

BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY

**Strategies for Professionals
and Communities**

Workbook

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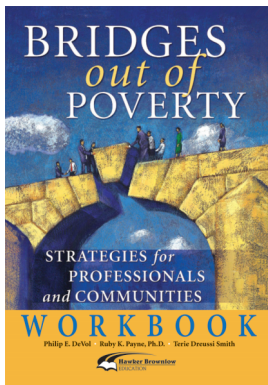
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Mental Models

OBJECTIVES

- Explore the concrete experience of people in generational poverty.
- Create a mental model of poverty.
- Analyse elements of the model.
- Create a mental model of middle class.
- Understand the interlocking nature of the models and the demands of the environment.

Poverty Research Continuum

CAUSES	Behaviours of the Individual	Absence of Human and Social Capital	Human Exploitation	Political/Economic Structures
RESEARCH TOPICS	Dependence on welfare Bad behaviour of individuals Individual morality Bad behaviour of groups Single parenthood Intergenerational character traits Bad mothers, mother-centred, matriarchal structures Values held by poor, lack of work ethic, commitment to achievement Breakup of families Addiction, mental illness, domestic violence	Lack of employment Lack of education Inadequate skill sets Decline in neighbourhoods Big government Decline in social morality Urbanisation Suburbanisation of manufacturing “White flight” Inelastic cities: inadequate regional planning Immigration Failure of social services Absence of knowledge, worker skills, intellectual capital Social capital Lack of career ladder between knowledge and service sectors Speed of economic transformation at local level	Minimum wage vs living wage Temporary jobs Less than 30 hours Lack of benefits Disposable employees Debt bondage Global outsourcing Payday lenders Lease/purchase Redlining Drug trade Exploitation for markets Exploitation of resources and raw materials	Policies that result in economic and social disparity Undue influence of corporations on legislation Tax structure that shifts tax burden to middle class, away from wealthy and corporations Decline in wages for bottom 90% Decline of unions De-industrialisation Management/labour “bargain” CEO-to-line-worker salary ratio Profit/financial-centred form of globalisation



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).

Hidden Rules of Economic Class

	Poverty	Middle Class	Wealth
Possessions	People.	Things.	“One of a kind” objects, legacies, pedigrees.
Money	To be used, spent.	To be managed.	To be conserved, invested.
Personality	Is for entertainment. Sense of humour is highly valued.	Is for acquisition and stability. Achievement is highly valued.	Is for connections. Financial, political, social connections are highly valued.
Social Emphasis	Social inclusion of the people they like.	Emphasis is on self-governance and self-sufficiency.	Emphasis is on social exclusion.
Food	Key question: Did you have enough? Quantity important.	Key question: Did you like it? Quality important.	Key question: Was it presented well? Presentation important.
Clothing	Clothing valued for individual style and expression of personality.	Clothing valued for its quality and acceptance into the norms of middle class. Label important.	Clothing valued for its artistic sense and expression. Designer important.
Time	Present most important. Decisions made for moment based on feelings or survival.	Future most important. Decisions made against future ramifications.	Traditions and past history most important. Decisions made partially on basis of tradition and decorum.
Education	Valued and revered as abstract but not as reality. Education is about facts.	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money.	Necessary tradition for making and maintaining connections.
Destiny	Believes in fate. Cannot do much to mitigate chance.	Believes in choice. Can change future with good choices now.	<i>Noblesse oblige.</i>
Language	Casual register. Language is about survival.	Formal register. Language is about negotiation.	Formal register. Language is about connection.
Family Structure	Tends to be matriarchal.	Tends to be patriarchal.	Depends on who has/controls money.
World View	Sees world in terms of local setting.	Sees world in terms of national setting.	Sees world in terms of an international view.
Love	Love and acceptance conditional, based on whether individual is liked.	Love and acceptance conditional, based largely on achievement.	Love and acceptance conditional, related to social standing and connections.
Driving Forces	Survival, relationships, entertainment	Work and achievement.	Financial, political, social connections.
Humour	About people and sex.	About situations.	About social <i>faux pas</i> .

If an individual depends upon a random episodic story structure for memory pattern, lives in an unpredictable environment, and does not have the ability to plan, then

...the individual cannot plan.

If an individual cannot plan, he/she cannot predict.

If an individual cannot predict, then he/she cannot identify cause and effect.

If an individual cannot identify cause and effect, he/she cannot identify consequences.

If an individual cannot identify consequences, he/she cannot control impulsivity.

If an individual cannot control impulsivity, he/she has an inclination to criminal behaviour.

Processing

- What resources might the person want to build?
- What support can your agency provide?
- What supports might your community provide?
- What policy changes might be needed?

STRATEGIES

CO-EXISTING PROBLEMS	REDESIGN AND CQI (CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Identify barriers. II. Identify strengths. III. Asset development. IV. Capacity enhancement. V. Tucker Signing Strategies. VI. Best practices by discipline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Theory of business. II. Client life cycle. III. Policy and procedure redesign. IV. Staff assignments. V. Orientation. VI. Engaging and inviting parents. VII. Utilising information. VIII. Support growth of associations. IX. New-science strategies.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Inventory of individuals. II. Inventory of associations. III. Inventory of service providers. IV. Inventory of governmental agencies. V. Identify connectors, experts, salespeople. VI. Community client life cycle. VII. Make messages "sticky". VIII. Change the context. IX. Build partnerships with associations. X. Build partnerships with providers. XI. Cost benefits of collaboration. XII. Provide resources as needed. XIII. Provide economic opportunity. XIV. Provide micro-credit.

CAUSES OF POVERTY			
Behaviours of the Individual	Human and Social Capital in the Community	Exploitation	Political/Economic Structures
<i>Definition:</i> Research on the choices, behaviours, characteristics and habits of people in poverty.	<i>Definition:</i> Research on the resources available to individuals, communities and businesses.	<i>Definition:</i> Research on how people in poverty are exploited because they are in poverty.	<i>Definition:</i> Research on the economic, political and social policies at the international, national, state and local levels.
<i>Sample topics:</i> Dependence on welfare Morality Crime Single parenthood Breakup of families Intergenerational character traits Work ethic Racism and discrimination Commitment to achievement Spending habits Addiction, mental illness, domestic violence Planning skills Orientation to the future Language experience	<i>Sample topics:</i> Intellectual capital Social capital Availability of jobs Availability of well-paying jobs Racism and discrimination Availability and quality of education Adequate skill sets Childcare for working families Decline in neighbourhoods Decline in social morality Urbanisation Suburbanisation of manufacturing Middle-class flight City and regional planning	<i>Sample topics:</i> Drug trade Racism and discrimination Payday lenders Sub-prime lenders Lease/purchase outlets Gambling Temp work Sex trade Internet scams	<i>Sample topics:</i> Globalisation Equity and growth Corporate influence on legislators Declining middle class De-industrialisation Job loss Decline of unions Taxation patterns Salary ratio of CEO to line worker Immigration patterns Economic disparity Racism and discrimination

Typically, communities put a great deal of effort into the first area of research: the behaviours of the individuals. “Work first” was one of the key themes of welfare reform as organisations focused on getting people to work. The idea was that getting a job, any job, and learning to work were more important than going to job-training classes or receiving treatment. Community agencies offered treatment for substance abuse and mental-health problems, money-management classes and programs to address literacy, teen pregnancies, language experience and more. The mission of these agencies is not to work directly on poverty issues but to deal with coexisting problems. All of these agencies encourage their clients to change behaviours, recording and managing the changes through the use of plans and contracts, and often sanction clients who fail to adhere to treatment plans.

Many programs have great value to those who have used them. Rather, it’s the almost exclusive focus on these two areas of research that is the problem.

Communities rarely develop strategies to restrict, replace or sanction those who exploit people in poverty. Even those organisations charged with fighting poverty sometimes neglect this cause of poverty. In part, this comes from departmentalising community services. People who work in organisations charged with serving those in poverty don’t think of exploiters as their responsibility. That falls to law enforcement and policymakers.

Departmentalising is even more pronounced when it comes to the causes of poverty that arise from political and economic structures. Community economic development is left to the market system, developers, businesses, corporations, the Chamber of Commerce and elected officials. People who typically work with those in poverty don’t see a role for themselves in the debate on economic development issues any more than those who are engaged in business ventures make a direct connection between their work and the well-being of people in poverty. And yet, in concrete terms, there is a direct