



# Creating spaces that disrupt the ideology of fatalism

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# My aims

- To outline the benefits of community-based adult learning
- To suggest how we might disrupt the ideology of fatalism.

## What are the main benefits participants in CBAL experience?

- Engaging with, and making progress in, learning;
- Developing resilience, self-confidence, and social capital because of participation in learning;
- Reducing the attainment gap through supporting parents and their children in family learning programmes;
- The positive impact of CBAL on health and well-being.

## Engaging in learning and making progress

- Involving people that may have decided that 'learning is not for them' is an important achievement.
- Engagement is most effective when practitioners build on their knowledge of the community and specific groups, provide easy access to provision through outreach activities, and link to other professions and institutions.
- Once people are engaged, they are most likely to continue when their goals are recognised and supported.
- Learners often prioritise increasing self-confidence, especially when they are recovering from ill-health or adjusting to changed circumstances, but this can be at odds with funders' goals of increasing employability.

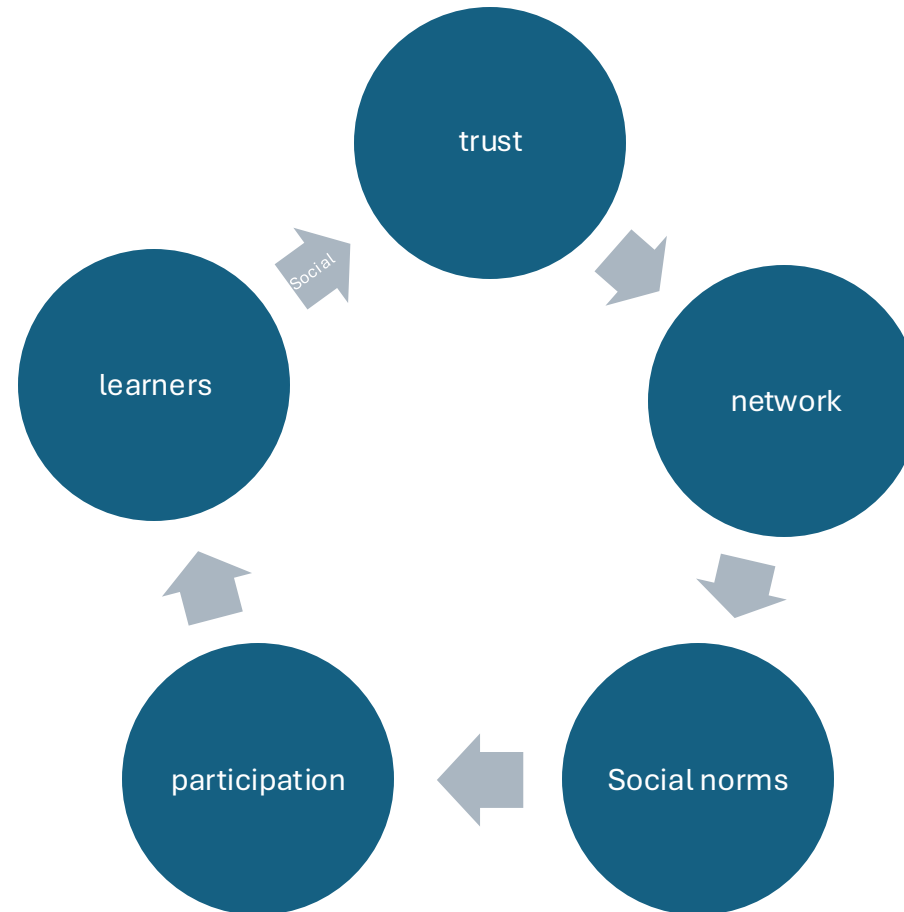
## Promoting resilience, self-confidence, and social capital

- Resilience means adapting well in the face of adversity and bouncing back from difficult experiences.
- Participating in CBAL helps people develop resilience and grit and build confidence. This then enables them to do things differently and apply what they have learnt in a range of contexts.
- For example, developing a stronger belief in their own potential and achievements, increasing their skills, and having a greater ability to deal with conflict and stand up for themselves.
- CBAL also builds social capital.

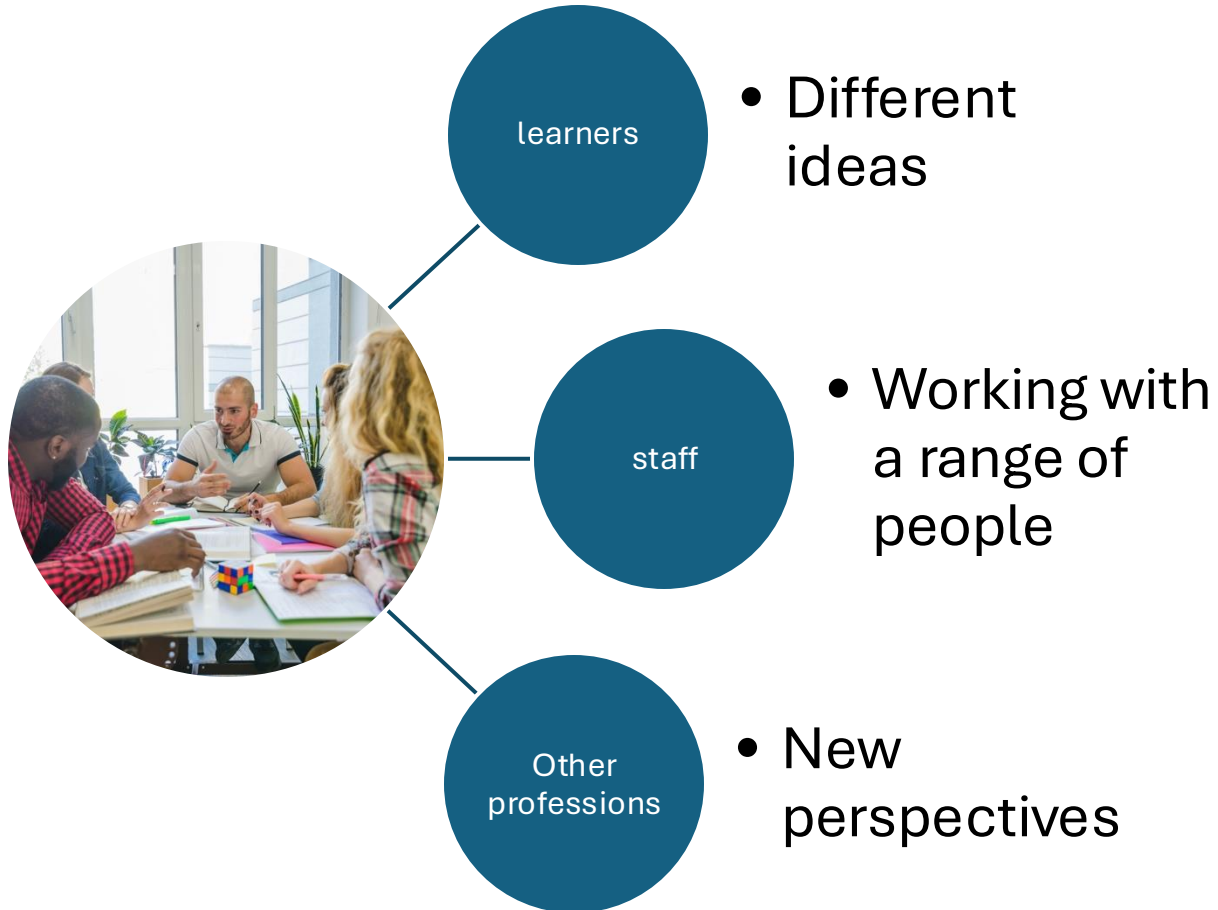
# Social Capital

- Two dimensions: trust in people and involvement in social activities
- When people participate in social networks it helps to form **bonds** between similar people, and **bridges** between different people.
- Bonds help to develop trust, and Bridges encourage the development of new ideas and perspectives.
- Bridges also help people to know who, when and where to go to for advice and help.

# Bonding Social Capital



# Bridging social capital





# Disrupting fatalism: pedagogy and assessment

- Challenging and supporting learners to help them develop a critical stance on their current situation, rather than accepting it.
- Creating a space for the plurality of knowledge and experiences and avoiding binary thinking.
- Treating learners as citizens with rights
- Resisting managerial discourses that are detrimental to learners, especially in relation to pedagogy and assessment.
- These acts can disrupt the “ideology of fatalism [and instead enable people] to dream. Without ... dreams, there is no human existence, without dreams, there are no more human beings” (Freire, 2014 p. 33).

## Disrupting fatalism: resisting dominant discourses

- Exchanging experiences and opinions, taking collective action and seeking mutual aid.
- Finding support from enthusiastic colleagues and inspiration from learners can help us to keep going in challenging circumstances.
- Developing partnerships and good working relations with other organisations also provides support.
- Undertaking research and developing strategic thinking that documents and values learners' experiences is another resource that can offer alternative concepts and analyses.

## Resources of hope

- We need an education system that emphasises “not the ladder but the common highway, ... [because every person’s] ignorance diminishes me, and every [person]’s skill is a common gain of breath” (Williams 1989,15).
- CLD is critically working towards this through building on learners’ experience and sharing their own knowledge to make institutional systems and spaces of government more transparent.
- Yet, if we are to address lasting structural changes as social justice requires, we need to create larger alliances of like-minded groups.
- Taken together these are steps on the way to promoting social justice and human flourishing and resisting the ideology of fatalism.