

# “Now is the Winter of My Discontent”. A Commentary on the Present and the Way Forward

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# The Present Situation

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- Lack of a clear vision and commitment for the future by all stakeholders
- A reactive rather than proactive service system
- A process rather than output/outcome-based system
- A centralised decision making system



## The Present Situation cont.

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- An inherently conservative bureaucracy resistant to partnerships across government agencies and with families/ people with disabilities /advocacy groups
- A conservative non-government system rooted in traditional approaches dictated by funding agreements
- Dominance of professionals in the decision making process



## The Present Situation cont.

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- The gap between research and practice – responsibility of researchers to translate research into practical outcomes
- Resistance of majority of stakeholders to think outside “the square”



## The Present Situation cont.

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- Responsibility of professional associations to challenge the system and their practices
- Need for an accreditation system
- Need to emphasise quality and leadership at local, regional and state levels

# Universal Design

Dr Patricia Morrissey

Commissioner, Administration on Developmental  
Disabilities, US Department of Health and Human  
Services

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- Move away from separation and special provision
- Move to consumer friendly provisions for all
- Bureaucracy to engage in sustained collaborative effort e.g. Post September 11, 2001
- Develop a seamless system of funding
- Describe processes of “best practice” – both successes and failures



## Continued

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- Stimulate local initiatives – build community capacity
  - What do I have?
  - What do I want to do?
  - Who can help me?
  - What are we going to do?
  - Track results and share recipe



# Characteristics of an Outcome Focused System

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- Consumer friendly
- Seamless system
- Consumer input into design
- Information shared with everyone in a user-friendly language & in timely fashion
- Fact-based decision making – don't promise what you can't deliver

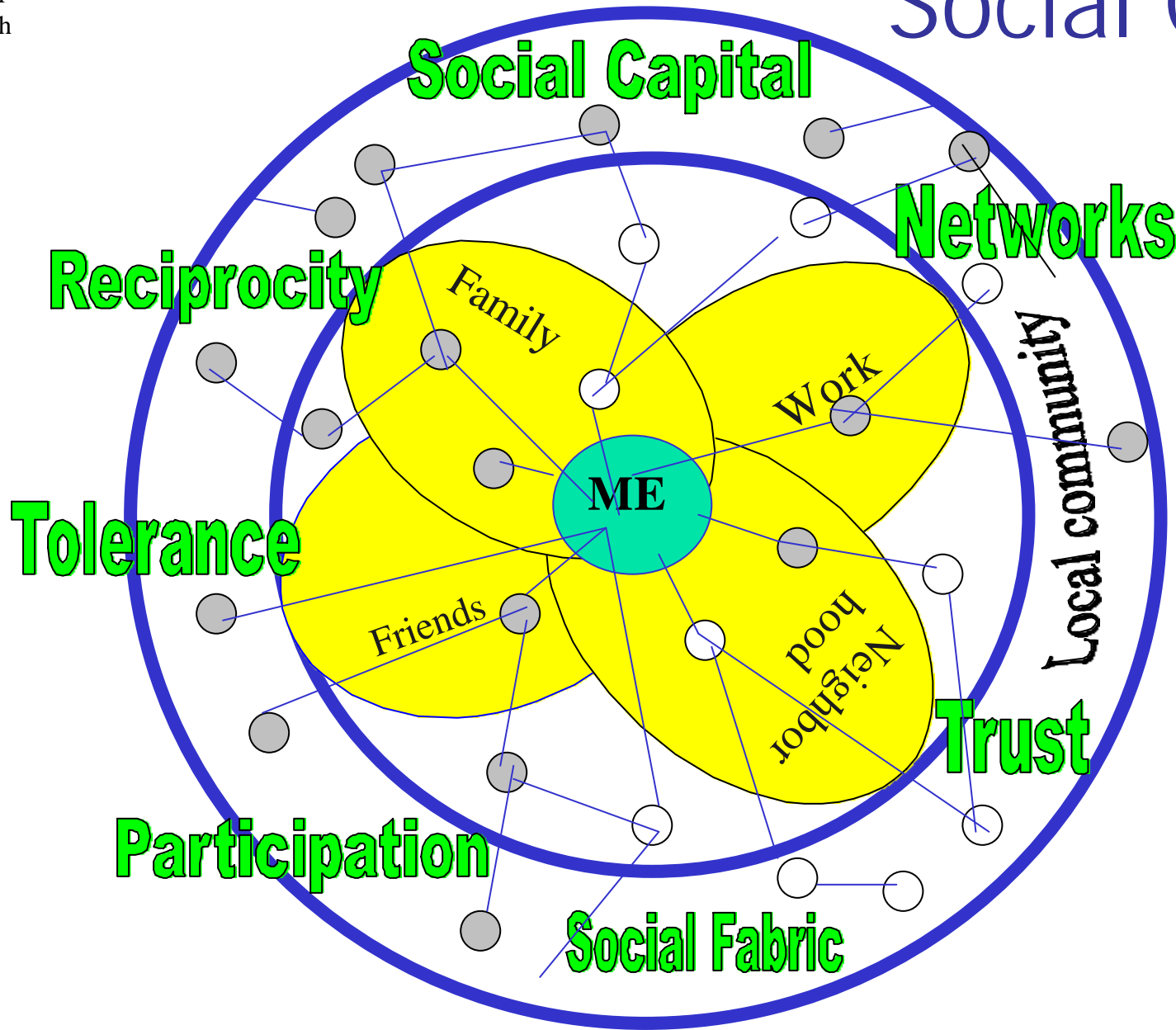


# Characteristics of an Outcome Focused System cont.

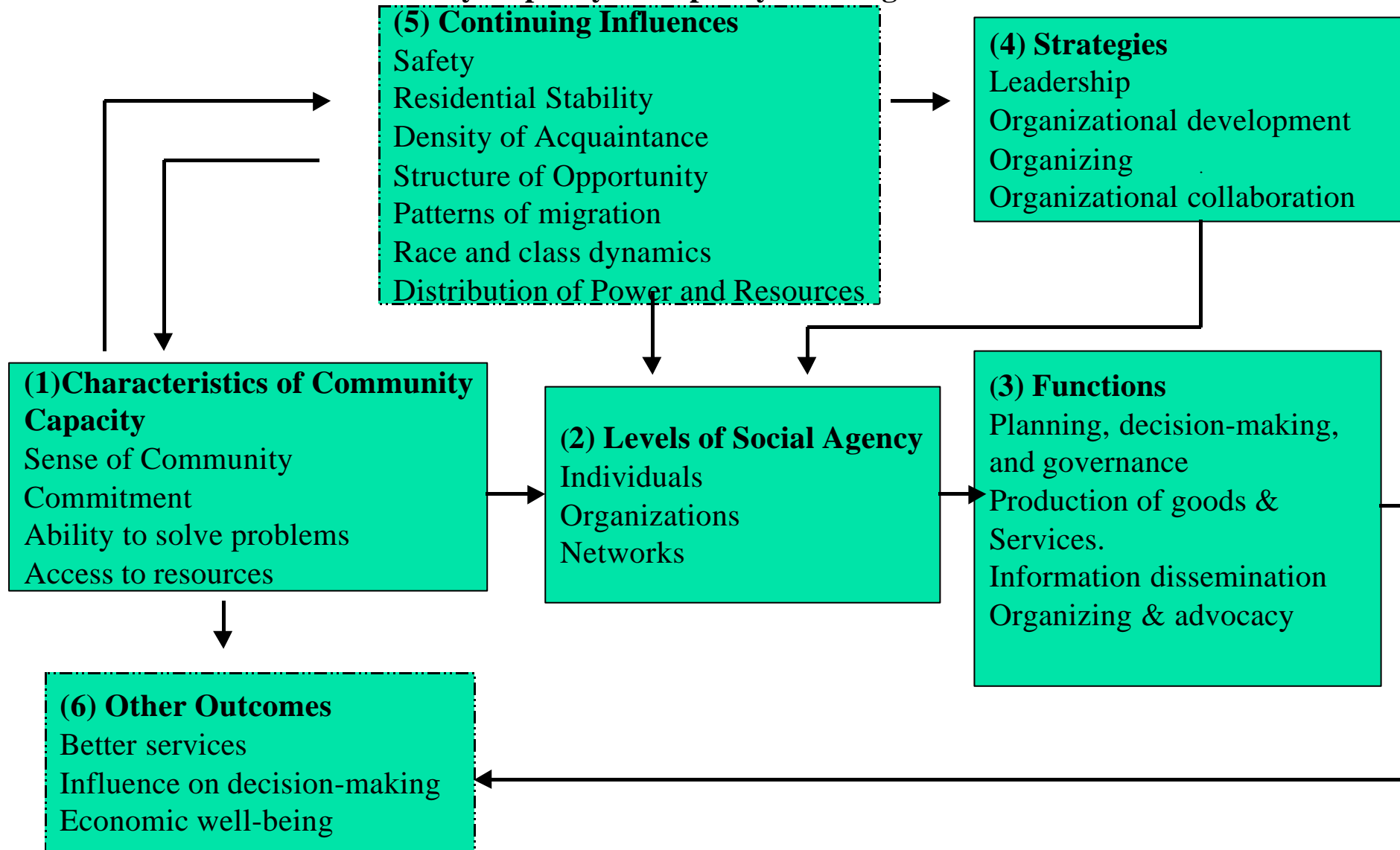
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- Safety factors built in
- Openness and transparency between & among systems- be honest
- Proactive approach to potential challenges – identify road blocks & prepare contingency plans
- Collaboration essential

# Social Capital



## Community Capacity & Capacity Building: A Relational Framework



Chaskin, R.J., Brown, P Venkatesh, S. & Vidal A. (2000) *Building Community Capacity* New York: Aldine de Gruyter p 12



# A Capacity-Building Approach to Community Empowerment

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Fabricio E. Balcazar, Christopher  
Keys, & Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar  
In C.B. Keys & P.W. Dowrick (Eds)  
(2001) *People with Disabilities.  
Empowerment and Community  
Action*. New York: Haworth Press



# Phase 1: Community entry & Project Planning

- Contact local community agencies and advocacy groups
- Identify potential leaders
- Discuss project goals with potential leaders
- Develop a strategy for funding the organizing effort (agency sponsorship, foundations etc.)
- Learn about the target community and its members
- Recruit and train initial Coalition Group Members



## Phase II: Identifying Community Strengths & Concerns

- Conduct focus groups to identify general needs and recruit volunteers to develop needs assessment survey
- Conduct meeting to develop survey items
- Prepare survey for distribution
- Administer and collect needs assessment data
- Analyze survey results and prepare list of community strengths and problems
- Publicize the needs assessment



# Phase III : Community Organizing

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- Conduct public meeting to review identified problems
- Discuss concerns and potential solutions
- Specify coalition goals
- Recruit volunteers for action groups
- Help volunteers identify leaders and priorities for their action groups
- Schedule regular meetings



# Phase IV: Planning & Taking Action

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- Provide training to group leaders on how to run action-oriented meetings
- Support action groups in planning and organizing meetings
- Support action groups in identifying local resources
- Provide advocacy training to action group members as needed



# Phase V: Monitoring/ Feedback

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- Collect copies of action planning logs from action groups
- Provide feedback to group members about their action plans
- Provide support to groups on their progress toward reaching goals
- Celebrate goal attainment
- Support action groups in the process of identifying new goals and targets for action



# Phase VI : Sustaining Community Organizing Efforts

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- Develop new leaders and members
- Reorganize around new members' primary concerns
- Support group efforts to secure resources for continuing operations



# Building Community Coalition with People with Disabilities & their Families: An Empowerment Approach

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- Identify local leaders
- Recruit people with disabilities & their family members
- Create a chemistry of collaboration
- Sustain coalition activities

Keys & Factor (2001)



# Necessary Conditions for the Empowerment of Marginalized Group Members

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- Interest - partnership
- Action - include & engage
- Impact - outcomes



# State and Commonwealth Initiatives

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Premier's Department NSW

- Families First

[www.parenting.nsw.gov.au](http://www.parenting.nsw.gov.au)

- Community Builders NSW

Strengthening Rural Communities

[www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au](http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au)

[scu@premiers.nsw.gov.au](mailto:scu@premiers.nsw.gov.au)



# State and Commonwealth Initiatives cont.

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Department of Family and Community Services

- Stronger Families and Communities Strategy

Information: Freecall 1 800 300 125

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

- ABS Social Capital Program

[elisabeth.davis@abs.gov.au](mailto:elisabeth.davis@abs.gov.au)

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- Chaskin, R.J., Brown, P Venkatesh, S. & Vidal A. (2000) *Building Community Capacity* New York: Aldine de Gruyter
- Gardiner, J. F. Nudler, S. (Eds.) (1999) *Quality performance in human services. Leadership, values, and vision*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes

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- Keys, C.B. & Dowrick, P.W. (Eds.) (2001) *People with Disabilities. Empowerment and Community Action*. New York: Haworth Press
- Lin, N., Cook, K. & Burt, R.S. (Eds.) *Social Capital. Theory and research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter
- Racino, J.A. (1999) *Policy, program evaluation and research in disability. Community support for all*. New York: Haworth Press.