DESIGNING A RESIDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM
introductory ideas

It is not enough for agencies to say, "Let's be partners". It takes intentional effort to create a space in which citizens can "get on the chair" by assuming responsibility and power.
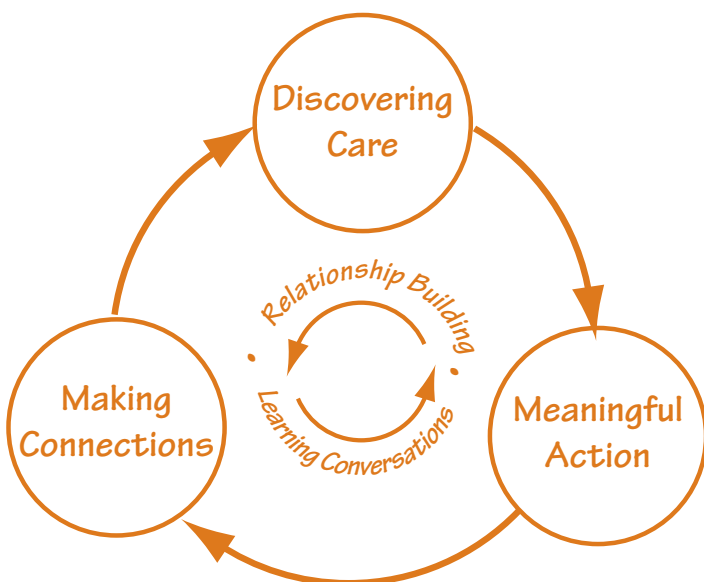

Citizens "get on the chair"
Assume more power, authority, responsibility

Agencies lead by stepping back

Different Domains of Action Require Different Kinds of Organization

Community Partnership

Relationship Building to Mobilize Citizens

Service Coordination

Services to Meet Needs

● = Citizens & Associations   ▲ = Professionals & Agencies
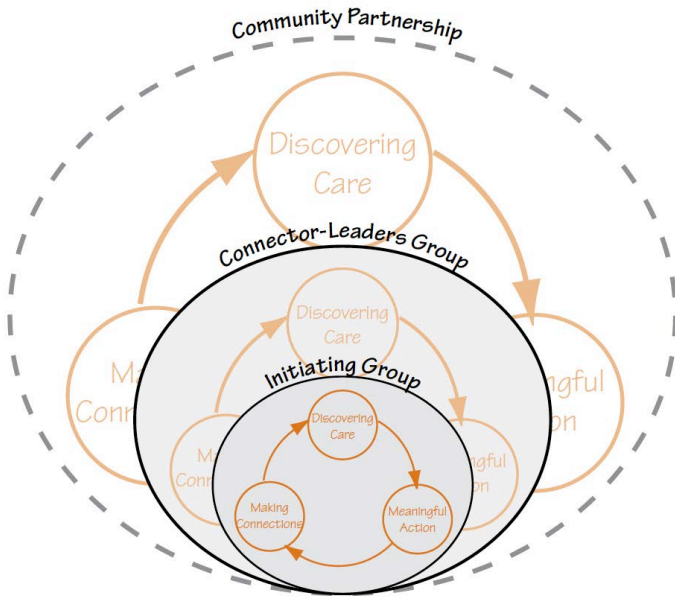
"The start determines the finish.

A service coordination structure can work well to deal with problems that are best addressed by experts, agencies, and institutions working inside the boundaries of their professional roles... **But to involve people from the everyday life of a community, put [resident] connector leaders at the center from the very first effort to define the problems that need addressing.**

When agency representatives in a service coordination structure recognize the importance of involving everyday people through their associations, they learn that **it works better to set up a new community partnership than to try to bring citizens and associations into the existing service coordination structure.**"

Discovering Care

Making Connections

Meaningful Action

Relationship Building
Learning Conversations

An ABCD **connector-leaders group** includes people with connections who are residents, local association or congregation leaders, or local business leaders. This group is made up of people who live, associate, or worship in the commu-nity. It functions with assistance from supporters from government, business, and human services who lead by stepping back. The connector-leaders group follows the principle: "Never to do anything that nobody wants", and sets its agenda by listening to what citizens care enough to act on. The goal is not ser-vice delivery but activating the productive capacity of the local community. The leaders of an ABCD community partnership act from the heartfelt conviction that everyone has gifts that the community needs in order to be strong.

There are typically six steps in forming a strong ABCD community partner-ship group. Through these steps, the cycle of organizing activities –making connections, discovering care, meaningful action– ripples out from an initiating group to a connector-leader's group and on to an ABCD community partnership group. Each cycle engages a wider and wider circle of citizens and associations in strengthening their community.
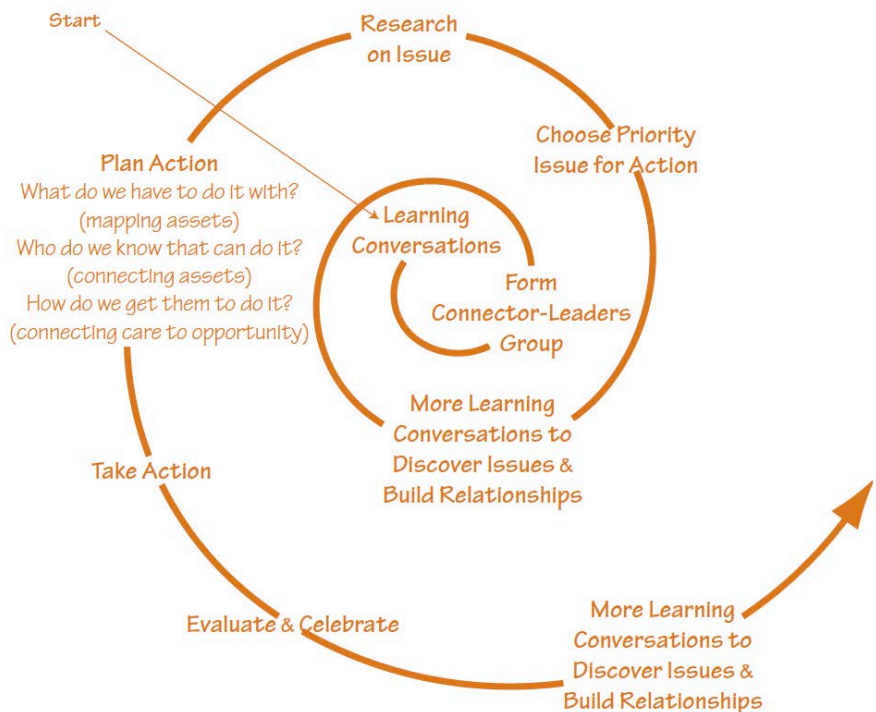
These steps are…

1. Initiating group begins work
2. Hire and develop an ABCD community organizer
3. Start learning conversations to build connector-leaders group
4. Discover a good issue through learning conversations
5. Develop a community partnership of well connected people to act on the issue
6. Find and mobilize assets to address issues

Organize a community partnership to act on the issue

The connector-leaders group embodies the truth that power is in relation-ships. This group of 5-15 people who are well connected, have a following in diverse sectors of community life, and have discovered common ground for action, use their relationships to mobilize the community to address a critical, winnable issue. They begin by asking themselves these questions in order to create a list of prospects.

Once a good issue is identified and the connector-leaders group has begun to reach out and engage people and associations, the community partnership does action research to get a clear picture of the present situation and pos-sible solutions, maps and mobilizes assets to get results, evaluates and cel-ebrates, and then moves on to build even greater citizen power and leadership.
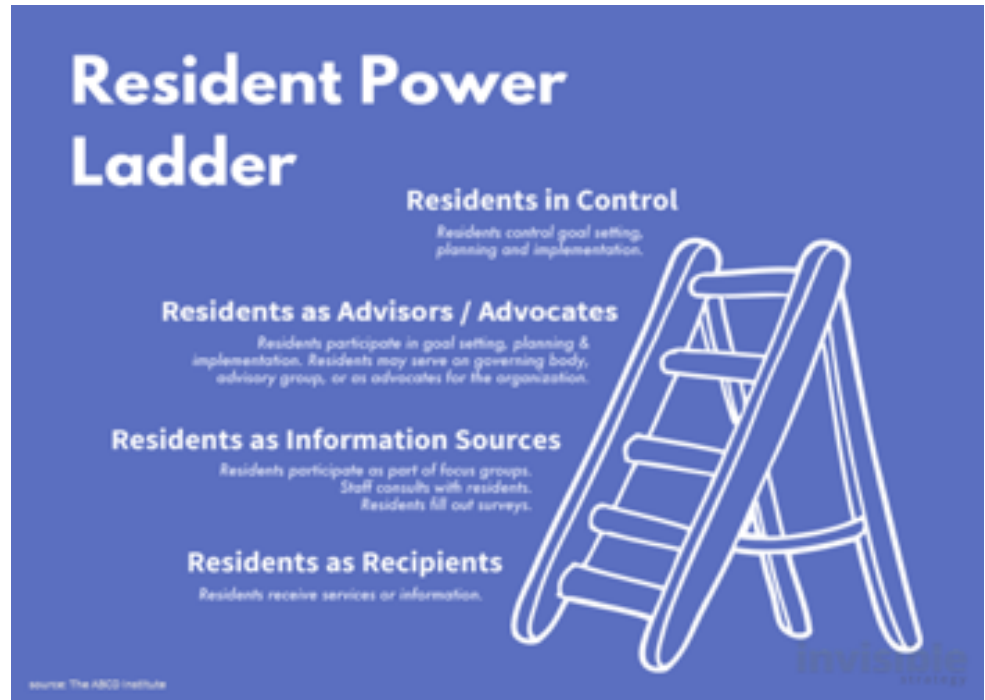
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asset-based community development always begins with the gifts and capacities of our neighbors. creating a resident leadership team is a great way to expand your work by learning from the everyday citizens who know your neighborhood best!

WHO HAS PRIVILEGE?

When we think about our designing a resident leadership team, our first work is to name where the power currently lives in our context. Take a few moments to ask yourself - either by reflecting on your specific grant or your context - who has the power? Who makes decisions? Write your answers in the space below…

TIME FOR A SHIFT!

One way to shift the power is to change who has *epistemological privilege* in your project/organization/ community. Epistemology means "ways of knowing." Who's experience is valued? Do the people who carry the burdens of the problems of the social issues you are trying to change lead the discussion or only sit at the side? Write down who's ways of knowing are most valued now in your context…

take a second to remember and reflect on the resident power ladder. then jot down where your org is at this moment...

how might you create change through invitation...

People I need to invite...	People I need to invite again...

RESIDENT

team

NOW MAKE A PLAN…

What steps will you take to create a resident team that fits your context? Use the following questions as a guide…

HOW WILL YOU INVITE OTHERS INTO THIS WORK?

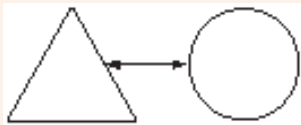**HOW WILL YOU RECREATE YOUR PROJECT/ORG/SPACE TO BE INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING? HOW WILL YOU CELEBRATE GIFTS TOGETHER?**

HOW WILL YOU PREPARE YOUR ORGANIZATION TO CHANGE IN RESPONSE TO THEIR IDEAS AND WISDOM?
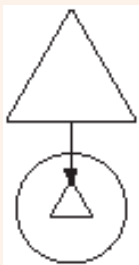
HOW WILL YOU HONOR THEIR TIME AND EFFORT?

How NOT to Connect People and Programs

Policies and programs reflect our response to the map we create of the world around us. Our map, like all maps, is not the territory it portrays. And it can be a map that inaccurately portrays the territory that surrounds us. We all know of the European map makers who described a flat earth without a western hemisphere. Their inaccurate map shaped the policies, plans and action of mariners, kings, nations and communities.

As we set sail into the twenty-first century, it is appropriate to reexamine the map that is used in most of our current policy-making in order to see whether it will show the way to safe, wise and healthful communities.
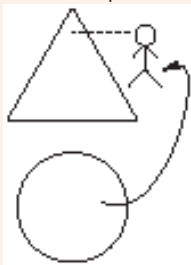
Whenever policy makers happen to recognize that there is a community territory, the map they draw usually looks like the one on the left. This map is commonly described as a **partnership**. It suggests that each is an equal owner of or participant in an activity. However, the recent history of the actual system-community relationships suggests that the real territory is quite different. At least three kinds of alternative relationships are actually present in most cases.

The first alternative is a relationship of the form on the left. In this relationship a subsidiary of a system is located in the community to assure access to local need. This relationship is most accurately described as **system outreach** rather than partnership.

The second form of relationship looks like the form on the right. In this case the community is used as a source of unpaid workers for systems. The accurate name for this relationship is **volunteering** rather than partnership.
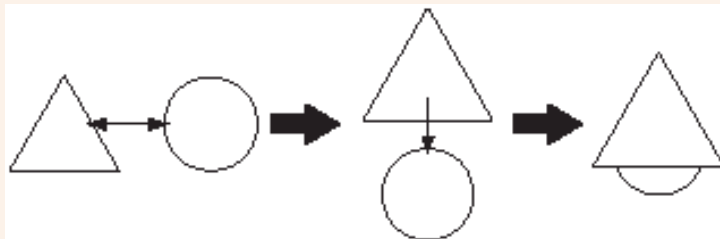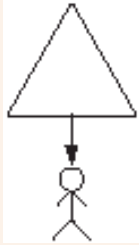
The graphic on the left maps a relationship in which a citizen is chosen by a system to react to a system's plans. The citizen does not have authority or a vote but is advisory. The correct name for this relationship is a **citizen advisory** group rather than a partnership.

A genuine partnership is a relationship of equal power between two parties with distinctive interests. Each preserves its authority, distinct capacity and integrity but gains power through the partnership.

It is difficult to find many examples of authentic partnerships of this nature between systems and associations. Instead, the actual power relationship is most often a system using a community of associations to foster its own ends.

Indeed, the principal history of the twentieth century relationships between systems and associations is the ascent of the system and the decline of the community of associations. The actual map of our era would chart this relationship chronologically in this way:

The actual territory is one in which systems have moved from equality to dominance and then have generally eclipsed or pushed out the associations and their functions. This has happened as systems have commanded ever more authority, professional dominance, technology and public and private dollars. Another name for the result of this dominance is a "consumer society". It produces an unprecedented belief system and culture of its own.
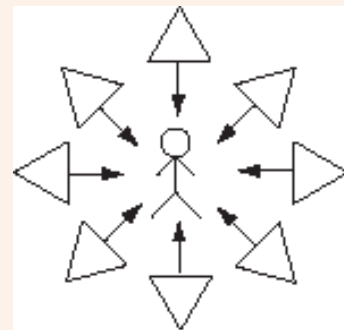
Central to this belief system is the proposition that is embodied in the social policy making map with which we began. That map indicates that systems produce our well being. We understand that our health is in a medical system. Our safety is in a criminal justice system. Our security is in a pension system. Our learning is in a school system. Our mental stability is in a mental health system. Our justice is in a lawyer. Our family stability is in a family service system. Our home is in the hands of the Allstate system. Our house is produced by the Caldwell Banker system. And our meals are the product of McDonalds.

When this belief system becomes the dominant social construction of a people, their map of a good society is shown at the right. One way of accurately describing this map is that it is a comprehensive, coordinated, wrap-around, inter-professional, multi-service system.

Those policy makers who believe in this map urge that its ability to produce evermore well-being for its clients depends upon two changes:

- More money for the system

- Better administration of the system

The result of these changes will be "systems reform" that will so effectively and comprehensively target clients that our current social problems will be greatly diminished. It is this proposition and the map upon which it is based that we are asked to use in navigating the twenty-first century.

–John McKnight

From: *A 21st Century Map for Healthy Communities and Families*

download from: www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/community/century.html

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