



# Connecting to Quality: CQL's Social Capital Index®

## ● REPORTING 20 YEARS OF DATA



*“The basic idea of social capital is that a person’s family, friends, and associates constitute an important asset, one that can be called on in a crisis, enjoyed for its own sake, and/or leveraged for material gain.<sup>1</sup>”*

Research has demonstrated how all our lives are enhanced by social ties with other people — families, friends, neighbors, social groups, and co-workers. Increases in social contacts have been associated with improved mental and physical health, lower rates of social problems, and greater access to economic security. The concept of social capital crosses the boundaries that have been placed on people with disabilities. Social capital offers a common meeting point for people receiving services and supports, families, employers, employees and community organizations.

Researchers agree that social capital influences our quality of life. Social capital impacts the viability of civic institutions, community life, and the economic and social measures of wellness in neighborhoods. Social capital and the transformation of community relationships are of particular importance for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and friends, service and support

providers, and public officials who develop policy and administer support services. The conceptual framework for over two decades of reform in the field of human services — deinstitutionalization, community participation, integration, inclusion, self-determination, and self-direction — rests on assumptions about social capital and the collective resources of community for social support. Social capital is not a human service specific term, concept, or measurement. Social capital is not the same as integration, community inclusion, self-determination, or community presence/participation. Yet, social capital recognizes the importance of trust, social networks, and the centrality of strong personal relationships — all key values and principles associated with social change for people.

CQL's *Personal Outcome Measures*® provide a method for measuring the properties of social capital that facilitate individually defined outcomes of social capital. The *Social Capital Index*® consists

of eight items extracted from the *Personal Outcome Measures*® database and analyzed for reliability and validity. A factor analysis of the eight Personal Outcomes resulted in the identification of two factors, identified and named **Bonding** and **Bridging**.<sup>2</sup>

We have Bonding social capital with those people who are similar to us and who share common values, traditions, and backgrounds. Bridging social capital is found in relationships with others who are less like us and who exist outside our typical social circle.

Five personal outcomes make up the Bonding factor. These outcomes are entry points for developing social capital. They are related to people's current world and the people and places they already know. This factor represents the initiation of bonds that make social capital more likely. It is the 'glue' that holds people together.

Three personal outcomes make up the Bridging factor. They represent the connections people have to the world around them beyond the confines of who they already know, where they already go, and what they already do. They represent potential for increased social ties and connections. They are the 'WD-40' of social interactions.<sup>3</sup>

CQL's National *Personal Outcome Measures*® Database contains data based on over 8,200 interviews with people receiving services from organizations pursuing CQL Accreditation, over a 20-year period. Our analysis reveals the *Social Capital Index*® for this population.

SOCIAL CAPITAL INDEX®		
Based on interviews conducted during CQL Accreditation (n=8,223)		
SOCIAL CAPITAL	BONDING SOCIAL CAPITAL	BRIDGING SOCIAL CAPITAL
60.2%	67.7%	47.7%

These findings indicate that, for people in our sample, Bridging social capital — relationships with others who are less like us and who are outside our typical social circle — is found to a much less degree than Bonding social capital. Bridging social capital is **inclusive**; it is outward-looking and encompasses people across different social groups.<sup>3</sup>

As the following table indicates, outcomes related to *integrated living* and *social roles* remain the greatest challenges for people with disabilities receiving services and supports.

SOCIAL CAPITAL OUTCOMES 1993 - 2012		
Percent of Personal Outcomes Present (n=8,223)		
OUTCOMES	BONDING	BRIDGING
People have intimate relationships	70.1%	
People participate in the life of the community	69.6%	
People have friends	56.1%	
People are respected	78.7%	
People remain connected to natural support networks	61.4%	
People live in integrated environments		38.2%
People interact with other members of the community		72.2%
People perform different social roles		32.6%

Social Capital is particularly important for people receiving services and supports who often lack financial and human resource capital. Social capital calls attention to the link between health, safety, and security and connectedness to caring networks of supportive people. The development of social capital and social networking enables people to reach across boundaries and develop trusting relationships with other community members. As organizations work to enhance the formation of social capital for individuals, their focus moves beyond programs and services.

It is in the community where we truly build social capital.

**References**

<sup>1</sup> Woolcock, M. (1999). *Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research and Policy*. Washington, DC: World Bank.  
<sup>2</sup> CQL (2005). *Social Capital Index*®. Towson, MD.  
<sup>3</sup> Putnam, R.D. and Feldstein, L.M. (2003). *Better Together*. New York: Simon and Shuster