



AN ASSET BASED APPROACH TO WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Robert M. Francis,
Faculty, Asset Based Community Development Institute and
Executive Director, RYASAP - Building Healthy Communities
2470 Fairfield Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06605
Ph. 203.579-2727 Fax. 203.333.9118
Email. Rfrancis_99@yahoo.com



COMMUNITY

- Space where citizens prevail
- Place where people's gifts are recognized and used to solve community problems and create healthy spaces to live



DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

1. Personal behavior
2. Social relations
(networks of support)
3. Physical environment
4. Economic resources
5. Access to health care**

** Usually not part of research





PRINCIPLES OF INSIDE OUT ORGANIZING

1. Shift in power! Agency space to citizen space.
2. Inclusiveness - all people have gifts and talents
3. Relationship building - relationships build community; learning community atmosphere
4. People, not programs build power in a community. Institutions are "servants"
5. Caring: not services
6. Motivation to act based on caring
7. Welcoming the stranger - people on the edge need to know they are "needed"
8. Listening conversation to discover motivation to act

COMMUNITY NEEDS MAP



Unemployment

Dilapidated Housing

Gangs

Single Parent Families

Teen Pregnancy

Illiteracy

Domestic Abuse

Child Abuse

Crime

Mental Disability

Alcohol & Drug Abuse

Juvenile Delinquency

Poverty

Lead Poisoning

Suicide & Depression



CONSEQUENCES OF THE POWER OF THE NEEDS MAP

1. Internalization of a "deficiency identity" by local residents.
2. Destruction of local relationships.
3. Reinforcement of narrow categorical funding streams.
4. Professional helpers get funding; not residents.
5. Focus on leaders who magnify deficiencies.
6. Rewards failure; produces dependency.
7. Creates hopelessness.



EFFECTS OF A SERVICE ECONOMY

1. Interventions based on deficits and meeting needs
2. Community and individual economy breaks down and money for services goes to institutions.
3. Need for more services grows and the sense of neighborliness dissipates
4. Community power is reduced while the system gains power

COMMUNITY ASSETS MAP



Local Institutions

HOSPITALS

GOVERNMENT

Citizens' Associations

CHURCHES

BLOCK CLUBS

SCHOOLS

INCOME

Gifts of
Individuals

ARTISTS

YOUTH

ELDERLY

LABELED
PEOPLE

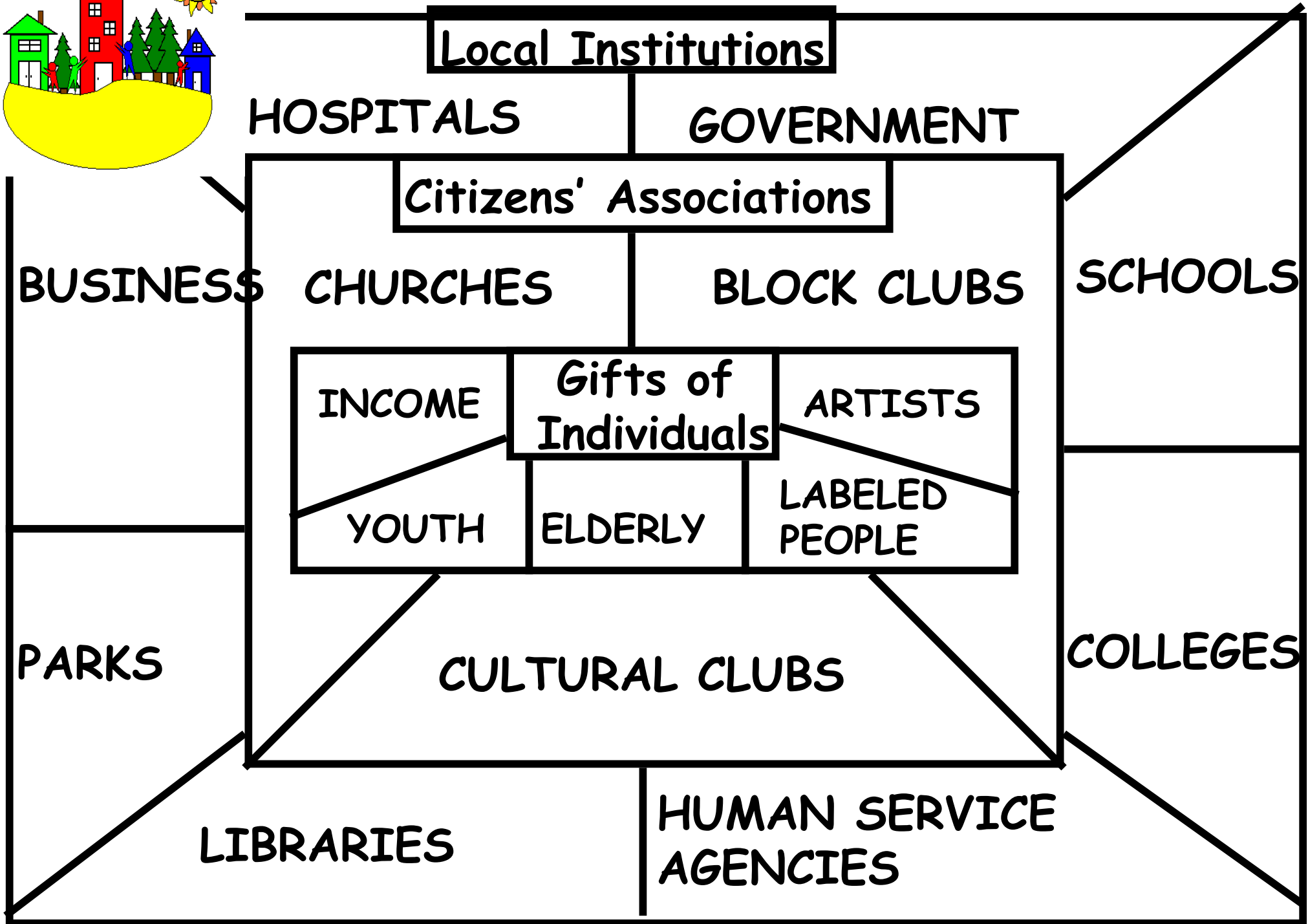
PARKS

CULTURAL CLUBS

COLLEGES

LIBRARIES

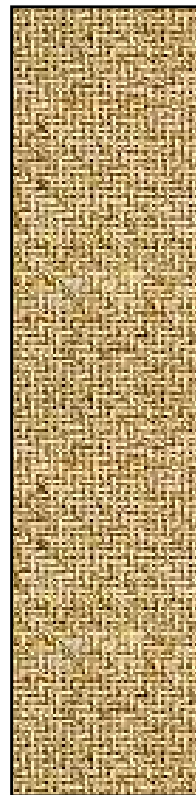
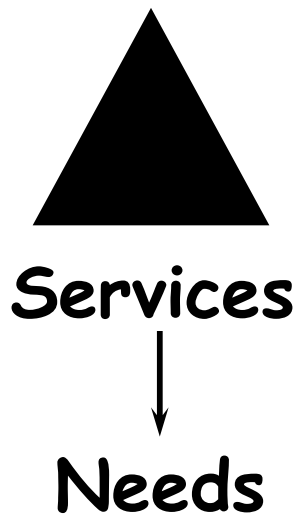
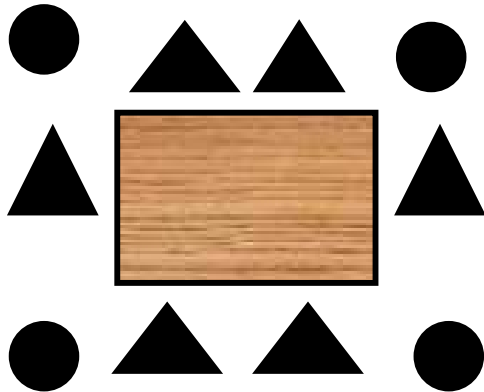
HUMAN SERVICE
AGENCIES



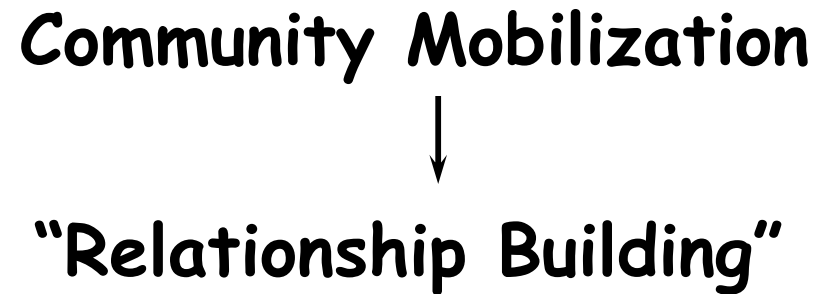
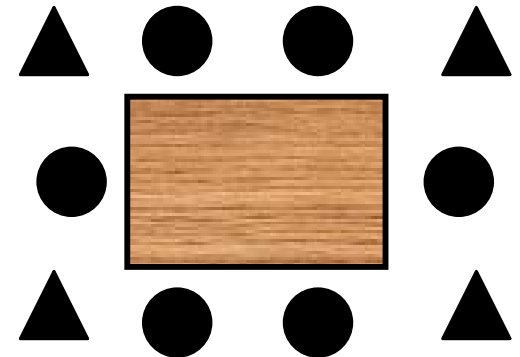
TWO DOMAINS FOR ACTION Require Different Organizations



Service Coordination



Community Council



PERSONAL ASSET INVENTORY



HAND

Make a list of all those things you can do with your hands.



HEAD

Make a list of all those things you are good at with your brain.



HEART

Make a list of all those things you are passionate about.



HOME

Make a list of important relationships in your neighborhood, community and beyond - people you can ask to get things done

NAME _____



HAND



HEAD



HEART



HOME

Types of Associations



- Artistic
- Business
- Charitable
- Church Groups
- Civic Events
- Collectors Groups
- Community Support Groups
- Elderly Groups
- Ethnic and Cultural Groups
- Health & Fitness Groups
- Special Interest Groups
- Media and Communications
- Self Help Groups
- Neighborhood Councils
- Block Watches
- Outdoors Groups
- Political Organizations
- School Groups (PTA's etc.)
- Service Clubs
- Social Cause Groups
- Sports leagues
- Study Groups
- Survivors Groups
- Veterans Groups
- Women's Groups
- Youth Groups



ASSETS OF INSTITUTIONS

"Fortresses or Treasure Chests?"

1. Facilities
2. Equipment
3. Purchasing Power
4. Employment Practices
5. Training and Organizational Development
6. Employees and their skills
7. Clout to Open Doors
8. Financial Resources



HOW PEOPLE LEARN

- 10% Of what we read
- 20% of what we hear
- 30% of what we see
- 50% of what we see and hear
- 70% of what we discuss
- 80% of what we experience
- 95% of what we teach

William Glasser



IATRAGENESIS

The act of inadvertently introducing a harmful side effect by a physician. The medical field is the only one that labels its interventions as having a possible negative side effect.

All interventions with young people should come with a "warning label." For example, involvement with the juvenile justice system may cause your child to become alienated from their peers and family, commit more serious offenses in the future, be removed from your home, encourage incarceration, cause discrimination because of race, and be labeled with mental health and substance abuse problems they may not have.



TRADITIONAL ORGANIZING (Saul Alinsky)

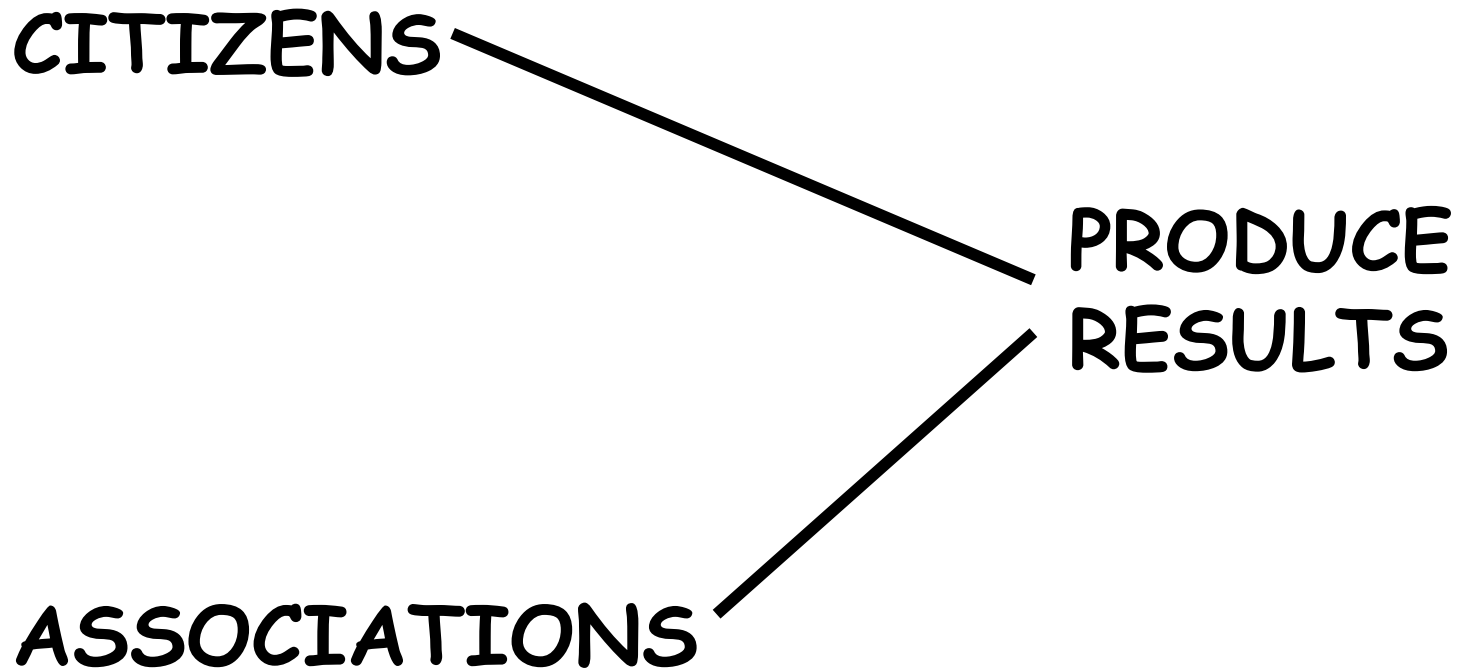
CITIZENS

**ADVISE AND
PRESSURE
INSTITUTIONS
WHO PRODUCE
RESULTS**

ASSOCIATIONS



ABCD ORGANIZING (Kretzmann and McKnight)





TOTAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZING (Citizen Democracy Model)

CITIZENS

**PRODUCE RESULTS
AND ADVISE AND
PRESSURE
INSTITUTIONS TO
PRODUCE RESULTS**

ASSOCIATIONS

**"You can change yourself, your
community and the outside powers"**

POWER

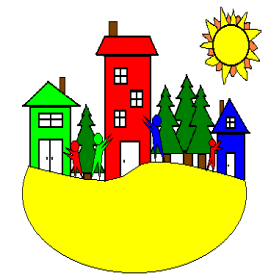


1. If no one's talking about power; it's not changing hands.
2. People should know what to expect from institutions. They should be graded and given feedback as to how they deal with citizens.
3. If the community's gifts are not being used, the community has no power.
4. Social service agencies should only do those things that cannot be accomplished through everyday life relationships.
5. Partnerships will not strengthen the community unless they are citizen centered.
6. Agencies are servants, not lords.
7. There is power in language.
8. There is great power in taking people seriously and treating them with respect.
9. There is power in "real democracy," -- citizen power.



BUILDING AN ABCD COMMUNITY

1. Decide on a site - remember small and place based
2. Decide on a theme on which to engage the community
3. Develop an initiating group which is citizen-dominated including a critical mass of strangers - youth, elderly, labeled people, clergy, business, etc..
4. Develop an organizing group - core group of community leaders including youth
5. Develop a game plan
6. Do the ABCD work -- identify, mobilize and connect assets



ASSET MAPPING

ASSET mapping is a valuable tool for identifying and mobilizing the positive skills and talents of individuals, organizations and institutions in the community

Through asset mapping, you can:

- Identify youth and adults for a program or project
- Identify neighborhood resources to apply to neighborhood issues
- Develop a youth/adult resource bank for the community
- Determine strengths in the community or organization
- Mobilize youth and adult residents to solve community problems and apply pressure for more resources
- Foster relationships with citizens, groups or agencies to build healthy communities

CAPACITY BUILDING VS. NEEDS BASED PARADIGMS

CAPACITIES

- Community vision
- Combined effort
- Dollars to those who know the community
- Highlights the capacities and assets working together
- Insiders are the key helpers
- Dependence on each other
- Involves the entire community
- Based on relationship building

NEEDS

- Therapeutic vision
- Fragmented effort
- Funding goes to service providers
- Highlights problems and needs and ignores strengths & capacities
- Only outsiders can offer real help
- Dependence on the system
- Targets isolated individuals
- Unconcerned about relationships

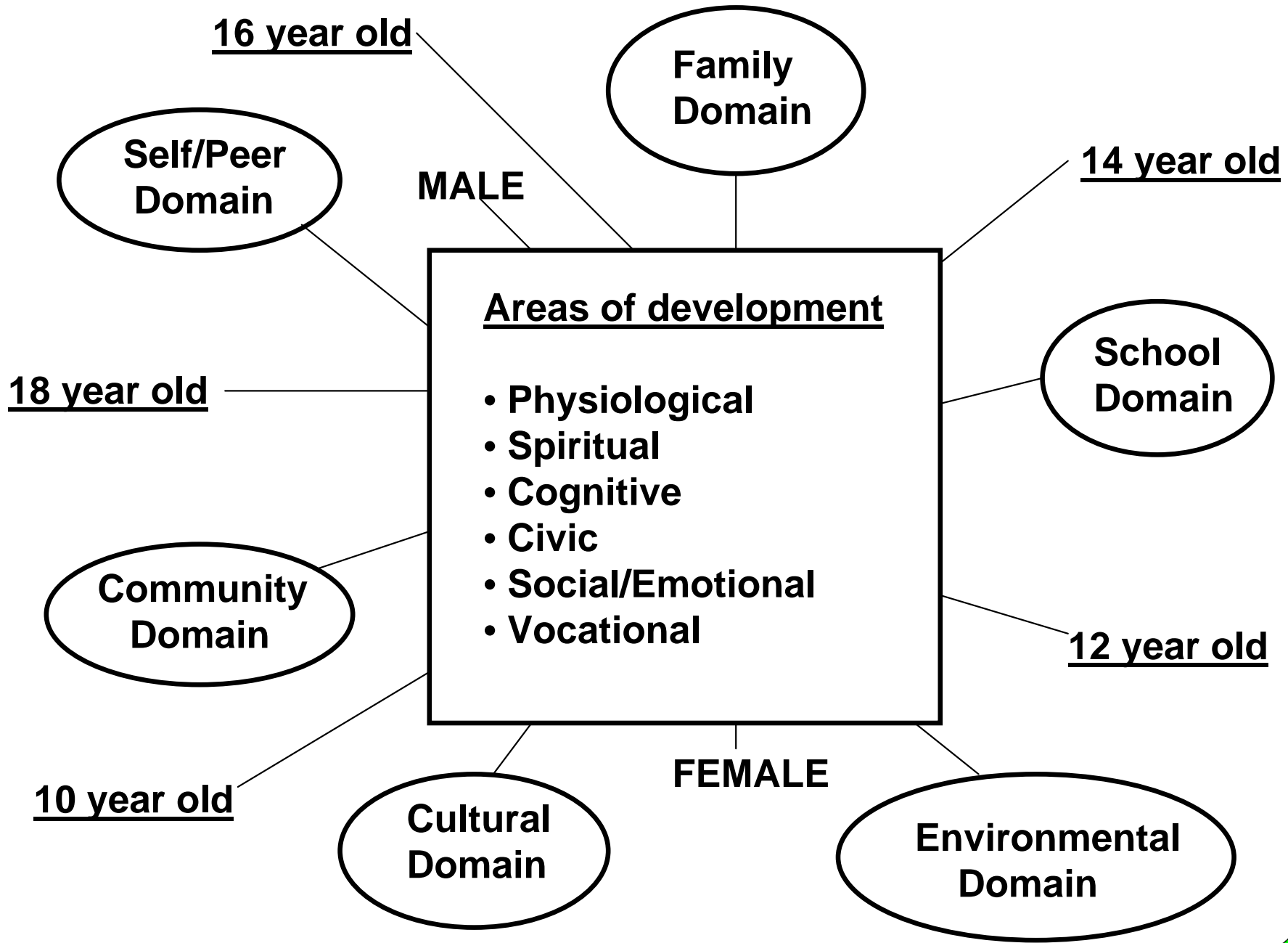




**“Problem Free Is Not
Fully Prepared”**

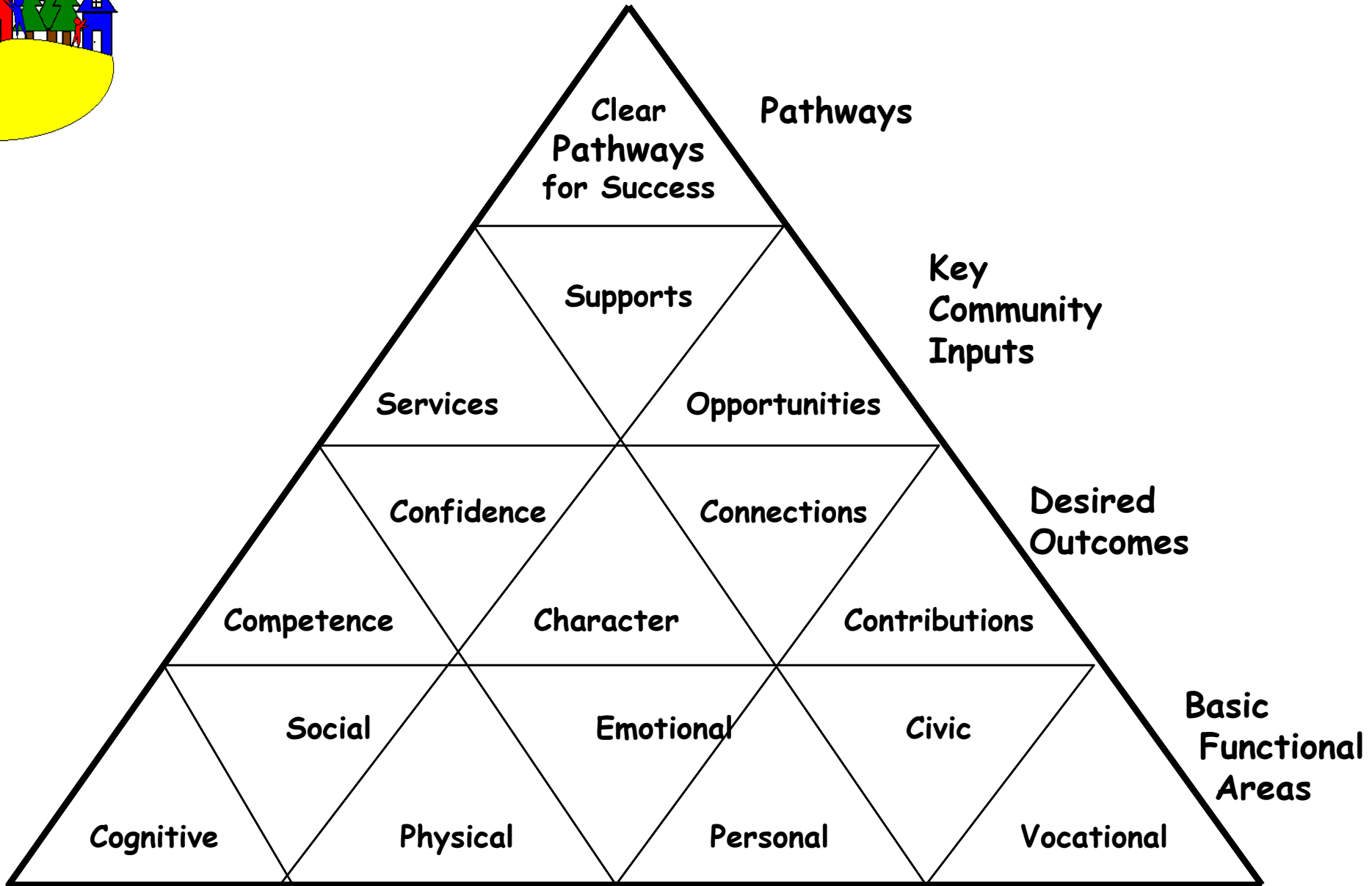
**“Fully Prepared Is Not
Fully Engaged”**

Karen Pittman



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN A NUTSHELL

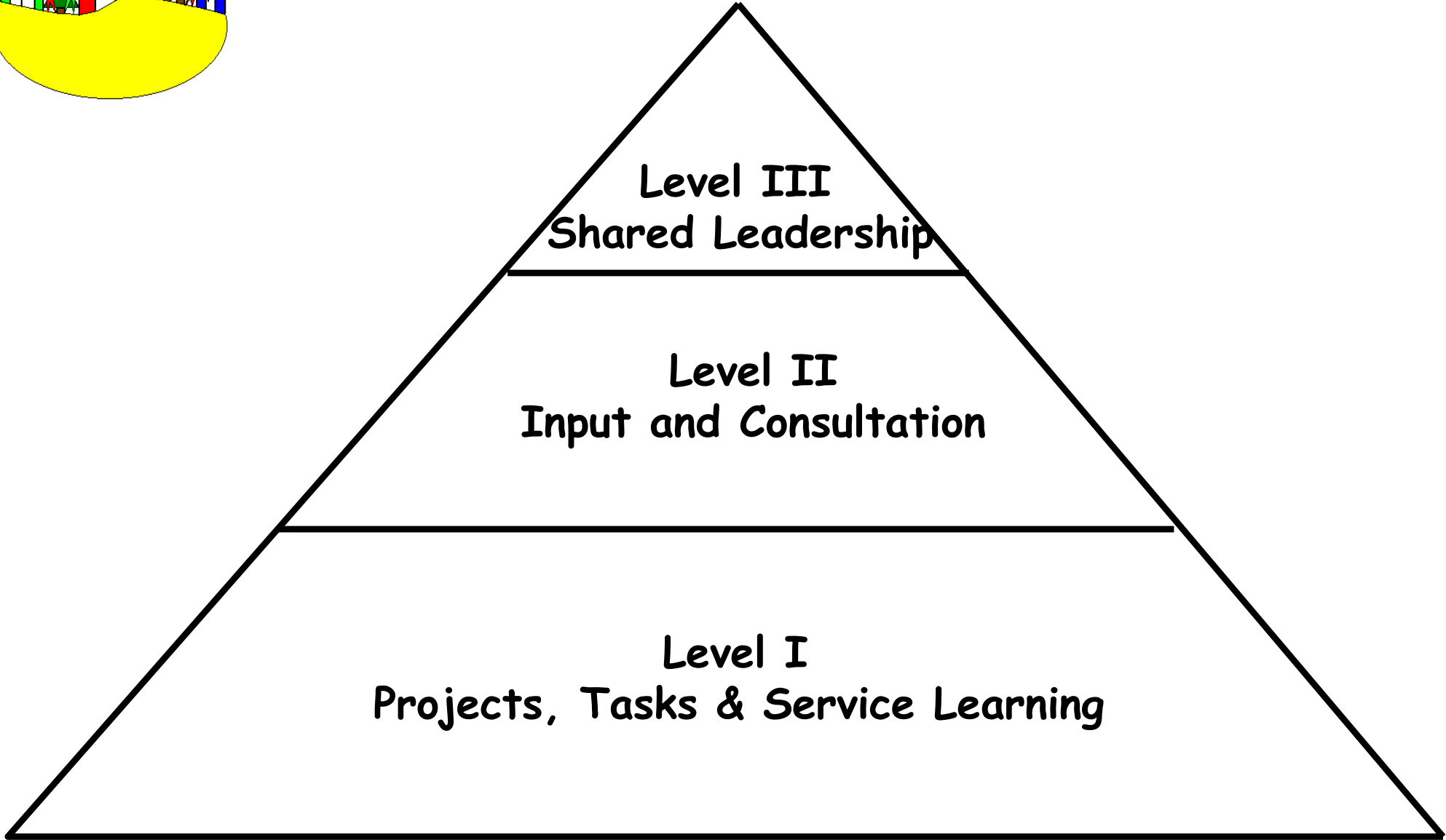




WHAT IS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT?



Levels of Youth Engagement





The Future of Youth Development

Is In

Community Development

And

Engagement



THE FUTURE

- **Beyond Prevention and Academics**
- **Beyond Basic Services**
- **Beyond Quick Fixes**
- **Beyond Schools and School Buildings**
- **Beyond the School Day**
- **Beyond Youth Professionals**
- **Beyond Recipients**
- **Beyond Labeling**
- **Beyond Pilots**

CHALLENGES

- The early investment push to work with younger youth has taken hold, possibly to the detriment of older youth with fewer supports
- Older higher risk youth do not get positive youth development services



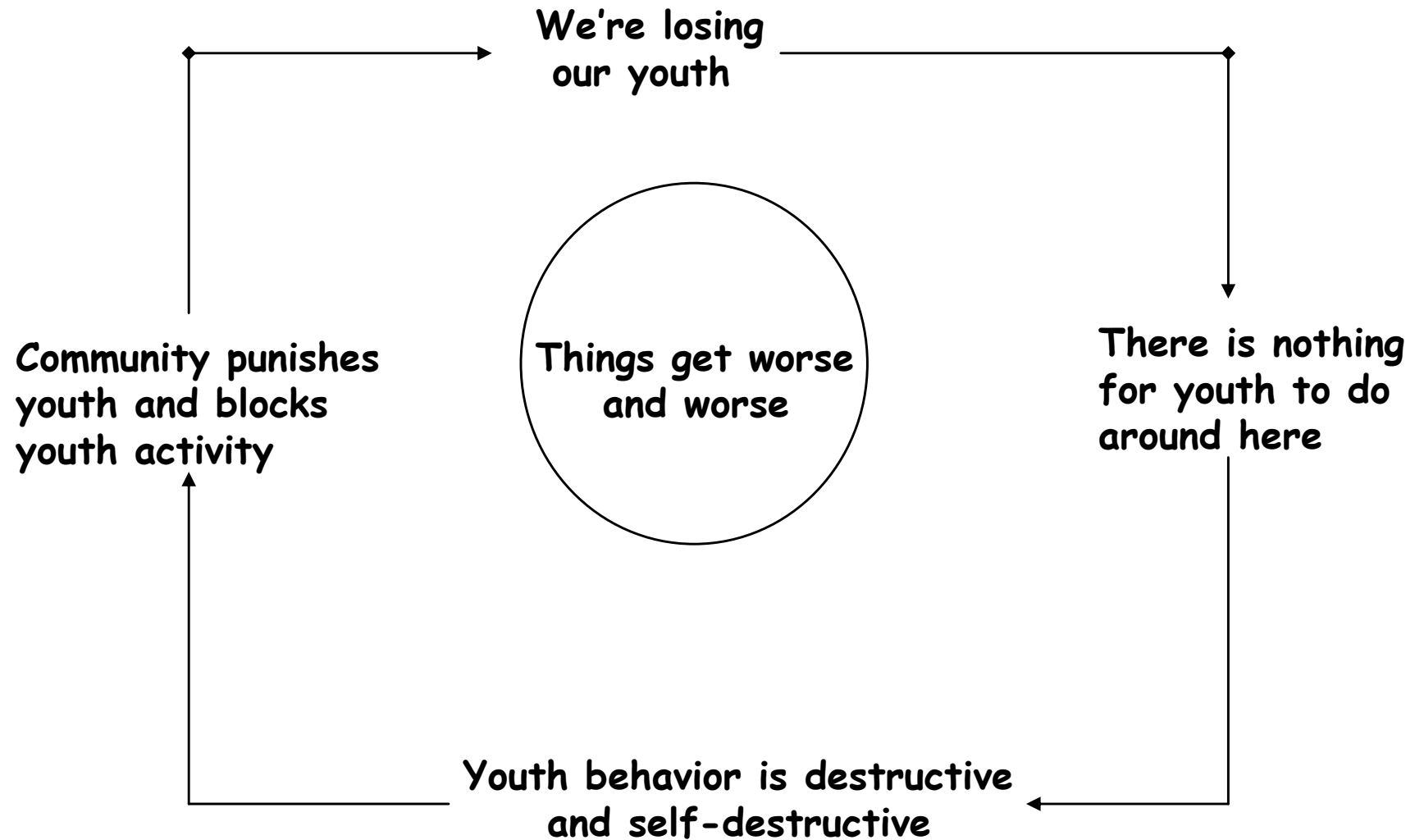
What must communities provide besides services?

- *People* - competent and caring adults
- *Places* - Safe, stimulating places - homes, schools, youth centers, faith organizations, workplaces and parks
- *Possibilities* - High quality, challenging activities and instruction that helps them build knowledge and marketable skills
- *Opportunities* - to use what they have learned in work, service or advanced learning - real opportunities to give back
- *"A healthy start"*

"Challenging Communities to Provide All 5"

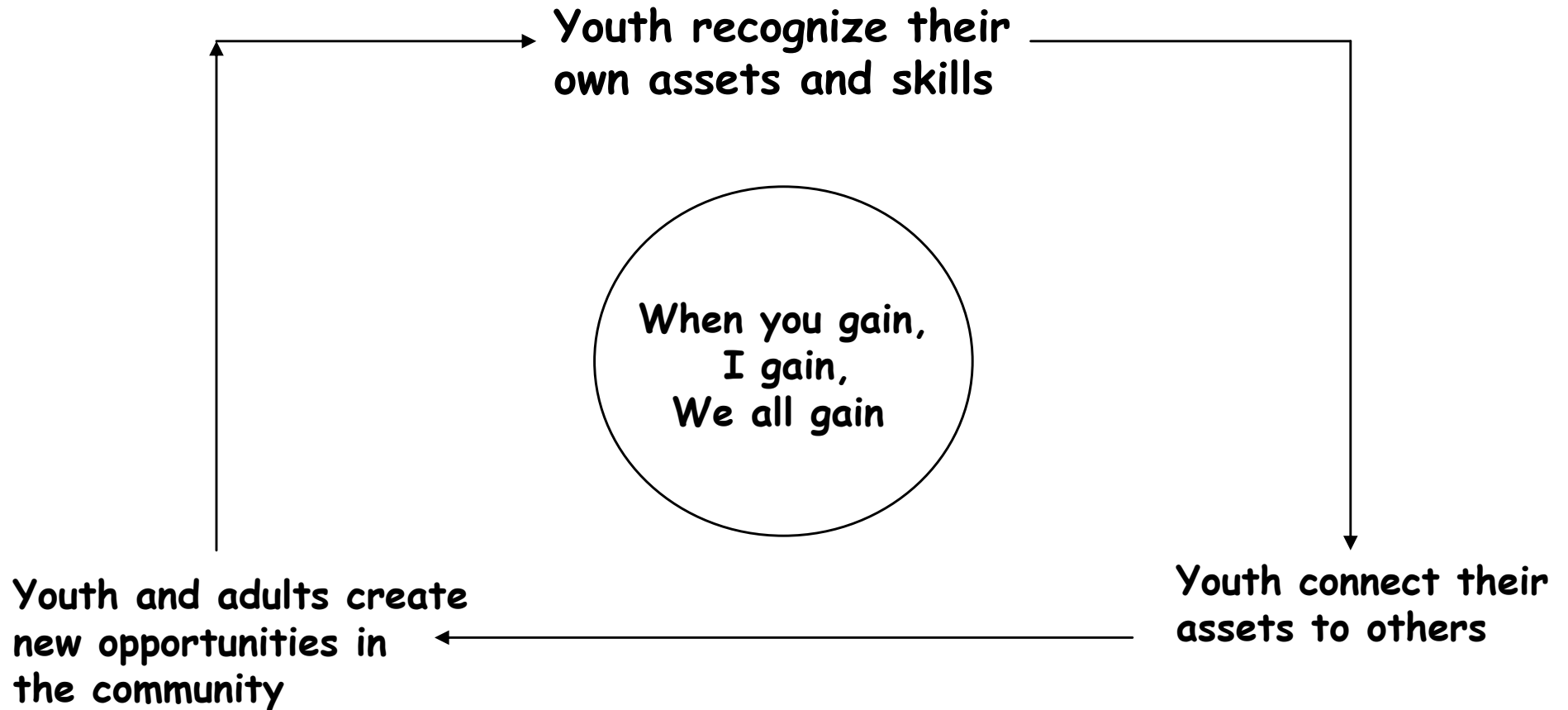


"Fixed Sum Dynamic" Negative Cycle of Youth in a Community





"Open Sum Dynamic" Positive Cycle of Youth Development





TEN COMMANDMENTS

FOR INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY BUILDING



1. Start with young people's gifts, talents and knowledge; never with needs and problems.

2. Always lift up the unique individual; not the category the young person belongs to.

3. Share the conviction: (a) every community is filled with opportunities for young people to contribute and (b) there is no institution that can't find a useful role for young people.

4. Try to distinguish between real community building work, games or fakes.

5. Fight in every way you can - age segregation. Work to overcome the isolation of young people.

6. Get away from the idea of separating young people by their emptiness -- ADD, reading disorders, hearing problems, etc...

7. Move as quickly as possible away from "Youth Advisory Boards," especially those with 1 or 2 youth.

8. Cultivate many opportunities for young people to teach and lead.

9. Reward and celebrate every effort, every contribution made by young people.

10. In every way possible, amplify the message to young people -- "WE NEED YOU!" Our community cannot be strong and complete without you.



Linking Youth and Community Development

Why should they be linked?

- Young people grow up in communities, not programs
- Participation is a key to positive youth development
- Young people are both *"producers"* and *"beneficiaries"* of community development
- The whole community benefits
- Youth Development and Community Development share similar goals and approaches (I.e., skills, jobs, participation, citizenship, investment and cultural identity)



Principles of Weaving Youth and Civic Development

1. Young people are producers who can make things of value
2. Products and skill-building should be linked
3. Young people should have serious relationships with adults and each other
4. Young people should learn to work in teams
5. Young people's work should be serious
6. Youth work should be visible
7. Young people's diverse talents and knowledge deserve respect
8. Youth work should lead to community and institutional change

A Social Capital Agenda



- Civics education
- Service learning
- Story telling and writing
- Youthful engagement in community building
- Smaller schools designed for inclusion, fun and values
- Family-friendly workplaces, support for community service, P/T work, civic discussion groups and privacy of communications
- Civic designed neighborhoods - mixed uses, more space for public use, focus on assets in disadvantaged neighborhoods, pedestrian-friendly street grids
- Faith based communities of discussion and support -- church involvement in self-help, and Chautauqua movement discussions
- Telecommunications that reinforce community building - Community Info Corps and encouragement of face to face interaction
- Involvement in arts and culture
- Political involvement -- voting, campaign reform, government decentralization
- Community gardens, potluck dinners, block parties, flea markets
- Linking assets of citizens, associations and institutions



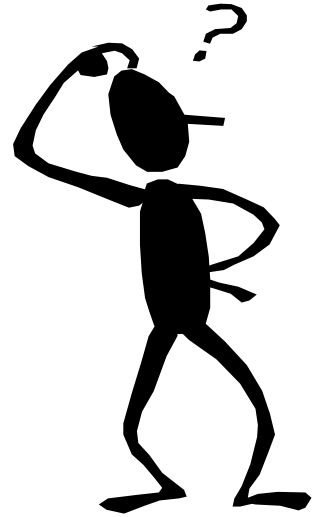
POWER OF ASSOCIATIONS

- 1. Multiplies the gifts of individuals**
- 2. Bridge between self, public and common interest**
- 3. Most efficient way to reach lots of people**
- 4. Most “values change” occurs in small groups**
- 5. Most “behavioral change” occurs in small groups**



QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

1. What is your current mission?
2. Are you willing to get involved to improve your community?
3. What are you willing to do to improve your community?
4. What are you unwilling to do?



INDICATORS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Active Citizen's Councils
- Well kept property
- People exercising
- Youth and adults working together
- People perceive community as safe
- People care for other's children
- High voter participation
- High association membership

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Block or Community Watches
- Police walking and interacting with residents
- Honest and trusting relationships
- Well-lit streets
- Children playing in the streets
- Families interacting
- People sitting on porches

GOOD SCHOOLS

- Kids love their school
- Youth perceive their teachers as supportive
- High parent involvement
- Student achievement
- School is open to the community
- Community service initiatives
- Students feel safe
- High and clear expectations of all students





Using ABCD To Build Developmental Assets

- ABCD is a community building approach that provides tools to identify and mobilize community assets to strengthen communities. These tools can be used to *help connect residents together and encourage them, including young people, to build developmental assets.*
- Rather than define people and neighborhoods as needy and seek programs, agencies and professionals to fix them, ABCD sees communities filled with “assets” - talented people, voluntary associations and local institutions. *For developmental assets to prosper, individuals, associations and institutions must all play a role.*
- ABCD sees residents, not agencies or institutions, as the primary builders of community. Institutions follow residents' lead. *In the end, it is the relationships young people have with adults and others that will help them develop their assets.*
- ABCD focuses on strengthening the leadership and networks of youth and adult residents, especially those who are labeled or marginalized, to transform communities from the inside-out. *We can, work better with those who are marginalized by helping them build developmental assets.*



**"IT TAKES A CHILD TO RAISE
A WHOLE VILLAGE"**

**"Young people have the gifts
and
talents to raise their villages.
They lack only the confidence
of
their villages in them to do it."**

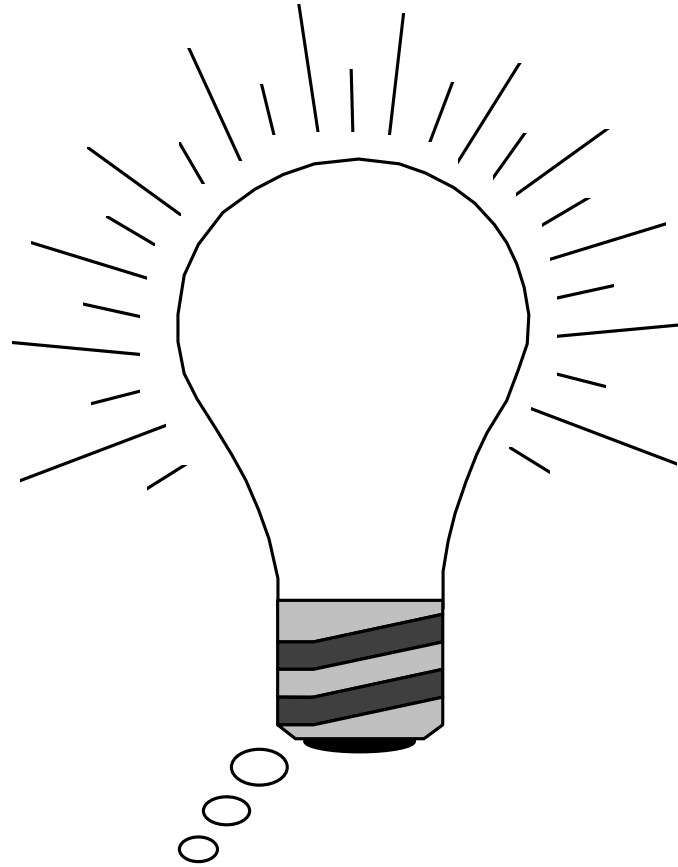


Kretzmann & Schmitz, Wingspread, 1997

Top Ten Youth Engagement Lessons What We Have Learned On Our Journey



- 10 The first ingredient in youth engagement is YOU
- 9 High expectations are not barriers - they are what drives youth engagement
- 8 When we stop focusing on where a young person has been, it allows them to remain focused on where they can go
7. Partnerships between young people and adults are neither common, nor easy
- 6 When a young person's fresh perspective, creativity and energy is valued, resourced and incorporated, the results will always be better outcomes
- 5 Proper training and preparation are essential for adults and for the youth
- 4 For youth engagement to be successful at citywide level organizations, agencies schools and municipalities must learn to work together
- 3 If you teach a bear to dance you don't stop until the bear wants to!
- 2 It is essential that adults learn to view and value young people as resources and that youth gain the confidence and skills needed to prove them right!
- 1 The bottom line is... **RELATIONSHIPS!!!!!!!**



**“You already know everything
you need to know!”**

Human Services In a Democracy - Three Contrasting Views

Conservative Bootstrap View	Liberal Service View	Living Democracy View
<p>The problem is the individual's fault</p> <p>The individual must take responsibility facing the problem without outside, public resources. Public help only encourages dependency.</p> <p>Where resources, private resources - churches and charities can help. They sustain families and communities.</p> <p>Professional, publicly provided social services are part of the problem. They cost too much public money and enlarge government, creating self-interested professionals who thrive on continuation of the problem. They usually fail because they deny people the chance to solve their own problems.</p>	<p>Society is largely responsible</p> <p>Let's bring in professionals to solve the problem and prescribe solutions. people who have been damaged by the socially inflicted pain of poverty and abuse have few resources within themselves for use in problem solving.</p> <p>Since families and other community institutions have been largely destroyed in poor neighborhoods. We can't expect them to help.</p> <p>Social problems are best solved by standardized government programs that can assure quality through oversight by professionals.</p>	<p>Fault finding doesn't help. Let's focus on building people's own capacities for problem solving.</p> <p>Even in the bleakest neighborhoods, people joining together discover resources within. But building people's capacities may also require outside resources.</p> <p>Self-help and public help may be complimentary - when professionals come in not as experts to solve problems but as facilitators to help people to discover their own power.</p> <p>Access to public resources (funds for low-cost housing, day care centers, and job training, for example) can help citizens solve their problems, if citizens (Not outside experts) have a central role in shaping the programs and ensuring their effectiveness.</p>





Social Capital is...

Communities benefit from the interaction and cooperation of all its parts -- individual youth and adult citizens, citizen associations and institutions. When individuals organize their neighbors social capital is increased which meets both individual social needs and improves living conditions in the entire community. Well connected individuals in well-connected communities multiply social capital, sustain rules of conduct, and create generalized reciprocity. "Bonding social capital" serves as a sociological "superglue" where people form connections to people like and unlike themselves. "Bridging social capital" serves as a sociological WD40 which smoothes inter-relationships for effective interaction to build effective communities. Communities with high degrees of social capital alleviate social problems and help residents achieve higher states of social well-being. In ABCD parlance, assets of citizens, citizen's associations and institutions are identified and mobilized for the entire community's benefit.



Indicators of Social Capital

1. Voting/Political Participation
2. Parent Participation in Schools
3. Flexible workplaces that foster community involvement
4. Informal social connections at bars, diners, card games, etc.
5. Adult Sports Clubs
6. Altruism related to participation
7. Neighborliness
8. Participation in Voluntary Associations
9. Church Involvement
10. Friendships at work
11. Youth and Adult Community Service
12. Family Interaction
13. Neighborhood Watches & Community Organization
14. Honest and Trusting Relationships



Predictors of Civic Engagement

- Education
- Newspaper readership
- Voting and political participation
- Church involvement
- Community service
- Voluntary association membership and participation
- Family and friend visiting
- Altruism
- Letters to the editor
- Public meeting attendance
- Public trust (no. of lawyers, lawsuits, etc.)
- High quality personal relationships
- Close family bonds



When Communities Have High Social Capital...

- Parent participation in schools raises children's academic scores and reduces risky behavior
- Citizens resolve conflict and problems collectively
- The cost of business and social transactions is reduced
- Character traits that are good for the rest of society are developed and reinforced
- Positive interactions are increased which help people achieve personal goals
- Ability to cope with personal trauma is increased
- All forms of domestic abuse and neglect are lowered
- People are encouraged to ask others for help
- Adherence to community social values is fostered
- Drug and alcohol use, crime and anti-social behavior are reduced
- Citizen happiness increases
- Rich spiritual and emotional networks are encouraged in poor neighborhoods



When Communities Have High Social Capital...

In the area of health...

1. Social networks furnish money, convalescent care and transportation which reduce psychic and physical stress
2. All forms of unhealthy behavior are reduced. Social isolation often leads to excessive drinking, overeating, smoking, depression, loneliness, suicide, sleep disorders and many other health damaging behaviors.
3. People's immune systems are stimulated to fight disease and buffer stress
4. Trusting relationships improve health
5. Participation in voluntary associations increases longevity
6. Strong social ties result in lower rates of heart disease, circulatory problems and cancer in women



Decline in Social Capital -- Why?

1. **Generational change** 50%
 2. **TV and Electronic Entertainment** 25%
 3. **Suburbanization/Commuting/Sprawl** 10%
 4. **Two-parent working families and the pressure of time and money** 10%
 5. **Economic hard times**
 6. **Civil rights revolution**
 7. **Welfare state**
 8. **Divorce**
- 5%
-
- A large right-pointing chevron symbol, consisting of two lines that meet at a point on the right side. It is positioned to the right of items 5, 6, and 7, and its right-pointing tip is aligned with the 5% value.



INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY INVENTORY

1. Skills information
2. Community information
3. Enterprising interests & experiences
4. Personal information





1. Who produces the outcome?
2. How many people are involved?
3. What are the internal resources they used?

"Full democracy is the outcome"



COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ASSETS BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. What about needs assessments?
2. Who performs the asset mapping?
3. Computerization -- Low tech - High touch?
4. Are we looking at just the staff's assets or the people we serve as well?
5. What do we do after we conduct an asset mapping process?
6. How does Inside Out organizing differ from Alinsky organizing?

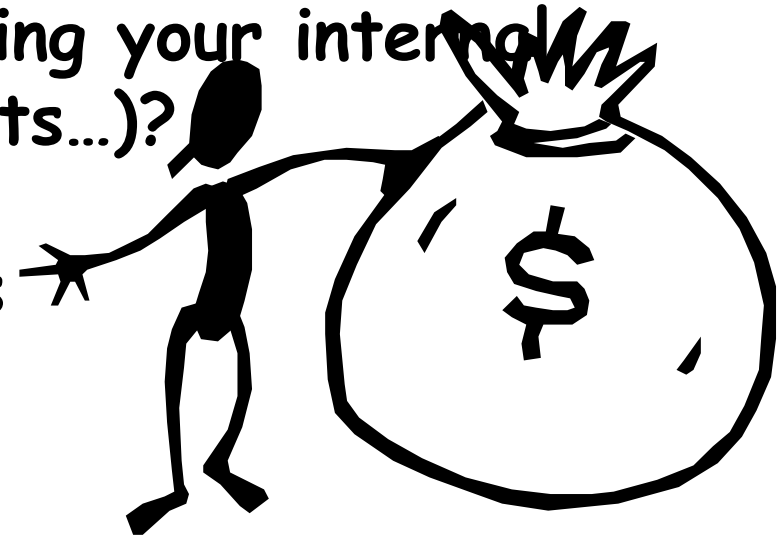


EMBARRASSING



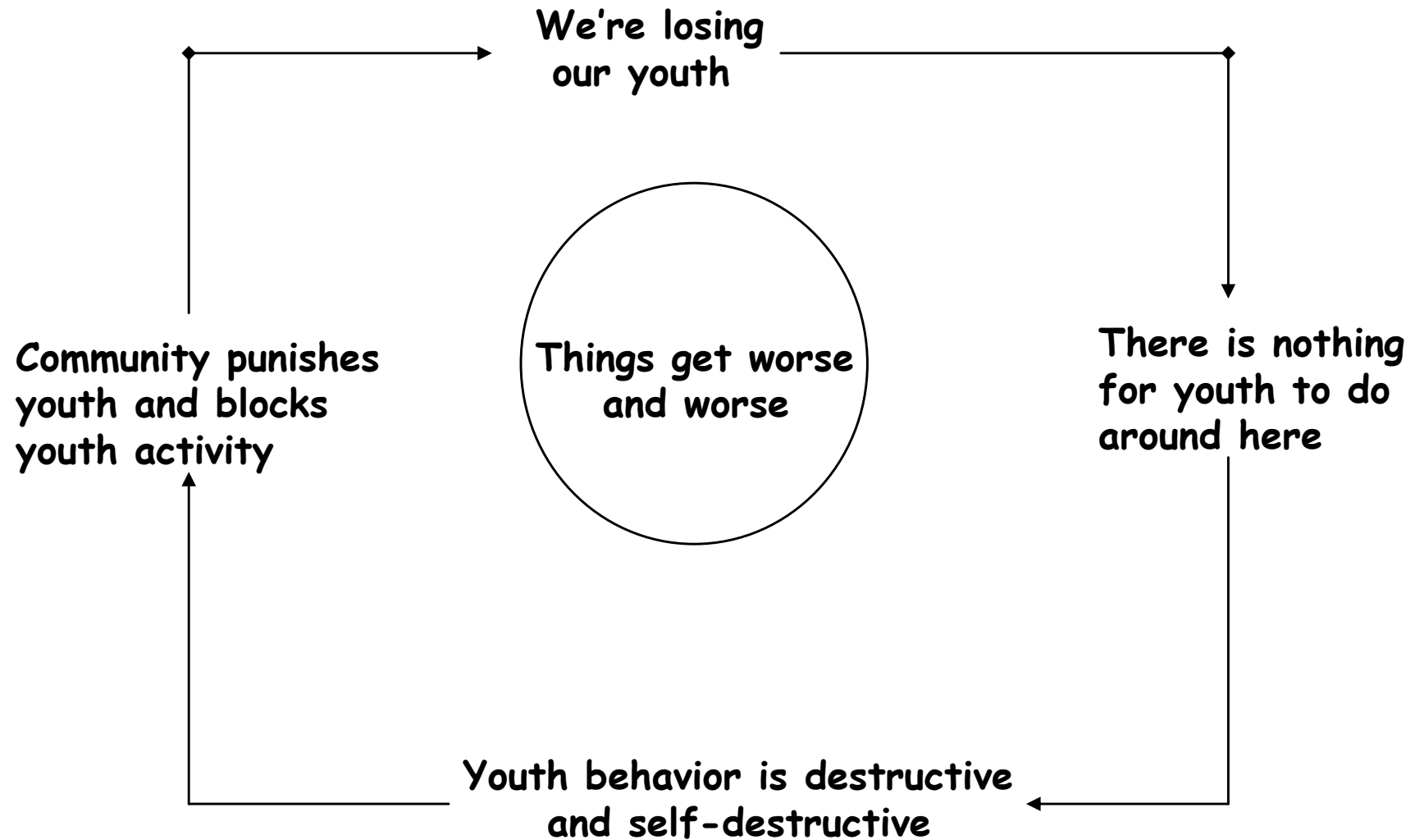
ORGANIZATIONAL TREASURE HUNT

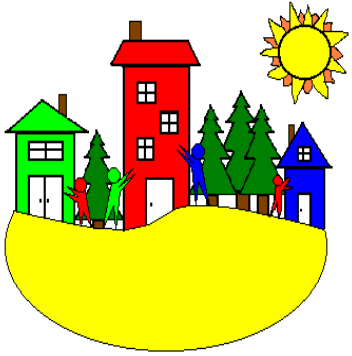
1. What are your goals for identifying your internal treasures, (gifts, resources, talents...)?
2. What are your internal resources (organizational and individual)?
3. Who is your community?
4. What is your connection to your community?
5. Who are your customers and how do you use them as assets and resources?
6. Who are your partners and what are their assets?





"Fixed Sum Dynamic" Negative Cycle of Youth in a Community





Gift Interviews

- What two gifts, talents or skills do you have that make you a valuable family member and friend?
- What two skills make you especially good at your paid or volunteer work?
- What talent do you have that not too many people know about?
- What is something that you love to do so much that you get lost in it for hours without getting bored?
- What are your 2-3 favorite hobbies?

ASSET MAPPING EXERCISE



1. Set a goal for mapping your community
2. What is your community? Describe the group you want to map - residents, your staff, your neighborhood, the area you serve, their demographics...
3. What is your connection to this community? Do you live there? Do you work there? Is it a group belong to?
4. Who will actually do the mapping? Residents are best!!!
5. Who will you share the information with when you have completed the task? An asset isn't an asset until it is shared and connected with others!!!

REASONS FOR HOSPITALIZATION

1. Automobile accidents
2. Interpersonal attacks
3. Accidents (non-auto)
4. Bronchial ailments
5. Alcoholism
6. Drug related problems both medically and non-medically administered
7. Dog bites





THE TIPPING POINT

- *The Power of the Few*
- *Stickiness Factor*
- *Social Context*

The Tipping Point: How Little Things can Make a Big Difference by Malcolm Gladwell

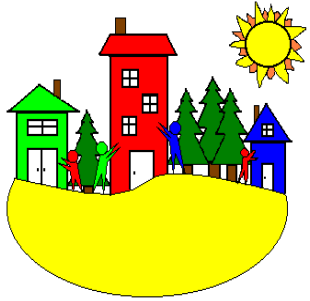


The Power of the Few* - the power of a small number of people to have enormous influence over our lives --- the power of *Connectors, Mavens and Salesmen

The power to infect people with our emotions, our passion and our ideas

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead



Stickiness Factor - discovering people's strengths so you can play to them makes an idea sticky or one that takes! The transmitters of stickiness of an idea in a social epidemic are direct marketers or Connectors, Mavens and Salesmen.

The best examples are Sesame Street, Blues Clues and I Love Lucy!

The real cause of most social epidemics or ideas that stuck are small and seemingly trivial



The Power of Context - Epidemics are sensitive to the conditions and circumstances the times and places in which they occur.

Powerful, yet small ideas such as "the Broken Windows" theory of crime reduction, the Zimbardo effect on getting good people to do evil things, and the Good Samaritan and "paying it forward" are all about context and situation. If people have the power to change the context or situation, they can have dramatic effects on outcomes.

The streets we walk down, the people we encounter, play a huge role in who we are and how we act.



CONNECTORS (Social Glue)

People who know lots of people and have the gift of bringing people together.

They have a truly extraordinary knack of making friends and acquaintances

They occupy many different worlds and subcultures

They have a combination of curiosity, self-confidence, sociability and energy



MAVENS (Human data banks!)

Active collectors of information who need to share it with others

Socially motivated - they collect information for a cause

They solve their own problems by solving the problems of others. They are motivated by their passion to help



SALESMEN (Persuaders)

They have the power to persuade us of something when we are unconvinced of what we are hearing

They are good at building relationships quickly

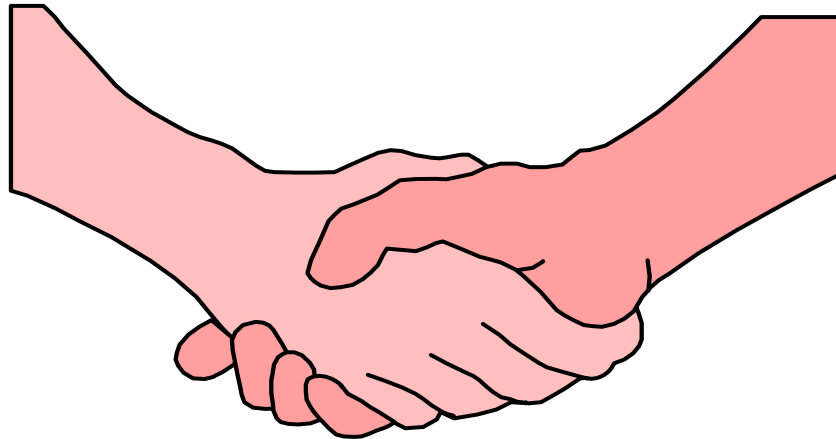
They use smiles, nods and other subtle cues to persuade others to do something

They are used to delivering a service you won't get anywhere else



WELCOMING THE STRANGER

"There are no strangers here;
only friends we haven't met yet!"



INSTITUTIONS	ASSOCIATIONS
Control	Consent
Produce lots of the same thing	Produce caring
Clients	Citizens





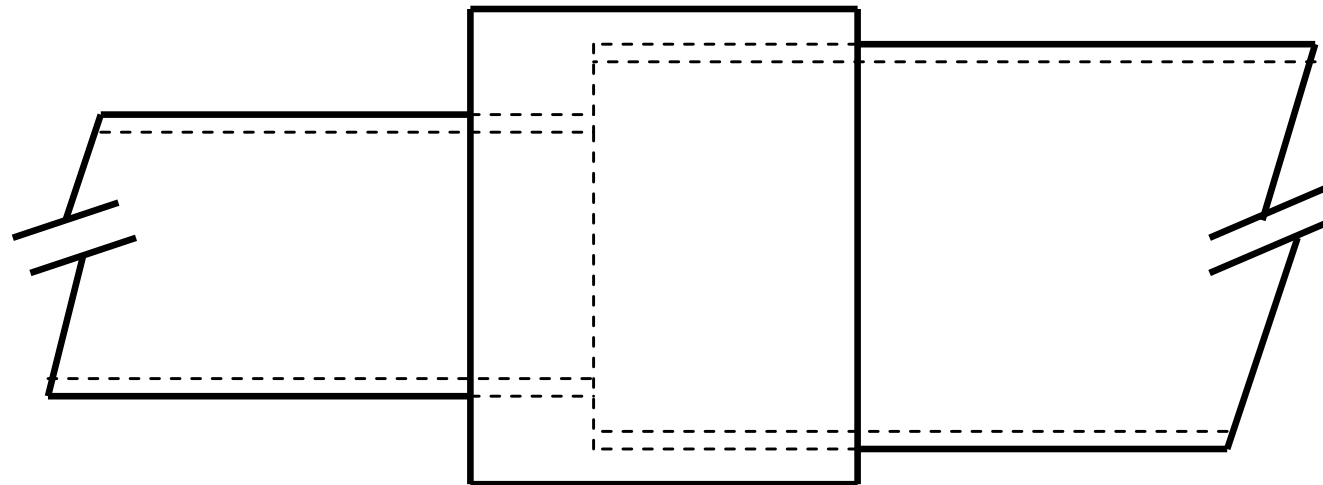
CONSEQUENCES OF THE POWER OF FOCUSING ON NEEDS

1. Internalizes a deficiency identity by youth
2. Destroys communication and relationships with youth and adults
3. Focuses on the people who work with youth, not the strengths of youth themselves
4. Rewards failure; produces dependency
5. Creates hopelessness

CONNECTORS



1. Link between community and institutions --- the link between citizen space and agency space
2. Connectors challenge people to do something in order to release their power in the community
3. Connectors are facilitators and organizers, not leaders



4. Connectors are servant leaders
5. Connectors do not do for others what they can do for themselves
6. Connectors do with; not for!
7. Connectors engage communities around a question; not an answer.

YOUTH NEEDS MAP



Unemployment

Truancy

Gangs

Single Parent Families

Teen Pregnancy

Illiteracy

Dropouts

Child Abuse

Crime

Mental Disability

Alcohol & Drug Abuse

Juvenile Delinquency

Lead Poisoning

Suicide & Depression

HEALTH NEEDS MAP



Unemployment

Asthma

Air
Pollution

Heart Disease

Physical
Disability

Illiteracy

Drug
Abuse

Child
Abuse

Mental
Disability

Alcoholism

Tobacco Addiction

Lead Poisoning

Suicide & Depression



ASSET BASED YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Robert Francis
Asset Based Community Development Institute
Northwestern University
rfrancis_99@yahoo.com