Developing culturally responsive communities: Pathways to youth resilience

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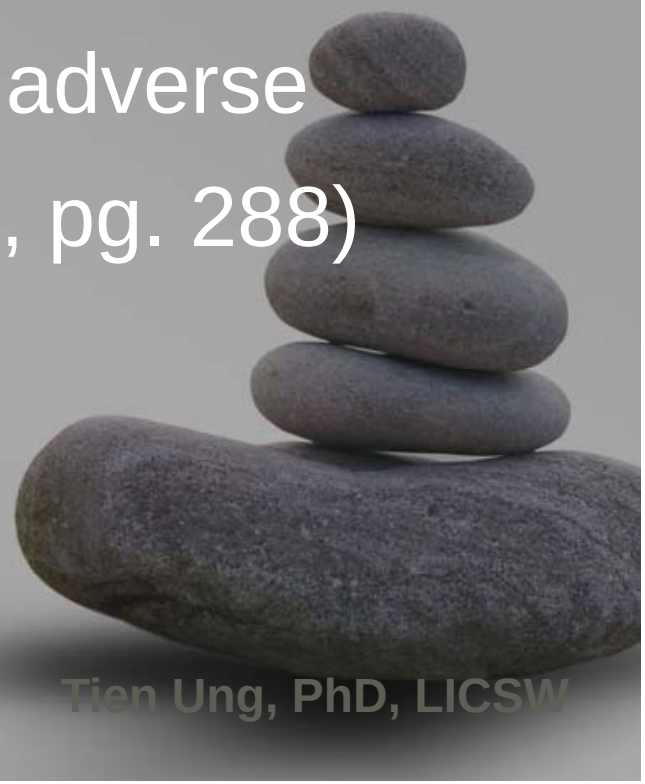
“Resilience is **both** an outcome of interactions between individuals and their environments, and the processes which contribute to these outcomes. Outcomes and processes are both influenced by children’s context (the well-being of their community as well as the capacity of social institutions such as schools and the police to meet children’s needs) and culture (the values, beliefs, and everyday practices associated with coping).” (Ungar, 2007, pg. 288)

“Resilience is, therefore, both a characteristic of the individual child and a quality of that child’s environment which provides the resources necessary for positive development despite adverse circumstances.” (Ungar, 2007, pg. 288)

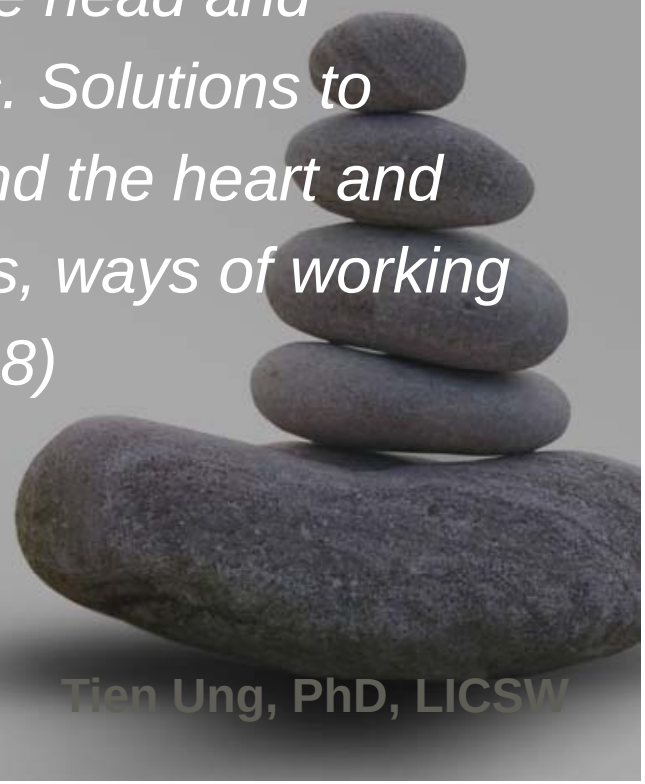


Five properties of healthy and sustainable eco-systems

- Diversity evolves dynamic and live communities
- Communities have the ability to self-organize in the presence of “sunlight”
- Self-organization leads to self-design
- Organisms can repair themselves
- Organisms have the ability to self-perpetuate

Technical Problems

"Problems that we can solve through the knowledge of experts are technical challenges. Problems that the Experts cannot solve are called adaptive challenges. Solutions to technical problems lie in the head and solving them requires intellect and logic. Solutions to adaptive problems lie in the stomach and the heart and rely on changing people's beliefs, habits, ways of working or ways of life." (Heifetz,2004, pg. 37-38)



Adaptive Challenges

"Adaptive challenges require experiments, discoveries and adjustments from many places in the organization or community. To make the adaptive leap to survive in the new environment requires people to learn new ways of behaving and adopt new values and attitudes. Sustaining change requires the people with the problem to internalize the change itself.

…you know you're dealing with something more than a technical issue when people's hearts and minds need to change, and not just their preferences or routine behaviors." (Heifetz,2002)

Adaptive vs. Technical Challenges and Solutions

Type	Problem Identification	Solutions	Who's Responsible
Technical	Clear	Clear	Authority
Technical & Adaptive	Clear	Requires learning	Authority & Stakeholders
Adaptive	Requires learning	Requires learning	Stakeholders to Authority

Heifetz, Grashow, & Linskey ,2009

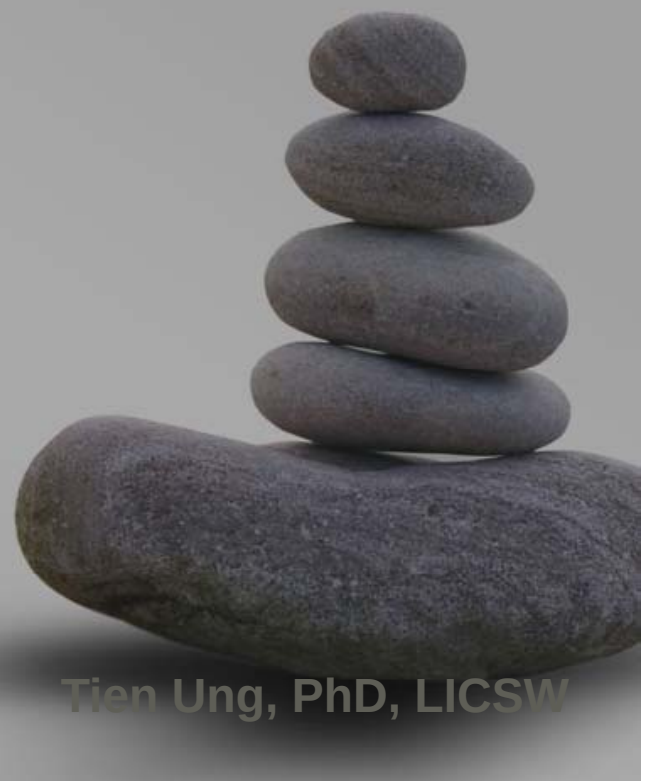
Social Capital

Social capital manifests in “features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam 1995, p. 67).

Social Capital

- Participation in networks
- Reciprocity
- Trust
- Social Norms
- The Commons
- Proactivity

(From Bullen & Onyx, 1999)



Next Steps

- What does your neighborhood/community or project "say" about prevention and violence?
- How has the neighborhood organized itself? What are the cultural and community norms and what do these norms say about youth? About youth capacity? About youth success?
- What aspects of social capital are present in your community or neighborhood? What aspects of social capital are absent? Is there strong social capital or community level attachments?

Next Steps

- Think about your findings to date – do they reflect technical problems or adaptive challenges? How do you know?
- What are the technical solutions that will support your goal of sustainability?
- What are the adaptive challenges? What aspects of being and seeing, what heart and mind changes will be necessary for you to achieve the goal of sustainability in your work to date?