

What Does It Mean To Be In Poverty In Wealthy America?

Is It Possible To Break The Cycle And Assist People To Move Out And Stay Out?



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Good News!

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1. Poverty is resolvable
2. We know what works
3. There are strategies for doing better

Key Questions

1. What does the word “Poverty” mean to you?
2. What have you been taught to believe about poverty, its causes, and those who live in it?
3. What are the realities and facts that we need to know to make a difference?
4. What tools, templates and supports can you provide that truly assist people in moving out and staying out of the war zone of poverty?



A New Paradigm

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Communication
Across Barriers

- A Deeper Understanding Of Poverty And The Families Who Live In It.
- A Strength's Perspective Approach: Stand In Awe
- A NASA Attitude: Failure Is Not An Option
- Stronger Partnerships: Within and Without

Communication
Across Barriers



What does poverty teach?

- *No one cares
- *Everyone seems smarter
- *We don't belong
- *People like us do not go to the doctor
- *Life happens and there is nothing you can do about it
- *There is no way to buy prescriptions





What does poverty teach?

Family Loyalty...I love my family. They love me.

He's my brother





What does poverty teach?

Children in poverty become adults quickly. They are in a war zone with adults that they love.

You learn about possibilities from the people around you. Who do middle class people spend time with?





What does poverty teach?

Constant Crisis: People are sick more and die younger---48 million W/O healthcare

**Premature Baby - Jennifer Marie -4lbs
High Infant Mortality**





Danny born healthy---Thanks to people bring resources into our lives: Community Action, Head Start and WIC.

PEOPLE who understand and build in supports make the difference.





Stereotypes about poverty prevents us from working together to break barriers. Some facts about poverty:

- Inadequate pay---2/3 of people in poverty are working 1.7 jobs without health care benefits
- Inadequately funded fragmented support systems
- Ignorance about the history/current realities of poverty
- Isolation from people who have benefited from education, jobs and health care
- Lack of access health care & stable housing
- Extremely limited access to needed resources





Some Poverty Impacts

- Hopelessness and depression
- Purpose of education or jobs may be unclear
- Do not understand what helping professionals are telling you (unfamiliar vocabulary, examples and mistrust)
- May not have the internal or external capacity to follow-through
- What is around you shapes expectations and world view
- Poverty realities pull attention away from the luxury of self-development or self-actualizing to your fullest potential

Defining Poverty



Generational Poverty

- Family work the land, rarely own it
- Never knew anyone who had preventative care
- Never knew anyone who moved up or who was respected in a job
- Highly mobile
- High family illiteracy
- Use emergency rooms and family members as health workers
- Focus is on making it through the day



Defining Poverty

Working, But Still In Poverty

- Working, but making choices between basic needs
- Most do not own property
- Live pay check to pay check
- Few have car or health insurance
- Focus on making it
- Poverty seen as personal deficiency

Defining Poverty



Immigrant Poverty

- Have little or no resources
- Language and culture barriers
- Suspicion and mistrust
- Experience race/ethnic discrimination

Defining Poverty



Situational Poverty

- Surrounded by people who are educated or able to earn a living wage
- Attends school regularly and has had health care in the past
- Has crisis (health, divorce, etc.) and income drops
- Generally is able to make it back to middle-class
- Has not internalized the poverty as personal problem
- Does not recognize advantages of growing up middle-class
- Can be harsh judge of those in generational and working class poverty



Advanced tools for breaking poverty barriers

1. **Strengths Perspective—All people have strengths.**
2. **Resiliency Theory---What makes me special?**
3. **Social Capital Theory---Break isolation and build address with an inventory of resources!**
4. **Experiential Learning Theory: Show me and expose me to possibilities for moving forward.**
5. **Understand people act and communicate differently when they are in the war zone of poverty. They are responding appropriately to their context.**



It's in the People!



- Believe people can make it out of poverty.
- Believe people have knowledge and skills to contribute to their growth.
- Have poverty competency:
 - Suspend judgement--Understand the structural causes of poverty and how to support communities in developing solutions from within.
- Focus on programs that reduce the isolation of poverty. No one makes it out alone, everyone needs help. It's in the people!



Dan with Austin

It's "who you know."

If not me, then who?

Support community programs that meet people where "they are," and build networks for breaking poverty barriers.





RESOURCES:

Upcoming 2011 Poverty and Coaching Institutes,
Portland Oregon, Traverse City Michigan and Amarillo
Texas

*New!! Action Approach For Educating Students: The curriculum kit includes a two-hour training dvd, along with 10, 68 page companion guidebooks with concrete strategies for breaking poverty barriers to education

*Poverty 101 online course for grad or undergrad credit
(Spring) Call (503-590-4599) or visit our website!
www.combarriers.com