Why Place and Belonging Are Essential Elements of Poverty Alleviation Strategies

Presenter: Anna Schoon, CCAP
Co-presenter: Melissa Bohacek, CCAP
Traditional Interventions

-skill trainings –employment services –financial literacy- are limited in their effect because they do not impact the neurobiological effects created by the toxic stress of poverty
A more whole anti-poverty solution would include place and belonging to address the neglected aspects of poverty alleviation.
Asset Based Community Development

“Systems are capable of service but not care”
- John McKnight ABCD Founder
What Is Toxic Stress

Toxic stress is a term used to describe the kinds of experiences, particularly in childhood, that can affect brain architecture and brain chemistry. Toxic stress can have a powerful negative effect on the brain.
Defining Place

**Place**
Is particular-

having a place for something means that the thing belongs

**Space**
Is a Void-
something could fit but so could something else
Loss of Place & Impacts

- Individualism
- Globalization
- Consumerism

- Disinvested Communities
- Isolation
- Resistance/Fear
• Correlation between the availability, quality, & perceived safety of recreational spaces and the level of physical activity of neighborhood residents.

• Individuals with limited socioeconomic means engage in less physical activity than their peers of higher socioeconomic means.
Access to healthy food is another way that place impacts health and other life outcomes.
Residents displaced by a lead crisis caused by building a low income housing complex on top of a contaminated industrial site

- A former sand mine, now a large hole 35’ deep & 4 city blocks long, contributes to up to 34x nitrate, lead & arsenic levels downstream and nearby
Social Impacts of Place: TOXIC STRESS

- Our experiences of power and powerlessness affect our biology and our long term health outcomes.
- When stress becomes chronic with diminished control, it impairs our health and shortens our life expectancy.
- Chronic stress in children can impair brain development and impair their immune function throughout adult life.
- Depending on social location we can suffer the cumulative burden or the cumulative protection created by environment & ability to influence the events.
Chronic Stress Response in Neighborhoods

- Simple tasks are complicated by lack of access to transportation, stable housing, adequate food, child care, employment, etc.
- Children who witness violence are more vulnerable to mental and physical health issues.
- Toxic stress recalibrates the brain’s alarm system which disrupts the ability to form secure attachments.
- Social cohesion and collective efficacy influence the quality of life in a place.
**Practices for Creating Place & Belonging**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUR COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY CAN BE A PLACE FOR PEOPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countering the loss of place for the people we serve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGENCY-AS-PLACE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUR COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY CAN PARTNER WITH PLACES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating places for belonging within the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGENCY-WITH-PLACE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| WE CAN HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THE EFFECTS OF TOXIC STRESS AND ITS IMPACT |
| Begin to provide opportunities to form secure attachments |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARN TOGETHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHARE STORIES FACE-TO-FACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELAX TOGETHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAT MEALS TOGETHER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EVALUATIONS

The Partnership Wants Your Feedback!

Please be sure to complete the evaluation for this session online, via the CAPCON18 Event App.

Thanks in Advance for your Cooperation!