Changing the Community Dialogue About Poverty

How to present poverty to your local community in a way that engages others to get involved in finding solutions
Make Poverty Understandable
Self-Sufficiency Standard
Understanding It Ourselves
Mental Models
Take families Out When Possible

Poverty in Franklin County
Mental Models from Families Who Want Out of Poverty

HOW THEY SEE THEIR LIVES.

Mental Models

The following pages provide mental models created by families who were working to get out of poverty – it is pictures of their struggle.
Sara was living at the homeless shelter — she spent a long time on her mental model putting in lots of detail. She has 6 children including a set of twins. She is comparing the world she lives in to the world she sees others have. Notice the difference in the settings. Trash, dark clouds and rain, words like stinky trash, the people fighting or passed out by the street — only two bedrooms and no where to play. The rent there is $800 and closer to what she can afford on her income. Compare that to the nice house with sunshine, enough bedrooms and a beautiful yard but it rents for $1,500 way out of her price range. Her kids are begging her.

You can feel her frustration and longing. It doesn't seem to matter how long she works — she won't be afford a safe place for her family.

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**What It's Like Now**

**The Road to Nowhere**

Carl is the stepfather of a seven year old child. He works construction and was living in a shelter with his family.

He drew his life in poverty as a circular road called

'The Road to Nowhere'  

His stepson says "Carl — where we going?"

He answers "Nowhere Joey."
Working Hard but Nothing Left

Scott works at a factory and does very manual labor for just above minimum wage.

He shows his job.

"Working all week."

Then pays his bills

"Everyone with their hands out."

and at the end of the week he has nothing left — it feels futile.

"Broke again."

Angel drew her dream world and her current situation. In her current world she is just a number and everyone judges her and laughs at her. She feels trapped. It is in color because it is so real. Her dream world is where she is going — no agencies, her own home, a business that she worked to build, college for her children — it is in black and white because for now it is just a dream.
People Are on a Continuum

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Our goal is to move them down the continuum!
Creating a Community Dialogue

It's not about having the solutions
- We don't want to limit the solutions
- The benefit of Big View is to educate and then engage others to join us in finding solutions

It's about talking about the problems for real!

Families sharing their stories is the best way to engage others

Using What We Are Learning

Macro looking at the bigger picture of poverty – looking at the systemic or economic drivers of poverty.
We have to build a path out of poverty! If not us than who?????

Monthly Costs for a Parent and Two Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing + Utilities</th>
<th>Child Care</th>
<th>Food</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation (used car payment, gas, insurance, maintenance)</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Other Necessities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Other Necessities</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals (This is bare necessities – no vacations, cell phones, cable, birthday parties, car repairs, sports for the kids, or to travel/dine)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>$24,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>$20,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>$16,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>$11,880</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (January 2016)

The family would lose food stamps when their yearly income reaches: $32,256, access to Food Pantries at $30,240

The Wage Gap

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNAtfgW79BM
### School Free and Reduced Lunch Counts

**October 2015 Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Franklin County Schools</td>
<td>46.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chambersburg Area School District</td>
<td>54.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fannett Metal School District</td>
<td>40.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greencastle Antrim School District</td>
<td>28.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuscarora School District</td>
<td>40.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waynesboro Area School District</td>
<td>46.46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Franklin TANF, SNAP and Medicaid

**Nov. 2015 Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Assistance Office (Welfare) Statistics</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Individuals in Franklin County</td>
<td>150,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANF – Number of Individuals</td>
<td>597 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP (Food Stamps) – Number of Individuals</td>
<td>17,570 (11.67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average SNAP (Food Stamp) Benefit per Individual</td>
<td>$110.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid – Number of Individuals</td>
<td>26,366 (17.50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Family Size</td>
<td>2.45</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Why do this kind of work?

• If you are not doing systemic macro level or community and system change work, we are not acknowledging the reality of poverty.

• We are not honoring the hard work of our families.

• We may be setting up families to fail.

• We certainly are not telling the whole story.

Some Examples from Adams and Franklin Counties

• Food Justice and Access
• The Wage Gap/Cliff Effect Work
• School District Work
• Countless College Classes
• Health Related Work
• Poverty Simulation and Panels
Poverty is a HUGE multi-faceted problem requiring many solutions

• We must change the dialogue
• It can’t only be only about families making better choices and working harder
• It is also about broken systems — it should not get harder to break as a family works harder to make it.
• It is about community solutions and effective supports!
Questions?

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