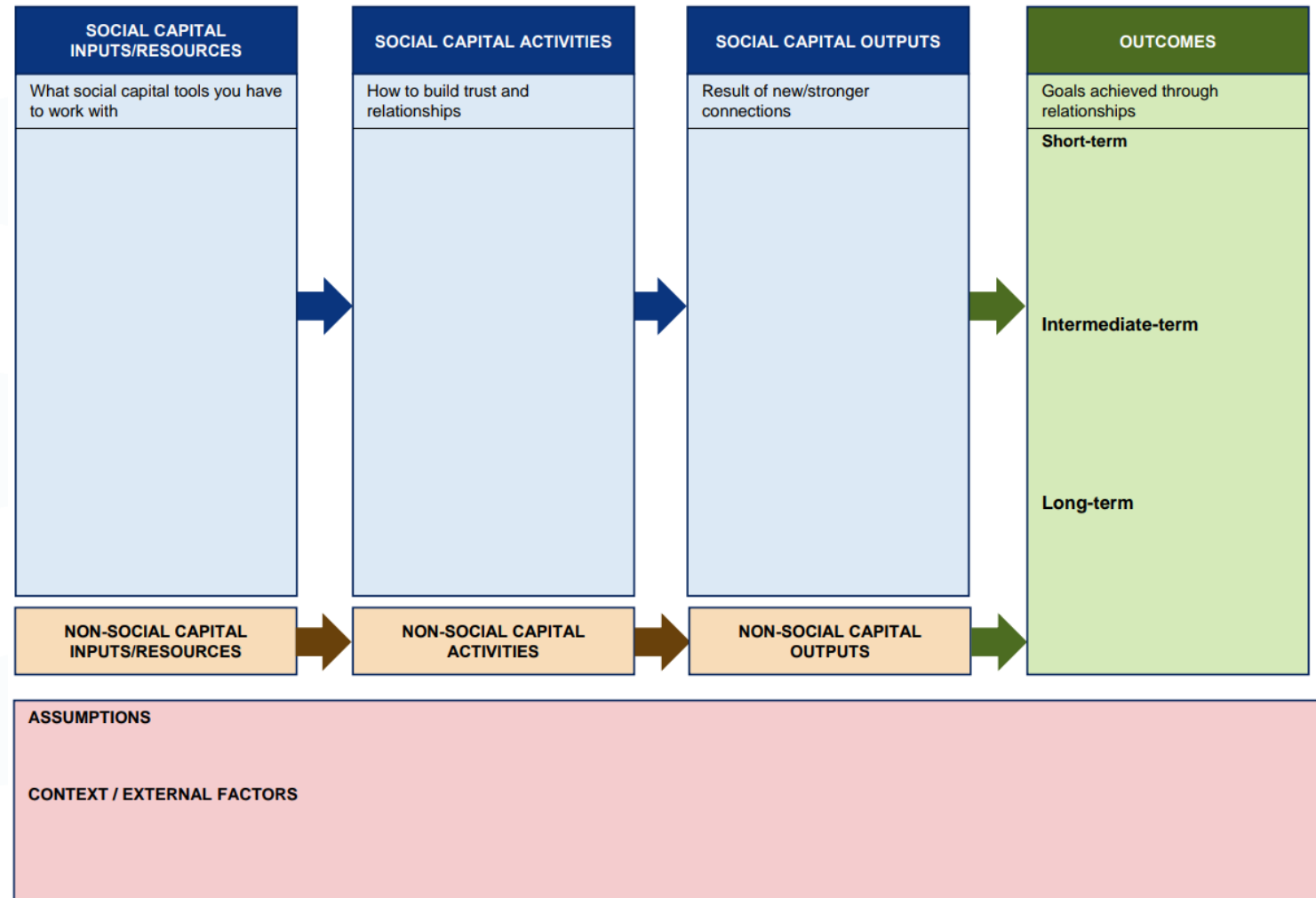- Unintended consequences

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Poll Question

Do you currently capture any data that could be used to measure social capital among youth?

- Yes
- No

Consider using a social capital logic model

SOCIAL CAPITAL INPUTS/RESOURCES	SOCIAL CAPITAL ACTIVITIES	SOCIAL CAPITAL OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES
What social capital tools you have to work with	How to build trust and relationships	Result of new/stronger connections	Goals achieved through relationships

OUTCOMES:
- Short-term
- Intermediate-term
- Long-term

NON-SOCIAL CAPITAL INPUTS/RESOURCES	NON-SOCIAL CAPITAL ACTIVITIES	NON-SOCIAL CAPITAL OUTPUTS

ASSUMPTIONS

CONTEXT / EXTERNAL FACTORS

Principles and Emerging Practices

Social Capital Principles

1. Person-centered
2. Relationships as assets
3. Staff and participants as partners
4. Cultural competence
5. Emotional intelligence

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Emerging Practice: Use Cohort Models to Engage Participants

- Think about size, characteristics of cohort members

- Consider facilitator and important skills

- Participants drive cohort norms, topics, goals

Emerging Practice: Engage with Participants Meaningfully through Time and/or Intensity

- Quality matters
- Develop meaningful relationships

Emerging Practice: Build and Leverage Social Capital among Organizations to Foster Individual-Level Social Capital

- Social capital at community, organizational, and individual levels can reinforce each other

- Organizational connections alone aren't enough to build individual-level social capital

Emerging Practice: Use Technology to Build Individual Social Capital

- Support data collection
- Improve program engagement

Poll Question

Which, if any, of these practices does your organization already use to help youth build and use social capital? (Select all that apply.)

- Cohort models

- Engage with youth meaningfully through time/intensity

- Organizational social capital to foster individual-level social capital

- Use technology

Emerging Practice: Use Data to Build Organizational Capacity in Decision-Making and Evaluation

- Limited rigorous research to date on social capital by most programs

- Data can help evaluate which social capital approaches lead to the best outcomes

Emerging Practice: Create the Space and Opportunity for Organic Connections to Happen

- Create physical space
- Allow opportunities for engagement and connection

Emerging Practice: Include Alumni in Programming and Staffing

- Qualified individuals with similar experiences as participants, or qualified alumni

- Alumni can bring credibility in participants' eyes

Emerging Practice: Emphasize Accountability

- Explicit agreements/commitments can foster accountability

- Goal is to clarify expectations, not structure/require relationships a certain way

Poll Question

Which, if any, of these practices does your organization already use to help youth build and use social capital? (Select all that apply.)

- Use data

- Create the space/opportunity for organic connections

- Include alumni in programming/staffing

- Emphasize accountability

Value of Social Capital during Pandemic

1. Use technology to build relationships and connect people to resources
2. Provide structured opportunities to connect remotely or while socially distancing
3. Offer peer groups remotely in nontraditional ways
4. Engage qualified alumni and other individuals to reach out remotely

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Available Tools

https://aspe.hhs.gov/social-capital

Definition of social capital: https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/263491/What-is-social-capital.pdf

Research briefs on social capital:

- Economic mobility: https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/aspe-files/261791/socialcapitalsupportingeconomicmobility.pdf

- Peer supports: https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/aspe-files/261791/promotingemploymentwellbeing.pdf

- Measurement

- Brief: https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/262956/FINALSocialCapitalMeasurementBrief.pdf

- Webinar: https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/measuring-how-social-relationships-contribute-to-the-outcomes-of-program-participants/

- Logic model tool: https://aspe.hhs.gov/how-include-social-capital-human-services-program-logic-model

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Social Capital Handbook

https://aspe.hhs.gov/pdf-report/social-capital-handbook

- Go-to resource for practical ways to implement social capital-building practices to improve youth outcomes

- Editable worksheets for your program team to use

Other Resources: https://aspe.hhs.gov/strengthening-human-services-through-social-capital

Podcasts on cohort models, using technology, engaging participants

Considerations for incarcerated/reentry populations

Case studies, including on:

- Teen Challenge Arizona
- Roca, Inc.

Upcoming Work

Peer supports on justice-involved, domestic violence, and human trafficking populations

What other information would be helpful in your work on peer supports for youth?

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Questions?

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