



**BUILDING SOCIAL  
CAPITAL**

# WHAT IS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE AND HOW DOES IT IMPACT SOCIAL CAPITAL?

- It's not just a phrase...
- A CoP can be thought of as a grassroots method of continuous quality improvement.
- Obviously, it is related to a specific area, both topically and geographically (i.e. Customized Employment, and wherever you are!)
- Social capital happens in our local economies, in our local communities, and outside of the human service systems. Trying to build social capital within our disability and employment systems will only lead to the same conclusions we already know does not produce an employment outcome.

“Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact.”

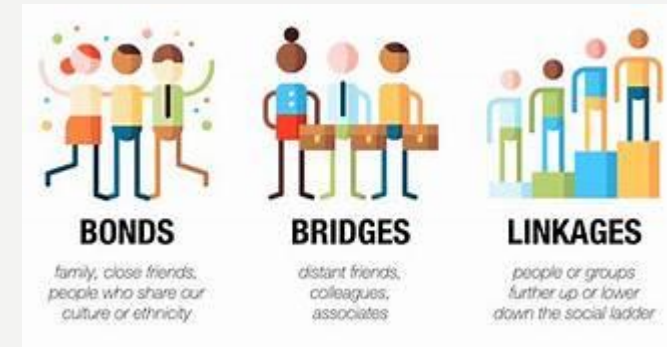
Wenger-Trayner 2015

# CoP members FORM/START, and join a CoP because:

- 1) They care about the domain of interest. (Customized Employment)
- 2) They have shared competence and practice. (ACRE-CE Training)
- 3) They want to learn together how to develop their practice (at a detailed competence level).
- 4) Practice! What? Practice! What? You know the answer! PRACTICE!!!
- 5) Our disability and employment systems lack true CoPs, and in order to understand, build and use social capital, you must commit to practicing and honing those skills.

# BASIC COP PRINCIPLES

- 1.Participation** – everyone in the community has a voice, can be heard and can contribute to the practice.
- 2.Commitment to practice** – uncovering what works, why we do it, how its done, and to embrace reciprocity with others wanting to learn.
- 3.Understanding boundaries and scale** – purposefully moving toward growth
- 4.Reflection** - using evidence-based conversations as a core practice in itself.
- 5.Creativity as a source of energy for practice** – using imagination, permission to explore, finding new ways of doing things (Discovery as assessment, Fidelity, Customized Job Development)

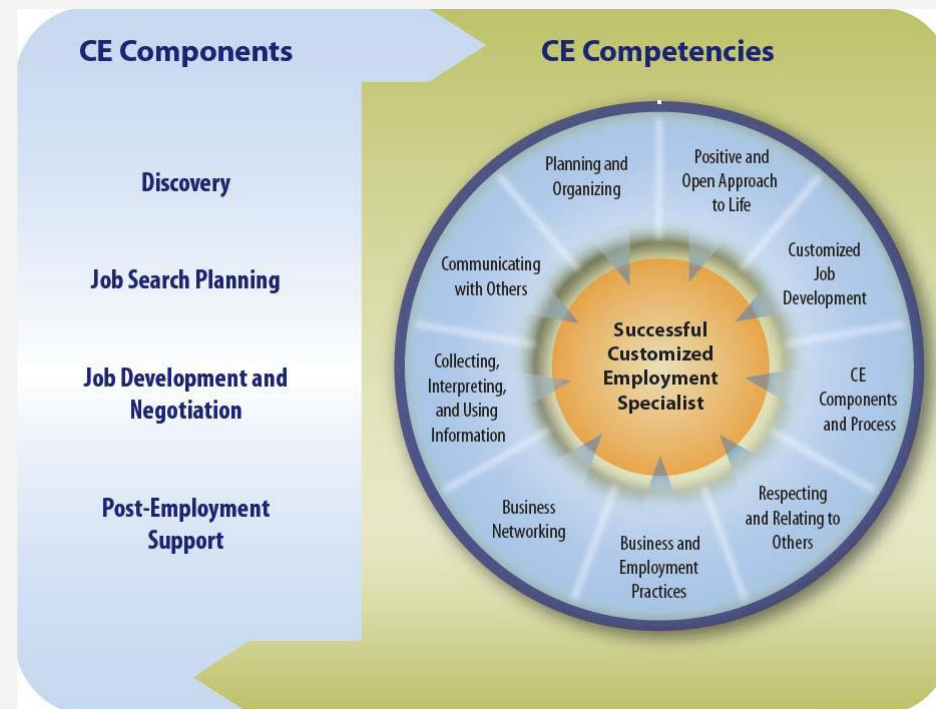


“Where people aren’t having fun, they are seldom producing good work.”

—David Ogilvy, the Father of Advertising and Human Behavior



# WHY IS SOCIAL CAPITAL IMPORTANT?



# 9 competencies and 80 plus KSAOs

## Respecting and Relating to Others

- **Skills**

- - Skill in interacting socially with others
- - Skill in being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do (that is, social perceptiveness)

- **Abilities**

- - Ability to work as part of a team
- - Ability to build and maintain relationships with others
- - Ability to put others at ease

- **Other Characteristics**

- - Values connecting with people
- - Is culturally sensitive
- - Has a world view that all people can work and that people with disabilities can contribute to the workplace
- - Treats others with respect and dignity
- - Is curious or interested in learning about others

# Social capital?

- Ability to build networks of social contacts with others in order to develop social capital
- Identify social networks, strategically enter those networks, and act as a bridge to develop social capital (that is, relationships which can be leveraged to match the job seeker's interests and strengths) for the job seeker.

Most people don't think much about their own social capital. How much do they have? How'd they got it? If I have low amounts of social capital, what can I do to systematically build it?



# A BIT MORE ON WHAT SOCIAL CAPITAL CAN BE:

- Social capital is similar to other forms of capital in that it can be invested with the expectation of future returns.
- Social capital is different from other forms of capital in that it resides in social relationships whereas other forms of capital can reside in the individual.
- Social capital is connected to solidarity as the notion connotes relations of trust, co-operation and reciprocity. (Resource ownership)
- Social capital cannot be traded by individuals on an open market like other forms of capital, but is instead embedded within a group or person and can be leveraged for social change.

# TYPES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

- **Bonding social capital** – ties between individuals with a relatively high degree of **network closure**. Bonding social capital is often described as **horizontal** ties between individuals within the same social group (as opposed to **vertical** ties between social groups). Bonding social capital is often associated with local communities where **many people know many other people** in the group (network closure). Bonding social capital is often associated with strong norms.

# TYPES OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

- **Bridging social capital** – ties between individuals which cross social divides or between social groups. Bridging social capital allows people to tap into the social network resources of each others social group. Bridging social capital may not involve many shared norms but is likely to be associated with reciprocity and trust. It may provide access to network resources outside of a person's normal circles and as such can provide significant individual (and group) benefits.

# QUICK ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL CAPITAL

- What groups do you belong to?
- Are they formal, informal?
- Where'd they come from? (School, faith, neighborhood, family, business, trade, interests)
- Have those grown more significant over time? Are they the same now?
- On a scale from 1-10, how full is your social capital account?

# Steps to build more social capital

- Be honest about your assessment.
- Identify **your three top areas** where you will strategically build more social capital. (School, faith, neighborhood, family, business, trade, interests)
- Under your top three areas, list names of real people to connect with (Notice I didn't say **contact.**) Why?
- If you can't find a real person to connect with, brainstorm ways where you can use **human bridges. What does that mean? Not a circus act, but it's also known as someone who vouches for you 😊**

# What does **strategically** enter those networks mean?

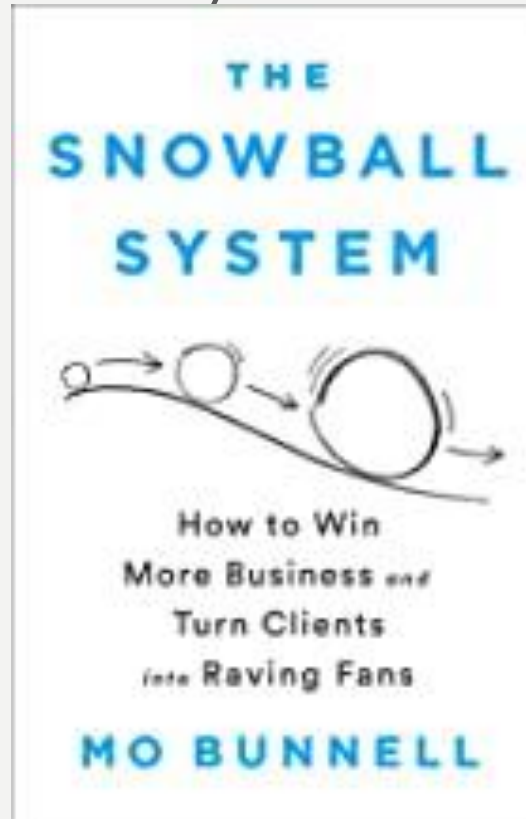
- First, why am I making this connection? Think of purpose: general, specialty, for me, for whom?
- If the social capital is for you (i.e. so you can personally draw from it later) what function will it play in Discovery and Customized Job Development?
- If the social capital is for a job seeker, what is your approach?
- How will you transfer that social capital? What's your plan to support the social capital?
- The point is: I must think and plan with purpose to be strategic. **And a sense of urgency is a must!**
- **Think of someone who has lots of social capital. What are some of their personality traits?**

# Tips to get started:

- Ride someone's coattails!! (emulate someone you know who is well-connected and has a lot of social capital) My friend Mo Bunnell.

## Snapshot of connections:

- Ultimate Frisbee
- Arts patron
- Involved parent
- Supports spouse's endurance horse racing
- Fraternity
- Alumni
- Traveler



## How he creates connections:

- Embraces reciprocity
- Connects via personal touch
- Focuses on growing relationships
- Is good at seeing who would be a good match
- Follows-up
- Gives credit to others

Whose coattails can you ride? Who can you offer a ride on yours?

# HOW TO USE SOCIAL CAPITAL IN CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT

- For informational interviews (both types)
- To build a network for a job seeker
- For advice about local economic activity
- As a way to connect business with rehabilitation
- To expand economic development in a community
- To solve community problems (Leo)
- As a tool to connect ordinary citizens with our work
- To help others who need human services (Danville story)



# ENLISTING CITIZENS AND FELLOW ENTHUSIASTS

- Use Social Capital of the Existing Team Members
- Google and google!
- Use SCORE, Meetups, Trade Groups, Associations, Clubs, Hobby Groups, and faith-based connections.
- Simply explain you need their advice and expertise!
- Commitment should be the person's choice.
- But be concrete in your “ask.”
- Make it reciprocal. Make it exciting! Make it pressure-free, and people will surprise you.

# A BRIEF DIATRIBE ON USING AGENCIES FOR MINING SOCIAL CAPITAL:

- CEOs and Board Members are generally well-connected.
- The depth and breadth of their social capital can be mined (and should be!)
- Agencies are customers, sometimes very big customers, and...
- You must frame the conversation!
- Say the word “action” over and over so there’s an understanding of the “ask.”
- Keep it specific, keep it individualized, keep it brief.
- After the fact: be concrete on what occurred, ask for more, and be thankful.

# Now what is Social capital again?

- Ability to build networks of social contacts with others in order to develop social capital
- Identify social networks, strategically enter those networks, and act as a bridge to develop social capital (that is, relationships which can be leveraged to match the job seeker's interests and strengths) for the job seeker.

Most people don't think much about their own social capital. How much do they have? How'd they got it? If I have low amounts of social capital, what can I do to systematically build it?

# OPEN CONVERSATION...



# REQUIRED (NOT SUGGESTED) 😊

## READINGS:

- Implications of social capital for the inclusion of people with disabilities and families in community life--[LESLEY CHENOWETH](#) & [DANIELA STEHLIK](#)
- <https://adayinourshoes.com/social-capital/> How and Why to Build Social Capital for Your Child with Disabilities
- Accessing Social Capital Implications for Persons with Disabilities  
[http://ngsd.org/sites/default/files/accessing\\_social\\_capital\\_implications\\_for\\_persons\\_with\\_disabilities.pdf](http://ngsd.org/sites/default/files/accessing_social_capital_implications_for_persons_with_disabilities.pdf)