Hello Massachusetts!

[Map of Massachusetts with city names scattered across the state]
Building Community for Brain Injury Survivors

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Questions we hope to answer today

- What is Krempels Center?
- What is community?
- What is social capital?
- Why are these important?
- How can you increase your own social capital or that of your clients living with BI?
We are Krempels Center!
A community-based, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of people living with brain injury

A unique, non-medical model, which provides opportunities for members and families to share their new lives with others who care and “get it”

Founded by a brain injury survivor, David Krempels

Engages members in meaningful & productive experiences

Member driven, member choice
Making the world a smaller place...
What is Community?

“A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals” (Simpson & Weiner, 1989)

The elements of community include:

- Network of people
- Commonality of celebration or cause
- Regularity (ideally)

\[ \text{comm (with) + unity (connectedness)} \]
Community “Culture”

As a community meets on a regular basis, it begins to frame behaviors and patterns, forming a “culture.”

Culture may be
- implied/tacit or
- explicit
Today’s group norms:

- Everyone’s opinion is valid
- Raise hand if you have something to say
- Opportunities for participation are built in to the presentation – Please save questions until the end whenever possible
- Presenters may redirect or put off a question/comment to later in order to stick to the time schedule
Let’s find out about you and your communities.
SOCIAL CAPITAL

“The connections and relationships that develop around community and the value those relationships hold for the members”

(Condeluci, 2002)
Why is social capital important?

Research shows that social capital, social integration and a sense of community leads to increased life satisfaction and wellness.

- Decreased isolation and depression
- Increased longevity
- Improved health
- Increased quality of life

(Burleigh, Farber & Gillard, 1998)
(Tomberg, Toomela, Pulver & Tikk, 2005)
How has brain injury impacted your social capital?

- Brain injury survivors – Think about this from your own perspective
- Family members – Think about this from your own perspective
- Professionals – Think about this from the perspective of your clients and their families
Strategies for improving social capital for brain injury survivors and families

What YOU can do...

- Participate in communities on a regular basis
- Make an effort to understand cultural norms
- Find similarities/subgroups within communities (Look for conduits)
- Choose a support person with strong social skills who values social capital
- Find ways to contribute to a community
- Consider sharing your challenges and letting people know if/how they can help
What YOU can do continued...

- Tell your story!
- Improve awareness (especially “anticipatory awareness”) about your challenges
- Look for opportunities to spend time with BI peers (e.g. Peer support groups)
- Understand and utilize the power of community gatekeepers
- Hone and utilize networking skills
- Hone conversation skills and general knowledge
What caregivers/professionals can do

- Make cultural norms explicit
- Choose a support person with strong social skills who values social capital
- Offer opportunities to improve social skills (therapy, role-playing)
- Include social capital goals in IEP’s and agency plans of care
- Get survivors out in their own communities sooner!
What OTHERS can do part two...

- Be certain to use person-centered goals (Therapists take on a “coach/consultant” role)
- Include peer-support opportunities in all settings (experts and therapists are paid professionals, not peers)
- Make every effort to adapt the environment to support the person, not vice-versa
- Offer opportunities for control and choices “Nothing for me without me.”
YOU have the power to make it happen!
KEEP CALM AND WRAP IT UP
References

References


References


