

Connecting the Social Support Network Dots: Creating Opportunities for Permanent Connections and Social Capital

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- ASPE defines it as: connections, networks, or **relationships among people and the value that arises from them** and can be accessed or mobilized to help individuals succeed in life. It produces information, emotional and financial support, and other resources.
- Social capital could be with:
 - people like us (“bonding”);
 - people different from us (“bridging”); or
 - institutions/individuals in positions of power (“linking”).

- Programs don't typically use the term "social capital."
- Programs build and leverage social capital in different ways that can be hard to categorize.
- Mentoring and peer-to-peer supports are among the most common social capital strategies.
- Social capital is most often one piece of a larger intervention.
- Evidence base was very strong for a few programs, but social capital component is rarely evaluated separately.

Principles & Emerging Practices

1. People at the Center
2. Relationships as Assets
3. Staff and Participants as Partners
4. Cultural Competence
5. Emotional Intelligence

1. Use Cohort Models to Engage Participants
2. Engage with Participants Meaningfully Through Time and/or Intensity
3. Build and Leverage Social Capital among Organizations to Foster Individual-Level Social Capital
4. Use Technology to Build Individual Social Capital
5. Use Data to Build Organizational Capacity in Decision-making and Evaluation
6. Create the Space and Opportunity for Organic Connections to Happen
7. Include Qualified Individuals with Similar Experiences as Participants, or Qualified Alumni, in Programming and Staffing
8. Emphasize Accountability

Use Cohort Models to Engage Participants

- Cohorts can help participants build networks and foster accountability
- Considerations:
 - Cohort size
 - Experiences of those involved
 - Needs of those involved

Build & Leverage Social Capital among Organizations to Foster Individual-Level Social Capital

- Relationships between organizations can help participants by:
 - Identifying appropriate resources
 - Facilitating “warm handoffs” and easing fears
- Organizational connections alone are not enough

- Toolkit on all emerging practices
- Infographic on social capital
- Webinar on building evidence to evaluate a program's social capital elements
- Podcast on strategies for engaging participants in activities that build social capital
- Logic model template on social capital program elements