



W5. Beyond Isolation: Developing Social Capital

Wednesday, June 5, 2019
11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Moderator:

- Carol Mizoguchi, Family Assistance Program Specialist, Office of Family Assistance, Washington, D.C.

Presenters:

- Dr. Armon Perry, Project Director/Associate Professor, 4 Your Child/University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky
- Lyman Legters, Senior Director, Casey Family Programs, Greenbelt, Maryland

Carol Mizoguchi: I'm Carol Mizoguchi, Family Assistance Program Specialist at the Office of Family Assistance, in ACF. I'm excited that you're here and I'm very excited to have the opportunity to have this conversation around social capital.

I am going to give the definition and frame the conversation and then the two panelists will talk a little bit about their work. We want to hear your questions and answer them in order to give you clarity around social capital, because we recognize that it's an old topic, but it's a new topic. There are still a lot of different schools out there on the subject.

We are mainly coming from within the context of how to help fathers move up the social economic ladder, how to help them leverage their relationships, not only in their personal lives, but also in their professional lives and in the community.

I was personally introduced to this topic and the whole concept of social capital many years ago as a parent of a child who was in Head Start. Head Start continues to boast they are the original 2gen and the original social capital. They definitely have those principles, but there's a little bit more evolution around the whole idea of social capital since the commencement of Head Start.

Lyman Legters and I have known each other for over 36 years. Over time, we've developed a certain amount of trust. And, as far as the reciprocity, there are times in my career where I've had to call on Lyman. Yesterday he recounted a story about work he was doing in kinship care with Casey Family Programs. He invited me to participate on a panel at a conference. That is one example of social capital. When I was first asked to put together a panel on this topic, I reached out to my network from my work with Casey Family Programs from Cities United and asked who some people are that I should have on the panel. I asked my colleague John Allen who oversees the contract for the fatherhood project. Dr. Armon Perry's name was at the top of two



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lists. Again, that's social capital. That is a concrete example of the way we leverage our networks. When we think about fathers and families, research suggests that 85% of the jobs, especially jobs that are in the higher paying bracket, are never advertised. How do you think people hear about them? Word of mouth, their networks. If you know people that are in the know, then you are more likely to have access to the jobs that aren't advertised.

Social capital helps people develop connections outside of their norm, outside of their regular community. Often people will talk about the peer networks they have within their agencies. They're helping participants learn to rely on one another, which is great. If I'm in a distressed community, this peer network will likely be in that same community. This network won't always be helpful in connecting people. So, it's important people establish social capital with individuals they wouldn't typically be exposed to.

When we're talking about social capital, we're talking about resources available through your personal and business networks. These are resources that reside in networks and relationships. One key aspect of social capital is around relationships and then also, social capital is reciprocal. It's very important to think about the give and take. The only way you can really give, and take, is to have the other key aspect which is trust.

Often with programs you'll have a mentoring program and it stops at that. Me as a mentor, I am willing to give you information, but I might not give you access to my Rolodex because I haven't really developed that relationship with you, and don't trust that if I refer you to Lisa, that you're going to behave in a certain way that's not going to embarrass me. That will be a reflection of my relationship with Lisa. You have to develop trust. Then there is networking and the bonding, the feeling of trust and safety, the reciprocity, participation and diversity.

There are two areas of the bonding capital and then the bridging capital. Bringing resources into the community and making people aware of resources outside of their normal community. I will now turn it over to Dr. Perry.

Dr. Perry: Thank you all for being here. As Carol mentioned, my name is Armon Perry. I'm a Professor at the University of Louisville and teach in the School of Social Work. I'm also a Project Director of the OFA funded fatherhood project, New Pathways for Fathers. Our project is called 4 Your Child. I want to talk to you about the way in which I sort of vacillate between those two roles and have been intentional about trying to create spaces for our dads to be able to move into new areas and new spaces and new networks based on the privilege that I've been provided with in my dual role as a university professor and project director.

The first question is, what is social capital? In many ways we have responded to that. When I think about social capital, I think about the idea that it's the extent to which you are connected to





people who can put you in position to showcase your talent. Social capital is near and dear to my heart. I shared with my co-panelists yesterday that I spent some time in Washington, D.C. My first full-time job at 22 was an internship, as part of my master's degree, in the US House of Representatives working for Richard Gephardt, Democratic Leadership Office. I found out about a position in the Capitol. It was a low-level staff position and I was encouraged to apply and said no. After being told several times that I needed to apply, I ended up applying because I didn't want to disappoint a woman named Phyllis Austin, who was Chief of Staff for Congressman Earl Hilliard. I was afraid that if I didn't do what she told me to do, I was going to fail my practicum and I wouldn't graduate. Lo and behold, they called me. The only job I ever had was working part-time at grocery stores in Alabama, ringing up groceries, bagging groceries and bringing in carts from outside.

Certainly, I wasn't going to go from working produce at Winn-Dixie to working in the US Capitol. If you're from where I'm from, a socially, politically, economically disadvantaged neighborhood, that's certainly not how things work. I'm from a place where the cost of living is going up, but the chance of living is going down. Things like that don't happen to people like me being from places where I'm from. But again, we're talking social capital. I'm in position because Phyllis said, you need to apply. Are you connected to people who can put you in position to showcase your talent? I was connected to Phyllis.

Many of the other interns were the children of close personal friends of Congressman Hilliard. My dad didn't hang out with congressmen, so that was not the case for me. Rather than going to D.C. to hang out, I was there to work, and it must've been that Phyllis saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. She took a special interest in me. She handpicked me for it because, for whatever reason, she felt I would be able to do the job. The night before the interview I went online and memorized policy agenda. I went in and told them all of the wonderful things that I would do if I were in charge, and they were exactly synonymous with what they were already doing. To my surprise, they called me back for a second interview and then gave me the job. I later found out that it was rigged from the very beginning. The person doing the hiring was Congressman Hilliard's bid whist partner. For those of you who don't know what bid whist is, it's a variation of the card game spades. I mean, it's a variation on spades, right? Bid whist players will tell you that bid whist is to spades as chess is to checkers. Anyway, because Congressman Hilliard played bid whist with a woman who just so happened to be doing the hiring, I ended up with a job in the US Capitol at 22 years old with only experience in bagging groceries and bringing in carts at a grocery store.

What ended up happening for me in that time and in that space was I walked away from that experience knowing I could do anything in the world. If I could go from my neighborhood where the benchmark for success was being able to buy a car with automatic windows, to getting a job in the US Capitol at 22 years old, there was absolutely nothing that I couldn't do. I have carried





that with me. Back to the theme around social capital, what ends up happening is everyone connected to me stands to benefit in a similar way.

How can we develop, manufacture, and leverage it? That story is an attempt to speak to that. I'll say a word or two more about that because I want to spend most of our time engaging in a dialogue, but I think more of you and less of me is what's good for this interaction.

Here are some of the things that, particularly as they relate to our fatherhood program, we try to be intentional about in terms of connecting our dads to people, agencies, and organizations that can put them in position to showcase their talent and ability. First and foremost is parenting knowledge and parenting skills. I know a lot of times when we talk fatherhood, that's coded language for workforce development and jobs. I'm a man just like the men in our fatherhood program. I have children and they are financial liabilities. They cost money, but they don't bring any in, so I fully understand the need for income. We emphasize parenting skills. We work with a population that is largely low income and just like Carol said, in many of the spaces that our dads inhabit, there's not a lot of financial opportunity. What ends up happening is we have this narrative in our society that tells us that their first primary, and in some cases the only contribution they can make to the children, is through financial vision. Nothing could be further from the truth.

When they are not in a position to provide financially, they walk around thinking that there is no contribution that they can make to the children's growth and development. The first thing we try to do is dismantle that and help them understand they are making a significant contribution by attending to their child from a nurturing and caregiving standpoint. Then we try to work with them around supplementing their capacity to do these other things that the world tells them they need to do, and they themselves believe are important.

We talk childcare, we provide resources and referrals around childcare, and crisis management. We try to build a sense of community in our workshops so that the men begin to rely on one another and on facilitators. I make it a habit of attending at least one session in each of the cohorts so they get to know me, get to know my face, and be whatever I can be to them. They know exactly who I am. They know how to get hold of me. There is no artificial buffer or layer between them and me. They see me walking the streets, see me in the community, and at workshops. They have my email and my phone number.

Job opportunities. We do contract work and referrals with an organization called KentuckianaWorks, and all of our men are referred to them. On the workforce development side, they can be put in positions to receive access to resources to hopefully obtain a skill or trade or job in a high demand field; or, obtain post-secondary educational training that positions them for a job.





Resource identification and acquisition is sort of a catchall. Whatever it is that we can do in whatever way we can, we try to do it. These are some cartoons. I told Carol and Lyman yesterday that much of the way we understand the world comes through either sports or cartoons. If you're anything like me, all of those things resonate with you.

The first one I draw your attention to is the bottom right. There's a boot. That's an intentional effort to draw attention to the tried and true American fallacy that one can pull him or herself up by the bootstraps, which is foolishness. That's part of a narrative that we've created as an attempt to prop up people who ended up being successful and gives them an opportunity to think that they indeed have hit a triple. More often than not, what has happened is they were born on third base. Again, we're talking about the way in which people get put in positions and then sometimes creates a space for people who think that they've done it all on their own. You can see people with a sling on because we try to reject that and resist that. When I talk to our dads, we talk about the sort of recipe for success in America, and the first ingredient is time management. You have to be about your business and don't waste your time. Time is the most precious commodity we have, and once it's gone, you can't get it back. There's no way to replicate it and no way to artificially reproduce it, so you can't waste it.

The second ingredient is perseverance. When I talk about perseverance, I talk about being involved in street fights. And if you're from where I'm from, you may have been involved in a fight or two. If you've ever been involved in a fight, you know that the very first thing that happens after you stop swinging is you get knocked out. That speaks to the importance of perseverance. Life is such that the only shot you have is to keep swinging, you can't stop swinging. Life is going to knock every single one of us down. Life has knocked all of us down. One of the things that separates some of us from others is some of us are willing to get up and keep swinging.

The third and most important ingredient is social capital. Are you connected to the people who can put you in position to showcase whatever talent, ability and capacity you have? And so, in a way, relationships and connections. We talked to our dads about that three-part recipe. We talked to them about the idea that they should treat every single interaction with every single person they come into contact with as if it were an interview. You have no idea who those people are or who or what they're connected to. You have no idea what ways you would be able to leverage that relationship at some point in the future.

What you're looking at now is a social media post that is connected to our program. This is a graduation ceremony and you can see one of our facilitators in the background with her face blurry, which is intentional, so as to draw attention and emphasize the embrace that's happening in the foreground. That's one of our dads hugging the other facilitator. We talked to our dads about the idea that our project is more than a program, it's a brotherhood. What we're trying to do





is manufacture and create an intentional space where men have an opportunity to engage in dialogue and discussion around a topic that could not be more important; but, do so in a way that is a little bit different than what they typically get, which is a finger wag and a deficit framing.

We're trying to empower dads to help them understand that their role is unique and irreplaceable, and if you aren't doing it, then you can't guarantee that anyone else is. We try to surround them with as much support as possible. Here are more social media posts and all of these are resource identification acquisition opportunities that we're providing to our alumni group. We ask dads to come into our program and we try to treat them as well as we can. Once they come, they've made a commitment to spend that time with us, and in return we commit to providing them with as many different opportunities and access to information as possible. Through our relationship with the executive director of the Urban League, we help them get their records expunged. Some of our men moved up and fast tracked on the waiting list. That is social capital at its finest. The second one is fades for fathers. One of my network connections is a barber. We've worked out an arrangement where if I give him a call and send him a name, whether or not the dad has \$20 for a haircut for his child, he's able to walk out with a fresh fade. We want to make sure our dads are looking sharp and, more important, we want to make sure that our dads are in a position to keep their children looking sharp. They can go to school and focus on learning and not have to be distracted with whether or not people are laughing or talking about them in a disparaging way.

The third is an opportunity we were able to create, manufacture, and facilitate for our dads to obtain prom attire for their older children. This is such an important moment in their lives, making memories that can carry them forward as they close out their 12th grade education.

These are emails that chronicle a story of a man named Jay Sean. I visit Router Correctional Facility maybe once every two or three months to teach a parenting session for men who are being released. One day at the security checkpoint someone called my name. I'm immediately concerned that someone knows my name. I turn and it was a man named Jay Sean, who was in the computer lab looking to apply to the University of Louisville. He was interested in being a social worker because of his family having interaction with the system and he himself having benefited from the services of social workers. He wanted to pay it forward once he was released. He recognized my picture from the website. He also showed up in the recruiting session for our fatherhood project. I talked to his probation officer who confirmed Jay was going to be released in about 90 days. I've learned to be skeptic because people will tell you, "Once I'm released, I'll be there. You'll see me." To Jay's credit, four or five months later, he showed up in one of our sessions and attended every single session, graduated, and was named MVP of the class. The facilitators do that for the most engaged and participatory dad. Jay did apply to University of Louisville. He was denied. They gave him no reason why. I told him to try again at the end of the semester; and send an email to a woman named Jenny Soy. He said Jenny was the person who told him he was denied." I said, "Jenny is the Chief Admissions Officer at the University. She





owes me a favor. "Here's what you do. Send Jenny an email asking if she will share with you the reasons why you were denied. I want you to copy me on the email, giving me an opportunity to respond and vouch for you in a way that is affirming, but doesn't reveal that I have a hidden agenda." He sent the email to Jenny. I respond saying, "Listen, to whatever extent I have any credibility or good will, or social capital built up with you, Jenny, I want to use it all right here. If it were a poker game, I'm pushing all my chips to the middle on Jay Sean's behalf." The last email, again, you can't read it there, but it's basically him confirming a few weeks later when he was admitted to the University of Louisville. Hopefully two or three years from now, Jay Sean will be walking across the stage as a college graduate, being in a position to better provide for his family, putting them in a position to where they don't have to make the same type of decisions that he felt compelled to make. In some ways our program was a small part in that. Again, we're talking about social capital, the way in which you cannot just mentor people, but actually open up your network so that other people are able to showcase their abilities and talents. Once Jay Sean graduates, he will have the talent and ability to do that. All he needed was an opportunity. I see our program, and myself, as a vessel for people to receive access to opportunities. I certainly wouldn't be standing here, at least not in this capacity, if it weren't for people who saw things in me that I didn't see in myself; and, gave me an opportunity to grow and mature.

I'm going to stop and turn it over to my co-panelist, Lyman.

Lyman Legters: Good afternoon. I'm Lyman Legters, Senior Director at Casey Family Programs, the largest operating national foundation in our country, solely focused on serving children and families that experience the child welfare system. We do direct practice work, and systems reform work at the national, state and local levels. My current role is to serve as a strategic consultant for the states of Michigan and South Carolina.

We build practice to help inform our strategic consulting work, serving children and families in the systems, and using that knowledge to help public child welfare systems improve their operations and outcomes. Our policy work is at the federal and state level, so we think about and help inform policy that will ultimately change outcomes for vulnerable children and families. We spend a lot of time talking about and focusing on family engagement and well-being. I'm going to talk a little bit about this notion of social capital from that perspective. Social capital actually is a huge component of well-being. When I think about well-being, some of it connects to the panel conversation we heard this morning from the federal principals about where, what do we do, what language do we use, what are the operations that we engage in and promote that actually allow us to focus on these outcomes from a collective perspective; across systems, across federal agencies, and across programmatic components of different organizations.

I spent four years as a Senior Fellow at the Department of Justice during the last administration. One thing I did learn was that everybody really does have the same goals in mind. We are



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working toward the same ends. We want better things for our communities, our children, and our families; but, we speak different languages. We mean the same thing, but we don't say the same thing. So, what is it that will help us? What is it that travels from system to system, from agency to agency, from federal government to state to local government? I think this notion of social capital fits. We use the term well-being in a much broader frame than we have historically in child welfare, which is much more limited. We think this notion of well-being actually travels from system to system and organization to organization.

I want to just touch on that briefly, because I think social capital is a huge component of well-being, but we're not paying enough attention to it. I'm a father and grandfather. When I think about raising my son, I adopted him not from the system, but because I married his mother and they came together. He happens to be African American. And I knew very early that I could raise him as a man, I could teach him the best qualities of being a man, being a father, being a husband; but, I couldn't teach him what it was like to be a black man in America. I could teach him that from an intellectual perspective, but not from a relational or experiential perspective. I didn't think about this until many years later, but I had enough social capital in the community with my network that I had resources to reach out to, that I could put him in touch with when he experienced those things that I could only intellectualize. That's an example of how I believe we can broaden our notions of social capital and the networks that we engage in. Not just on employment or education, those are all important, I'm not dismissing those, but on how we grow and develop our young people and expose them to some of the things that we need to focus on as a nation, around some of our complex social issues.

Well-being is really about a collective set of domains, social-emotional domains, cognitive development, mental health, wellness, physical health, safety, economic well-being, and spiritual wellness. All of them align really well with the idea of social capital. As we think about expanding these notions, I think that's a place for us to focus on. And as I mentioned, it translates across systems and circumstances.

The other thing I believe social capital does is it moves us away from a real focus on circumstances. Our systems want to change circumstances. We want to get people employed, hold them accountable for their specific behavior, get them educated, but we don't necessarily think about them from a life course perspective. We're dealing with situations that are in the moment. We get them a job and we're done, or get them into school and we're done, as opposed to thinking about how that contributes to a life course for those individuals that are going to lead them into a healthy and productive focus on lifetime well-being. Not just well-being for them, but well-being for their children and families.

The second point is that social capital for fathers is social capital for their children and families. As we have this great conversation about fatherhood, it's not just about the fathers, it's about their





families, it's about their children. As we think about this notion of social capital, we need to keep that in mind. Healthy fathers with strong connections to social capital are intimately connected with their children and families. Our President and CEO, Dr. William Bell said in 2018 that our national child and family response systems cannot continue operating as though it is possible to fully address the well-being of children without addressing the well-being of families and communities. That includes fathers, whether they're in the family or part of the family, or somehow remotely connected with their children and families .

I want to talk about this notion of social networks. I'm not talking about the movie, or Facebook or Twitter when we say social networks. But I think it's something for all of us to think about because whatever role we have in supporting fathers, the systems that we work in have an impact on social networks. Social networks describe connected relationships, and there's this emerging work happening. Dr. Nicholas Christakis from Yale University is doing amazing research on social networks and how powerful they are, not only in predicting outcomes, but also how powerful they are in changing outcomes. The potential to change outcomes for children and families. Social networks positively enhance and reinforce social capital. The more positive connections we have, the healthier connections we have, the more social capital we have, and they can improve outcomes.

As we think about fatherhood and building this movement to embrace and value fathers in our respective areas, we have to consider this idea of social networks and how in the social networks, in fact, we are impacting. When I think about the child welfare system, what is the impact on social networks when we remove a child from their family? What is the impact on social networks when we terminate parental rights for a father who probably doesn't even know what's going on? What are the social networks that we impact when we remove a father from their community for a substance abuse offense?

I think about the homeless population. I don't work with the homeless, but I see the dynamics of homelessness across our country and in the city where I live. When we work with homeless populations or people who temporarily don't have a home, we need to also think about our language. We put them in shelters with other homeless people or build tent camps in our cities to give them temporary housing. Those are networks that we're actually creating, perpetuating and placing these people in. We need to think about not only the social networks that we're impacting by our policies and programs, but the social networks that we're funneling people into, and that we are actually creating.

The criminal justice system is another great example; and it was mentioned a couple of times during the plenary this morning. The criminal justice system is a social network and the more we don't understand and don't recognize that, the more likely we are to be funneling people into that





system and not responding correctly by reframing and changing the social networks when they come back into the communities.

We talk about poverty being a dynamic that we're trying to change and this notion of social capital. But the reality is that poverty is not just about a lack of money. That's just a piece of it. It's also a lack of confidence, a lack of self-esteem. We heard self-esteem talked about this morning. I don't think that the response to someone with low self-esteem is simply to tell them to go do something estimable. I cringed a little bit. I know the intent was right, but there's more to it than just saying go do something estimable. We have to build structures and build networks and actually create places where we can place men, particularly fathers, where they can have the social capital, and be exposed to the social capital where esteem emerges from.

A lack of self-esteem, a lack of dignity. I thought the point made this morning about shame was good. How do we respond to shame and think about it differently? We can't just talk about shame and say, "Well, you have to get over it." We need to respond in a way that builds social capital for those men, those fathers that are struggling with it.

A lack of hope and they all interact to undermine the sense of prosperity or the chance at prosperity. A couple of recommendations. First, we need to consider a life course perspective, avoid focusing on circumstances. That doesn't mean that we have to be responsible for making sure that everything happens within a life course, but we need to make sure that our work is contributing to contemplating a life course perspective. Not that we are putting fathers into a particular program or initiative that resolves a circumstance without making sure that they're not connected into something else or connected into this kind of life course perspective.

Dr. Perry did a great job talking about his program. One of the things we asked him yesterday was how does your program deal with housing or economic development. There's a direct link, not that his program does this work, but there's a direct link to the fathers that are coming out of his program into economic development, into housing resources that then help them continue on with that life course perspective.

We need to bust myths. We need to change narratives. I thought the Ad Council's presentation this morning about how we change myths and public narratives was really good. Within the systems and organizations that we work in, we need to make sure that our programs, policies, and words are aligning with that narrative that we're trying to create. Therefore, it's really important that we don't allow ourselves to fall back into myths, fall back into the way we've always done it. We're going to keep doing it this way, making sure that our programs and our initiatives are focusing on what it takes to create and promote social capital.





What do we think about the fathers that we're dealing with, with the clients that we serve? Do we believe the best about them? Do we believe that they are worthy of social capital? This is something that we consistently struggle with in child welfare. Do we believe that these families are worthy of the services and resources that we're supposedly offering them? And it's particularly true of men who may be disconnected from their family, may be in the criminal justice system. Do we have this sense that they're not worthy of this idea of social capital? And how do we change that? Do we believe that people can change? When we think about social capital, we have to believe that people can actually change and do things differently. Our nation is built on faith principles and one of the biggest faith principles is the idea of redemption. Do we bring that into our work? I'm not talking about a particular faith, but do we actually believe that people can change? Do we actually believe that if we invest in them, they'll get better, they'll do better? Finally, we need to be about healing. I think that investing in social capital, creating opportunities for men, for fathers, to build a social capital, actually has a healing component. Social capital will respond to trauma, mental health issues, and substance abuse issues. I think that social capital actually helps inoculate men and families from some of the unresolved issues we have in our country like race and racism, inequities, and injustice. Having more social capital puts people in a place where they can respond to those situations, those circumstances that we face as a nation.

I thank you for the time. It's certainly a privilege to be part of this panel and this conversation. I look forward to the continued discussion.

Carol Mizoguchi: Lyman and Armon thank you very much. As I mentioned before, we definitely want to have the opportunity to answer your questions. One of the things that you talked about were personal and organizational relationships. John and I often have this conversation about working with organizations and making referrals. It's sometimes really easy for us to sit behind our desk when participants come in. They need another service and we send them somewhere that we haven't done our own investigation on or haven't really developed those relationships with the organizations. Oftentimes we find ourselves in a situation where we violate the trust of our participants because they go and have a terrible experience. Often when you're dealing with parents that are in the child welfare system and with fathers who are required to complete, they have to jump through hoops and deal with obstacles in order to get their children back. They might not tell you about their experience, but they go there and they're not having a good one. I say that because it's important for us to go out and really have conversations and meet the people that we're actually referring our participants to. That reciprocity, building the trust. If someone says, "Lyman sent me." and Lyman has a great relationship with Fanny she might treat the participant a little bit better than she treats the person that just walked in off the street. We want to believe that everybody is treated the same when they walk in the door, but we know that isn't always the case, but it's an important part of this.





Participant: My name is LeShay and I work for an organization called Baby University in Chattanooga, Tennessee. We're a city program. Dr. Perry, you mentioned the reentry program that you have done, with incarcerated fathers. I'm curious if you have any tips or any golden rules. We are launching our fatherhood curriculum in our local county jail next week. Is there anything that you could recommend or any feedback that you could provide us, for our process and going into the jail? It was scary for us even going through the process of taking off our shoes and everything we own and walking through the metal detectors. It was definitely a mental process for us. Is there any feedback that you could provide our staff with, to help us navigate?

Dr. Perry: That's a really good question. I should mention, because I don't want to mischaracterize my role in that process, our project doesn't do work in the prison. As a university professor and as a civically engaged person, for years, even prior to our program, I would go in and teach classes from time to time. It just so happened that we ended up with a fatherhood program and many of those men are our fathers. So, we created an opportunity for me to recruit for our father program as part of something I do once a quarter anyway.

I don't know that I have advice other than, and I think Lyman hit the nail on the head, when you talked about the idea of redemption. You said America is a place that cripples you and it blames you for limping. We lock up more people than any other industrialized country in the world and disproportionately those people look a lot like me. America has a specific type of vitriol and hatred for people who look like me. Lyman used the word narrative. There's a narrative about people who look like me and people who may not look like me but have a history with the criminal justice system. There's this idea that one goes into the system and pays his or her debt to society. But in reality, there's a whole host of civic engagements and invisible punishments that follow people oftentimes for the rest of their lives.

When Lyman talked about the idea of redemption and this sort of belief that people can change, I think that if I had any advice, that it would be in that realm. With the people you have providing services to these men, there has to be a way where there's a real commitment to the idea and belief that, if and when these men are connected to positive quality services, they can increase their capacity and make different decisions.

Where I'm from there's a saying: game recognizes game. Some of you are from where I'm from, right? If you're not, basically what that means is, there's a premium on authenticity and we aren't being genuine and authentic with people. They can smell it on you. Oftentimes people would behave in certain ways as a test to see whether or not you really want to be there or are you just showing up for a paycheck? You'll be able to determine differences in people's behavior, whether or not that genuineness and sincerity are there.





Again, I'm a professional social worker and we talk about the idea that engagement is the first step in the healing process. It's all about building a trusting and professional relationship. The truth of the matter is, if you can say things to people in a way that resonates with them, you can get people to run through a wall for you. When people get that sense and they walk away thinking, "That person is in my corner and has my back," even before they understand why they're making changes, they may start making those changes simply because they don't want to let you down.

In the field we call it the therapeutic alliance and it accounts for about 30% of the variants in research on human service interventions. If you can combine that with some social capital and an actual willingness on the part of the client, I think there's a great opportunity for change. But I think it's important that time needs to be spent with the people doing the work to make sure that these people are really and truly bought in and that it's more than just a job. If that's all it is, that's going to be tough because they are going to see that. The people that you are working with, they spend time deconstructing others because that's a part of survival in a place where they come from. They'll be able to separate the real from the fake and you want to run the real in there.

Lyman Legters: I just want to add that healing happens within relationships. Building relationships is important. Understanding the way they react to you when you first go in there, it's not about you at all. You can't take the first reaction they have of you. It's not personal. If you're going into those institutions, you have to be prepared because they're going to come back at you in a certain way that won't feel good.

Participant: My name is Barbara Andrews, I work for Region Two Office of the Administration for Children and Families which includes New York, New Jersey, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. Many of the people we serve damaged their social capital and their social network and the people who they desperately need to reconnect with such as their family and community. What are you doing for those on the other side of the relationship? We're concentrating on the client who maybe is returning to the community or was incarcerated.

Dr. Perry: One of the stipulations of our fatherhood grant is that we can't use the resources to engage or serve moms. That's a limitation for us because our dads are all non-resident dads and it's tough to do fatherhood by definition without engaging custodial mom. The feedback we would get from dads is, "yeah, doc, this is cool. But what ends up happening is if I'm actually going to apply what I've learned, I have to be able to negotiate access to my child with a person who has not been a part of any intervention." I was fortunate enough to write a proposal that was funded by the Fatherhood Research and Practice Network. For the last 18 months we've been inviting custodial moms into a trimmed down version of what we teach the dads. We engage moms in a discussion that says, "Hey mom, I'm running a fatherhood program and I want to know how effective it is in helping dad increase his capacity for taking a more active role in his





children's lives. Mom, I know that you're the real expert so I could see no better way than to determine how well dad is doing then by asking you, because again, you're the real expert."

The other part of the discussion that I don't always share with mom is what I'm really looking to do is get an opportunity to talk with her and share the types of dedication and commitment that dad has made so that we can try to create a window of opportunity where mom is more open and receptive to the idea of co-parenting. And to your point, it's oftentimes the case that mom has a stance that is adversarial and defiant in many ways because of whatever experiences she's had with dad. What ends up happening is when I recruit moms, the first thing I do is give mom a space to just unload whatever it is she would have liked to unload on dad. I'm more than happy to absorb that if in exchange she is willing to sit down with me and listen to me talk about what it is that dad is doing.

We do a quick focus group and follow up with the moms by asking them "How have you been impacted by what you've seen and observed as a part of this workshop?" And time and time again mom tells me, "I could not be more thrilled about this." Mom also tells me, "You know what? For the first time I've been compelled to think about what parenting looks like from his perspective. I never had a reason to do that because the child resides with me. When decisions are made, the decisions are mine. I never had to think about what it looked like from anyone's perspective other than my own." Every time mom tells me that for the first time, I chalk it up as a win. Because again, the intent behind the project is to try to create a window of opportunity largely based on some of the baggage and scar tissue that has been created for better or for worse, for right or for wrong, in their previous relationships.

Lyman Legters: I'd like to quickly add that our focus would absolutely be about narratives and making sure that we're not vilifying the fathers in those dynamics and that we're not labeling them based on circumstances or on the worst thing they ever did. We also need to bring that sense of redemption into the conversation. We would also focus on those policy and structural things that are inhibiting moving those relationships forward. Dr. Perry talked about his grant that doesn't allow him to work with mothers. It's not the father's problem, it's a systemic or structural problem that we would want to identify and figure out how to remove going forward.

Participant: My name is Joel Austin. I'm a social entrepreneur and started a company called Daddy University in Philadelphia. We are self-funded and non-granted. Ten years ago, I started running an event called The Daddy Daughter Dance. It began with about 40 people. Last year we stopped selling tickets at about 500. It continues to grow. Every year we end up with at least 250 strong males with their daughters, grandfathers and uncles. So, it's magnanimous. I'm on a non-deficit. When I post the event and go social and try to get social capital, we struggle with trying to get services and resources because if you have a father that's involved in his daughter's life, neither of them needs help. That's the narrative that we struggle with.





If they were all incarcerated or had issues, it'd be easier. I need recommendations on if there was a massive event like this, how do I change my narrative or social capital narrative? Who do I reach out to to try and ensure these girls have places to go for services and resources and that these males, even though they were able to afford a \$65 ticket, still had certain resources. What pictures do I show with narrative?

Lyman Legters: Working in philanthropy, we tend not to go to places where there's not some deficit focus. I'm not sure I have a really good response other than to build out this notion of social capital. Social capital is much broader than having a particular problem that you're focusing on, a particular deficit in this child or this father. We all have social capital. Try to build a message around that that says everybody needs it, and everybody can contribute to it. How are you building out social networks with your event and your entrepreneurship in your program? I'm not trying to tap into this notion that we have to solve a particular problem, or we have to rescue or save this father or child from something that's deficit focused.

Carol Mizoguchi: When you spoke, the first thing I thought about, because you're working with fathers and girls, is what is it you're trying to build? Maybe think about women leadership organizations? There are a lot of organizations that are focused on leadership quality, so that might be something that you could tap into. Also, corporate sponsors. You have banks and you said you're in Philadelphia. Through this, you're enhancing the leadership qualities for young ladies.

Lyman Legters: There's the National Girls Network, the National Crittenton Foundation that works across the country, specifically elevating girls, in particular. There's the Susan Thompson Buffet Foundation, which is chaired by one of Warren Buffett's children, that focuses on girls and women development that I think would bring that strength-based focus to your initiative.

Dr. Perry: I think that rather than this being deficit framed and deficit focused, you're connected to a group of men who are interested in making sure that they're taking an active role in their daughter's lives. What you're doing is creating a space and a venue for them to be able to showcase that.

Participant: I have fathers from the age of 21 to 55 bringing their daughters. The belief is that they all have financial literacy, that they all have a house, that they have certain knowledge or they must look like that because of the way it's framed on the strength base. They must be strong. But the truth is, when you touch them individually, you find these background stories of "I just got out" or "I'm 55 and bringing my daughter because I got released when I was 54," that kind of thing, and I missed something. So, that's just one of the events we have to fund ourselves. We have others but this is the one that's hardest to find social capital.





Dr. Perry: Here is what these guys are able to do, and they've made this commitment, this dedication. Imagine what they could do if they were provided with additional support.

Lyman Legters: You're also challenging some narratives that men in prison or men not connected with their families don't love their children. There's another layer of narrative that you're battling against because people are looking at these men dancing with their daughters like they don't have these problems, or they don't come from that past. It's another place of narrative change and dispelling some of these myths that would help convince some people to support your event.

Participant: I run a fatherhood program in Rock County, Colorado. I work with incarcerated individuals in the county jail. Many of these individuals are used to people not trusting them, and them not trusting others. What we're doing is building trust and then we fall into this nice spot where they trust us, but that can be dangerous. We have to create boundaries, so it doesn't end up "Well, you provide this for me. Can you also supervise visits for me, for my children? Can you do this and that," which may not be appropriate.

My question is about creating appropriate boundaries, but also how can we then create trust in partner organizations or other individuals. How can we get them the confidence they need to work with others?

Carol Mizoguchi: You talked about building the trust with these other organizations. I don't know how you're bringing them together, but as you're developing those relationships, having those people come so they're not just developing a relationship with you, they're also developing relationships with individuals at these other organizations that you know at some point, you're going to have to pass them off too.

Dr. Perry: We call it a warm handoff. Instead of just simply the referral, the referral is connected to an introduction by someone from your agency or organization that they trust. That may be one way to transfer some of that trust and get them to take the services and opportunities that they're provided with seriously, but not doing so in a way that overburdens your agency and puts you in a precarious situation.

Lyman Legters: I think adding clarity to what you're about with the men that you're building trust with is actually a trust building exercise. Making sure they're clear about what you're doing and following Dr Perry's comment, it's not that you have to be responsible for overseeing the visits, but you have to be responsible for that warm handoff that makes sure that those visits are happening. And that's something that we talk about across a number of domains working with vulnerable populations.





Carol Mizoguchi: Thank you for being part of this conversation.



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