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Bridges Out of Poverty:
Strategies for Professionals and Communities

Welcome and Introduction

Creating a Mental Model of Generational Poverty

Break

Review Research Realities

Key Points

Lunch

Hidden Rules

Language, Story and Cognition

Break

Family Structure

Resources

Program Design

Evaluation and Adjournment

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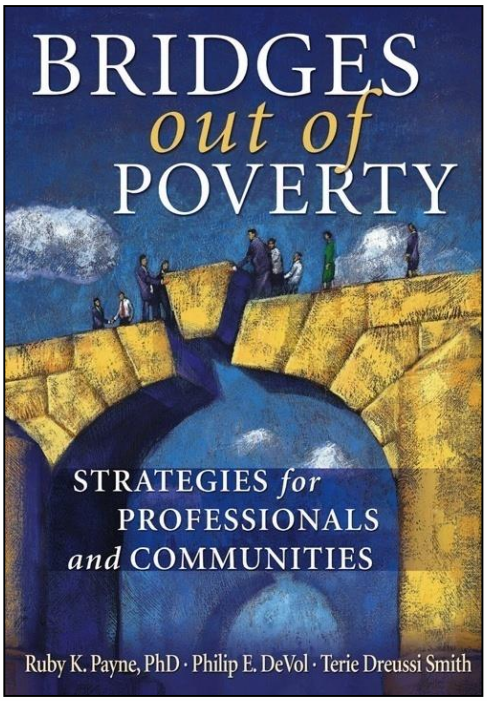


Bridges Out of Poverty

Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.
Philip DeVol
Terie Dreussi-Smith

Handouts

Version 3.5

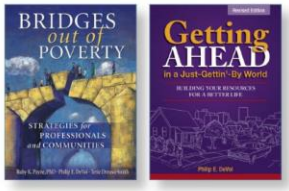
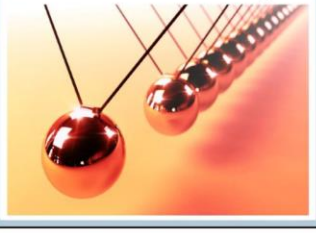
www.ahaprocess.com

BRIDGES AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL

BRIDGES out of POVERTY

GOALS

- To build a community model using Bridges Out of Poverty, an integrated system of resources
- To develop human capacity and opportunity for the under-resourced
- To provide a significant ROI to the community so all can live well

Individual	Increase Resources in Order to Stabilize Life	Understand the Hidden Rules	Educate the Resourced and the Under-Resourced 
Institutional	Increase Resources in Order to Stabilize Life	Reduce Silos Change Institutional Policies	Have Under-Resourced Individuals as Board Members
Community	Build a Steering Committee	Involve All Community Sectors and All Economic Classes in the Planning Process	Identify the ROI
Policy	Address All Causes of Poverty 	Identify and Eliminate Barriers	Develop an Abstract Infrastructure to Build Human Capacity and Opportunity

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Utilizing the Bridges Out of Poverty Concepts

Name:_____

Organization:_____

What are three ways you can improve your personal skills for working with individuals in poverty?

1.

2.

3.

What are three ways you can improve programming, theory, and structure to better serve individuals in poverty?

1.

2.

3.

What are three ways you can improve the community system to better serve people in poverty?

1.

2.

3.

What, if any, follow-up services does your organization need?

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It's Due to Social Coherence

"Does a person have a sense of being linked to the mainstream of society, of being in the dominant subculture, of being in accord with society's values?"

"Can a person perceive society's messages as information, rather than as noise? In this regard, the poor education that typically accompanies poverty biases toward the latter."

"... has a person been able to develop an ideal set of coping responses for dealing with society's challenges?"

"... does a person have the resources to carry out plans?"

"... does a person get meaningful feedback from society—do their messages make a difference?"

—Robert Sapolsky, Aaron Antonovsky

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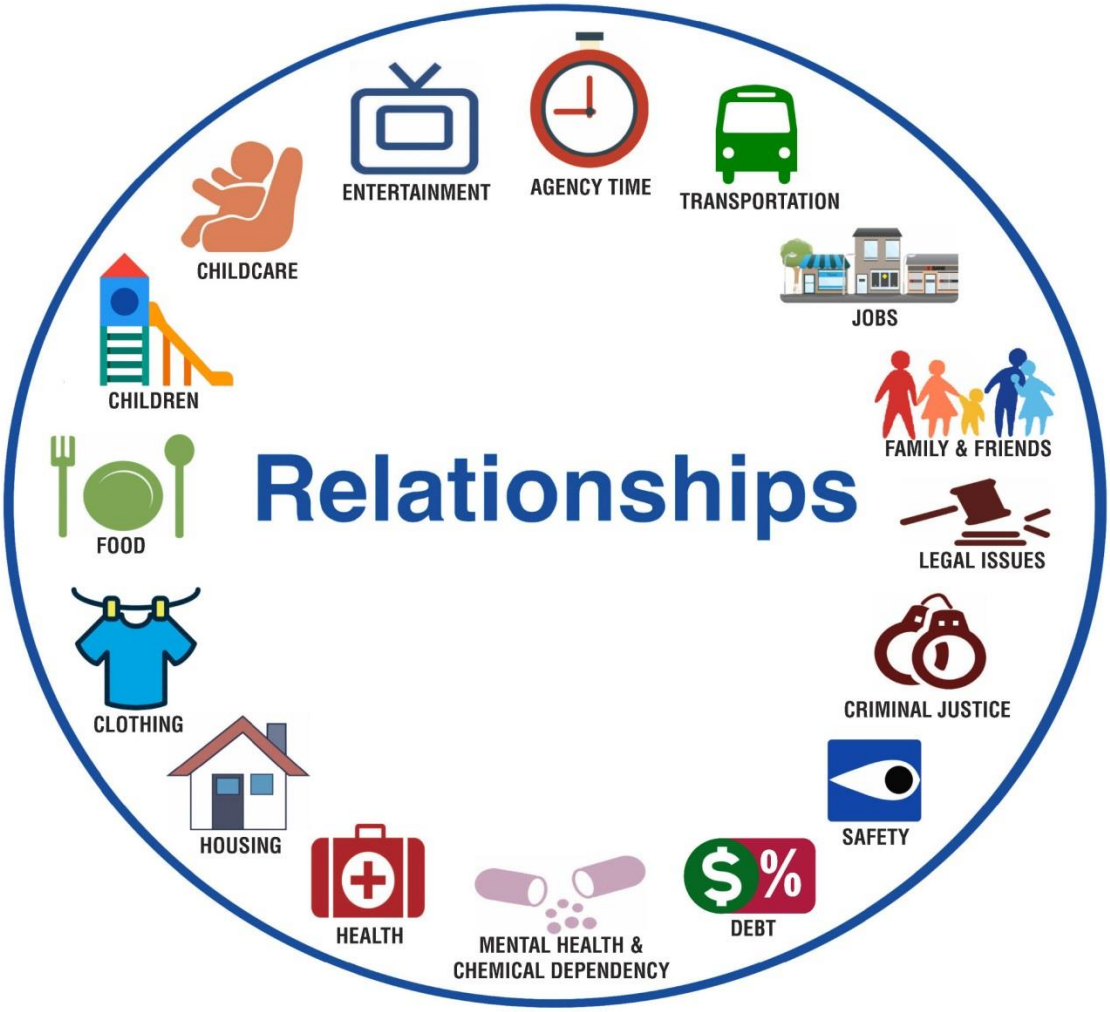
Mental Model for Poverty



Actual responses from people living in poverty.

Developed by Phil DeVol

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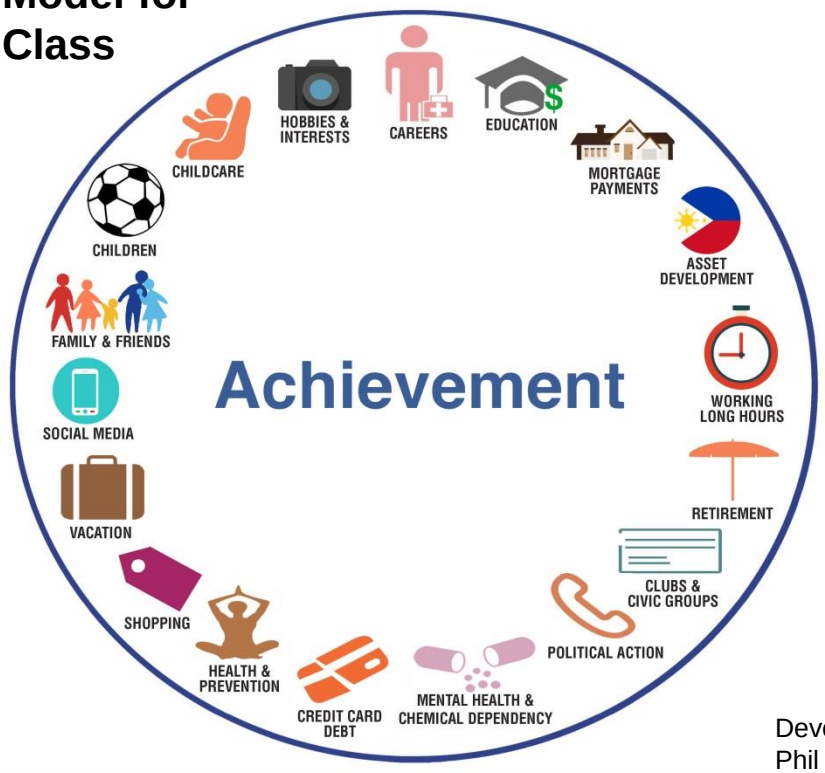
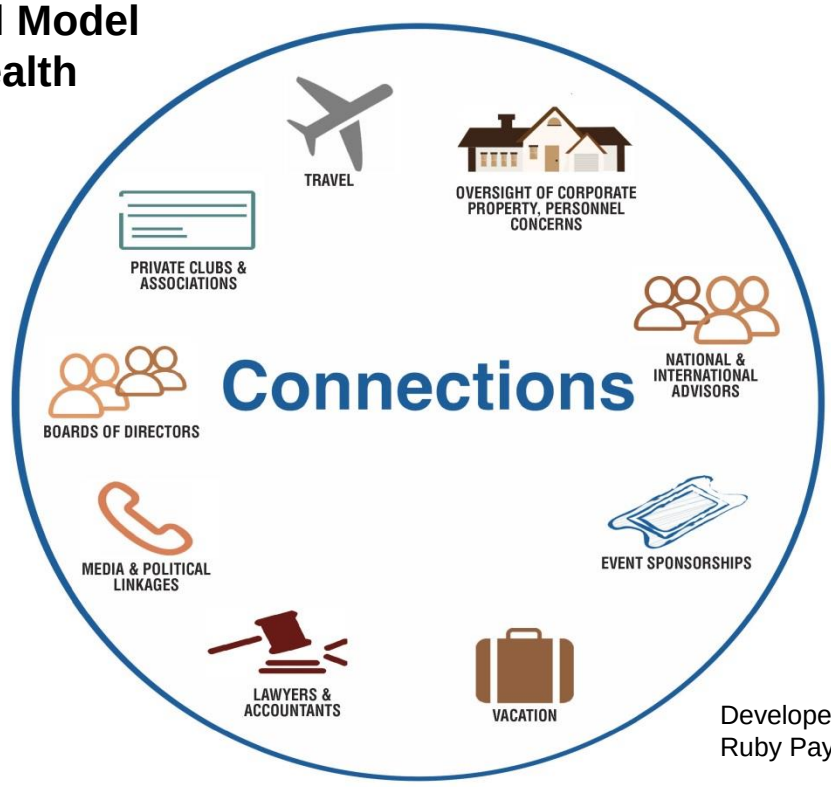
Mental Model for Middle Class



Developed by
Phil DeVol

Mental Model for Wealth



Developed by
Ruby Payne

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Tyranny of the Moment

"The need to act
overwhelms
any willingness
people have to learn."

Source: The Art of the Long View *by Peter Schwartz*

"The healthier you are
psychologically,
or the less you may seem
to need to change, the
more you can change."

Source: Management of the Absurd *(1996) by Richard Farson*

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Mental Model of Generational Poverty

- It is a description of the concrete experience.
- It is an abstract representation of poverty.
- It depicts vulnerability.
- It depicts the relative importance and interlocking nature of the elements.
- It is a depiction of the trap: no future story, no choice, no power.

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Community Sustainability Grid

A Comprehensive Planning Tool for Bridges Steering Committees

Name the Barrier: Work one barrier at a time.	**Individual Behavior**	**Human and Social Capital in the Community**	**Exploitation**	**Political/ Economic Structures**
Individual Action				
Organizational Action				
Community Action				
Policy				

Address All Causes of Poverty

Source: *Facilitator Notes for Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting'-By World* Revised Edition by Philip E. DeVol (2013).

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Causes of Poverty—Research Continuum

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIORS AND CIRCUMSTANCES	COMMUNITY CONDITIONS	EXPLOITATION	POLITICAL/ ECONOMIC STRUCTURES
Definition: Research on the choices, behaviors, and circumstances of people in poverty	*Definition:* Research on resources and human and social capital in the city or county	*Definition:* Research on the impact of exploitation on individuals and communities	*Definition*: Research on political, economic, and social policies and systems at the organizational, city/county, state, national, and international levels
Sample topics: ~ Racism ~ Discrimination by age, gender, disability, race, sexual identity ~ Bad loans ~ Credit-card debt ~ Lack of savings ~ Skill sets ~ Dropping out ~ Lack of education ~ Alcoholism ~ Disabilities ~ Job loss ~ Teen pregnancies ~ Early language experience ~ Child-rearing strategies ~ Bankruptcy due to health problems ~ Street crime ~ White-collar crime ~ Dependency ~ Work ethic ~ Lack of organizational skills ~ Lack of amenities	Sample topics: ~ Racism ~ Discrimination by age, gender, disability, race, sexual identity ~ Layoffs ~ Middle-class flight ~ Plant closings ~ Underfunded schools ~ Weak safety net ~ Criminalizing poverty ~ Employer insurance premiums rising in order to drop companies with record of poor health ~ Charity that leads to dependency ~ High rates of illness leading to high absenteeism and low productivity ~ Brain drain* ~ City and regional planning ~ Mix of employment/wage opportunities ~ Loss of access to high-quality schools, childcare, and preschool ~ Downward pressure on wages	Sample topics: ~ Racism ~ Discrimination by age, gender, disability, race, sexual identity ~ Payday lenders ~ Lease/purchase outlets ~ Subprime mortgages ~ Sweatshops ~ Human trafficking* ~ Employment and labor law violations* ~ Wage and benefits theft ~ Some landlords ~ Sex trade ~ Internet scams ~ Drug trade ~ Poverty premium (the poor pay more for goods and services) ~ Day labor	Sample topics: ~ Racism ~ Discrimination by age, gender, disability, race, sexual identity ~ Financial oligarchy—the military, industrial, congressional complex ~ Return on political investment* (ROPI) ~ Corporate lobbyists ~ Bursting “bubbles”* ~ Free Trade Agreements ~ Recessions* ~ Lack of wealth-creating mechanisms ~ Stagnant wages* ~ Insecure pensions ~ Healthcare costs ~ Lack of insurance ~ De-industrialization ~ Globalization ~ Increased productivity ~ Minimum wage, living wage, self-sufficient wage ~ Globalization ~ Declining middle class ~ Decline in unions ~ Taxation patterns ~ Wealth-creating mechanisms

Source: *Getting Ahead In a Just-Gettin'-By World* Revised Edition. © 2013 by Philip E. DeVol

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Key Points

1. This workshop focuses on economic environments.
2. Economic class is relative.
3. Economic class is a continuous line, not a clear-cut distinction.
4. Generational poverty and situational poverty are different.
5. This work is based on patterns within the environments of economic class. All patterns have exceptions.
6. An individual brings with him/her the hidden rules of the class in which he/she was raised.
7. Schools and businesses operate from middle class norms and use the hidden rules of middle class.
8. In order to build relationships of mutual respect between economic classes, we need to be aware of more than one set of hidden rules.
9. The more we understand how class affects us and are open to hear how it affects others, the more effective we can be.
10. In order to achieve, one may have to give up relationships (at least for a time).

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Bridges Constructs

1. Use the lens of economic class to understand and take responsibility for your own societal experience while being open to the experiences of others.
2. At the intersections of poverty with other social disparities (racial, gender, physical ability, age, etc.), address inequalities in access to resources.
3. Define poverty as the extent to which a person, institution, or community does without resources.
4. Build relationships of mutual respect.
5. Base plans on the premise that people in all classes, sectors, and political persuasions are problem solvers and need to be at the decision making table.
6. Base plans on accurate mental models of poverty, middle class, and wealth.
7. At the individual, institutional, and community/policy levels: Stabilize the environment, remove barriers to transition, and build resources.
8. Address all causes of poverty (four areas of research).
9. Build long-term support for individual, institutional, and community/policy transition.
10. Build economically sustainable communities in which everyone can live well.

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POWER

POVERTY

Power linked to personal respect
Ability to fight
Can't stop bad things from happening

MIDDLE CLASS

Power/respect separated
Responds to position
Power in information and institutions

WEALTH

Power in expertise, connections
Power in stability
Influences policy and direction

DRIVING FORCES

POVERTY

Survival, relationships, entertainment

MIDDLE CLASS

Work, achievement, material security

WEALTH

Financial, political, social connections

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Registers of Language

REGISTER	EXPLANATION
FROZEN	Language that is always the same. For example: Lord's Prayer, wedding vows, etc.
FORMAL	The standard sentence syntax and word choice of work and school. Has complete sentences and specific word choices.
CONSULTATIVE	Formal register when used in conversation. Discourse pattern not quite as direct as formal register.
CASUAL	Language between friends and is characterized by a 400- to 800-word vocabulary. Word choice general and not specific. Conversation dependent upon non-verbal assists. Sentence syntax often incomplete.
INTIMATE	Language between lovers or twins. Language of sexual harassment.

Adapted from the work of Martin Joos

Research About Language in Children, Ages 1 to 4, in Stable Households by Economic Group

Number of words exposed to	Economic group	Affirmations (strokes)	Prohibitions (discounts)
13 million words	**Welfare**	**1 for every**	**2**
26 million words	**Working class**	**2 for every**	**1**
45 million words	**Professional**	**6 for every**	**1**

Source: *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children.* (1995). Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley.

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Definition of Poverty

To better understand people from poverty,
the definition of poverty will be

"the extent to which an individual does without resources."

Those resources are the following …

Definition of Resources

FINANCIAL
Being able to purchase the goods and services of that class and sustain it.

EMOTIONAL
Being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior. Shows itself through choices.

MENTAL
Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life.

SPIRITUAL
Believing in (divine) purpose and guidance.

PHYSICAL
Having physical health and mobility.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS
Having friends, family, and backup resources available to access in times of need. These are external resources.

RELATIONSHIPS/ROLE MODELS
Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriate, **nurturing,** and who do not engage in destructive behavior.

KNOWLEDGE OF HIDDEN RULES
Knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group.

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Questions to Ask About Resources

NOTE: These questions are not designed to be used in an ask/answer format with a customer. They are a powerful tool for your team to use to find the areas in which an individual is rich.

FINANCIAL

- Is $574 per month per person available? *
- Is there enough income to cover all expenses?
- Is your credit/debt ratio above 37%?
- Do you spend more than 30% of your income on rent/mortgage?
- Do you have enough savings to cover six months of expenses?

* Based on 125% of 2010 Poverty Guidelines for Family of Four: $27,563 per year/$2,297 per month.

EMOTIONAL

- Is there evidence that the individual has persistence?
- Does the individual have the words to express feelings in a way others can receive?
- Does the individual have coping strategies (for adverse situations) that are not destructive to self or others?

MENTAL

- Can the individual read, write, and compute?
- Can the individual plan?
- Can the individual problem-solve?
- Can the individual understand cause and effect, then identify consequence?

SPIRITUAL

- Does the individual believe in divine guidance and assistance?
- Does the individual have belief in something larger than self?
- Does the individual perceive an abstract and larger perspective that provides depth and meaning to life (culture, science, higher power, etc.)?

PHYSICAL

- Can the individual take care of him-/herself without help?
- Does the physical body allow the person to work and to learn?
- Does the individual have transportation resources to get from one place to another?
- Does the individual have health and wellness?

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Who is the individual's bonding social capital? Is it positive?
- Who is the individual's bridging social capital? Is it positive?

KNOWLEDGE OF MIDDLE CLASS HIDDEN RULES

- Does this individual know the hidden rules of work and school?
- How important are achievement and work?
- Will this individual give up relationships for achievement (at least for some period of time)?

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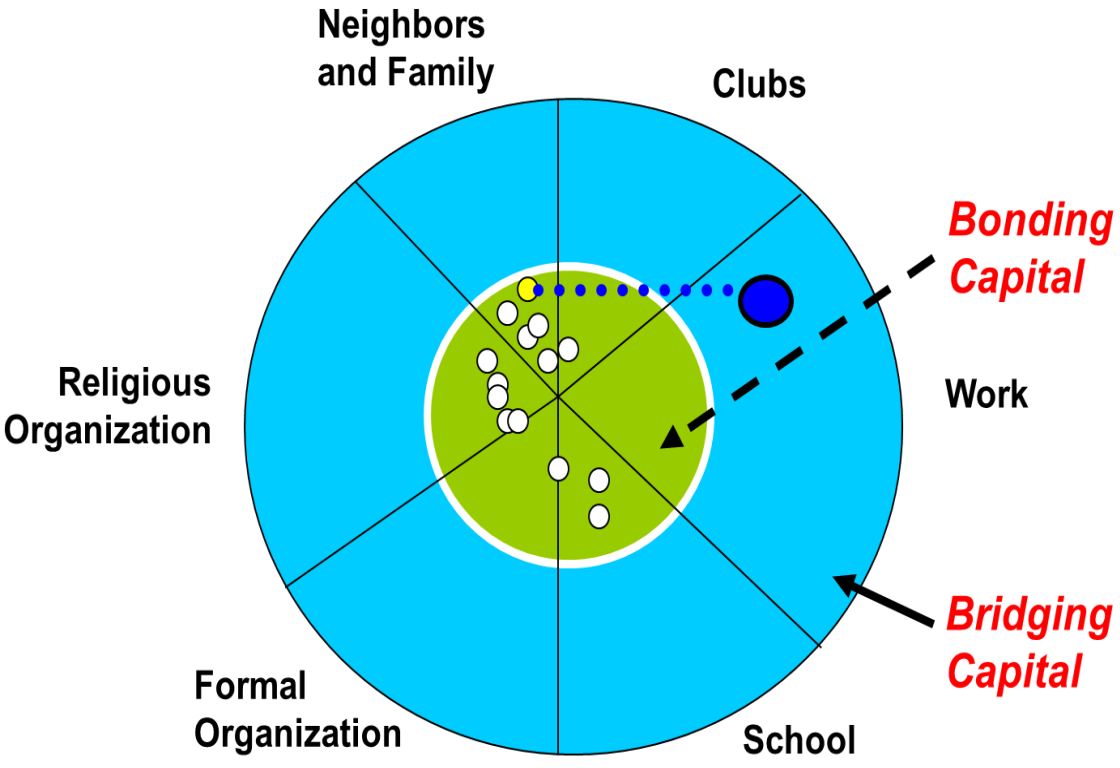
Definition of Social Capital

- Connections, social networks, norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness
- Private and public aspects
  - Bonding
  - Bridging
  - Thick and thin

Social Capital



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Principles of Change

- People in poverty are problem solvers.
- Stabilize the environment.
- Provide support during transition.
- Build future stories, practice choice, and develop power and influence.
- Communities, families, and individuals build resources.
- Bring members of all 3 economic classes to the table.
- Develop strategies across all 4 areas of research.
- Plan, monitor, and evaluate using the Social Health Index.

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Additonal Resoures for Bridges Out of Poverty

Articles

Neighborhood Effects and Poverty (Payne)
https://www.ahaprocess.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Neighborhood-Effects-and-Poverty.pdf

Social Risk Factors Through the Triple Lens (Payne & DeVol)
https://www.ahaprocess.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Risk-Factors-Through-Triple-Lens.pdf

12 Thinking Tools for Bridges Out of Poverty Initiatives (Devol)
http://www.ahaprocess.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/12-Thinking-Tools-for-Bridges-Initiatives.pdf

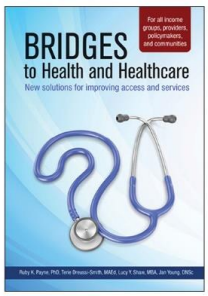
Starting a Bridges Community [video] (DeVol)
http://youtu.be/uJHeMGvITAM

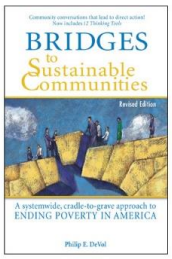
5-Point Stability Scale (5 indicators per category), Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World (DeVol)
https://www.ahaprocess.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Stability-Scale-Indicators.pdf

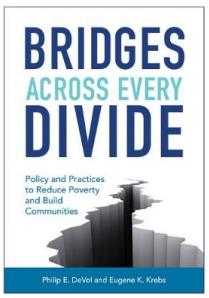
The Policy Paper on Education: How Do We Create Intellectual Capital (Talent and Expertise) on a Mass Scale? (Payne) https://www.ahaprocess.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/How-Do-We-Create-Intellectual-Capital.pdf

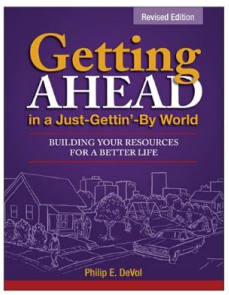
What Information Does *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* Have That Cannot Be Obtained Easily from Other Sources? Why Do Critics Love to Hate It and Practitioners Love to Use It? (Payne)
http://www.ahaprocess.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/What-Info-Does-Framework-Have-2.pdf

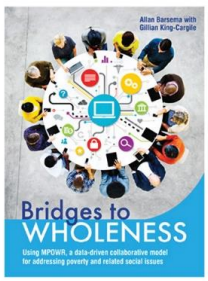
Publications

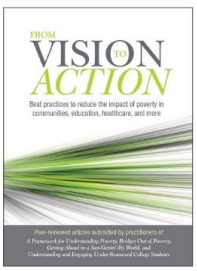


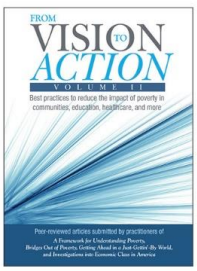


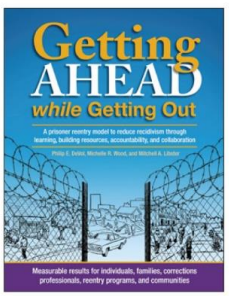












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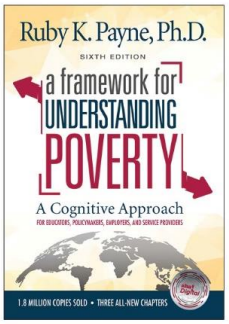
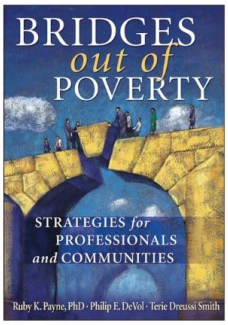
Share Knowledge and Exchange Ideas

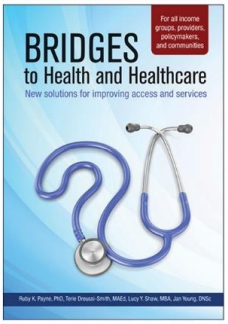


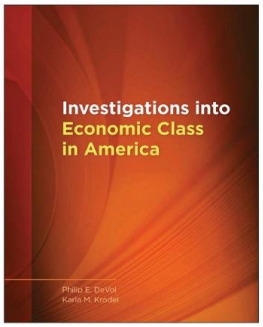
Want to be an agent of change in your community?

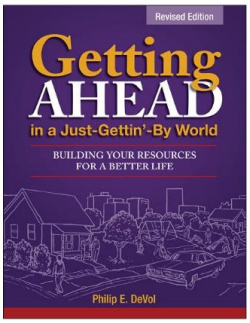
Do you want to train others?

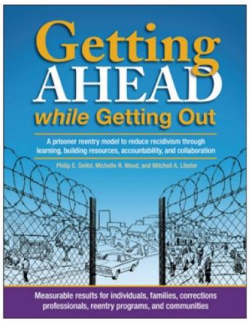
Become a Certified Trainer











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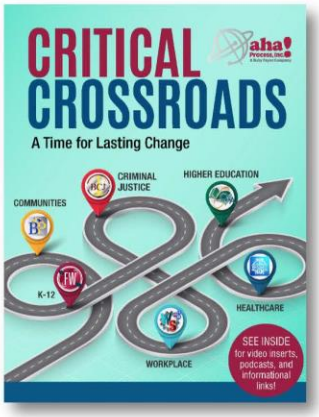

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