



# Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience: Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma

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# **What's Trauma Got to do with It?**

**How the Environment  
Affects Us**





Photo: Michael Fleshman





Photo: Todd Dwyer





Photo: MTA of the State of New York





Source: NY Times





Source: [www.artswfl.com](http://www.artswfl.com)

**MY**



**NEIGHBORHOOD**

**IS**



**KILLING**



**ME**



**Environment**

**Health &  
Safety**

**Behavior**

**It is unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural and physical environment conspire against such change.**

— Institute of Medicine



# Prevention

a systematic process that reduces the frequency and/or severity of illness or injury.

## Primary Prevention

*Promotes healthy environments and behaviors to prevent problems from occurring before the onset of symptoms*

# Prevention Works

- ◆ Smoking Prevention
- ◆ Minimum Drinking Age Laws
- ◆ Childhood Immunizations
- ◆ Motorcycle and Bicycle Helmet Laws
- ◆ Child Seat and Safety Belt Use
- ◆ Reduced Lead Levels in Children



# Child Safety Seats



# NORMS

Attitudes, beliefs,  
ways of being

Taken for granted

Sanction behavior

Based in  
culture  
& tradition

More than a habit



cc Elvert Barnes

**“The ideas of  
one generation  
become the  
instincts of  
the next.”**

— D.H. Lawrence



**What can be done  
to prevent the  
problem from  
occurring**

***in the first place?***



# Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience

A FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING AND PREVENTING COMMUNITY TRAUMA



KAISER PERMANENTE.

This paper was supported by a grant from Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit Program

Prevention  
and  
equity  
Institute  
at the center of community well-being

Prevention  
Institute

# Thank You

Kaiser Permanente Northern California  
Community Benefits Program for supporting the  
development of this work

Prevention Institute and Dr. Howard Pinderhughes  
conducted a study (literature review and interviews) to  
explore trauma at the population level, how it impacts  
other community health improvement efforts –  
including violence prevention, and emerging strategies.



# UNITY City Network



Updated  
8/4/2016

# What Is Trauma?

- ◆ Experiences or situations that are emotionally painful
- ◆ Chronic adversity (discrimination, racism, sexism, poverty, oppression)

# Overarching Findings

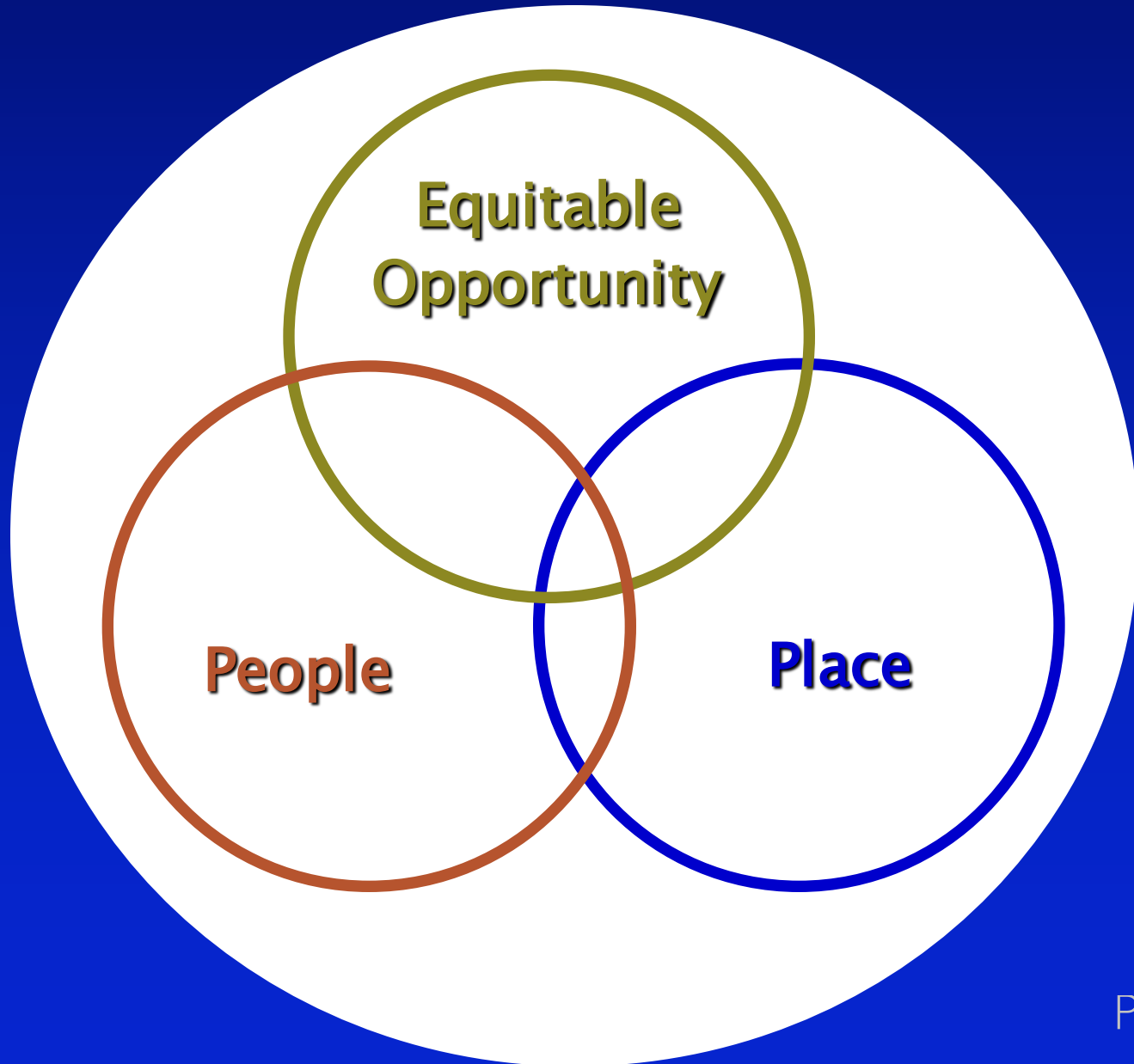
- A. There is growing understanding about trauma, particularly its prevalence and impact. The predominant approach to dealing with trauma is screening and treatment, consistent with a medical model.
- B. Trauma manifests at the community-level. There are emerging practices to address trauma at the community-level, yet there is not a framework for addressing and preventing it.

**“ No epidemic has ever been  
resolved by paying attention to  
the treatment of the  
affected individual.”**

— George W. Albee

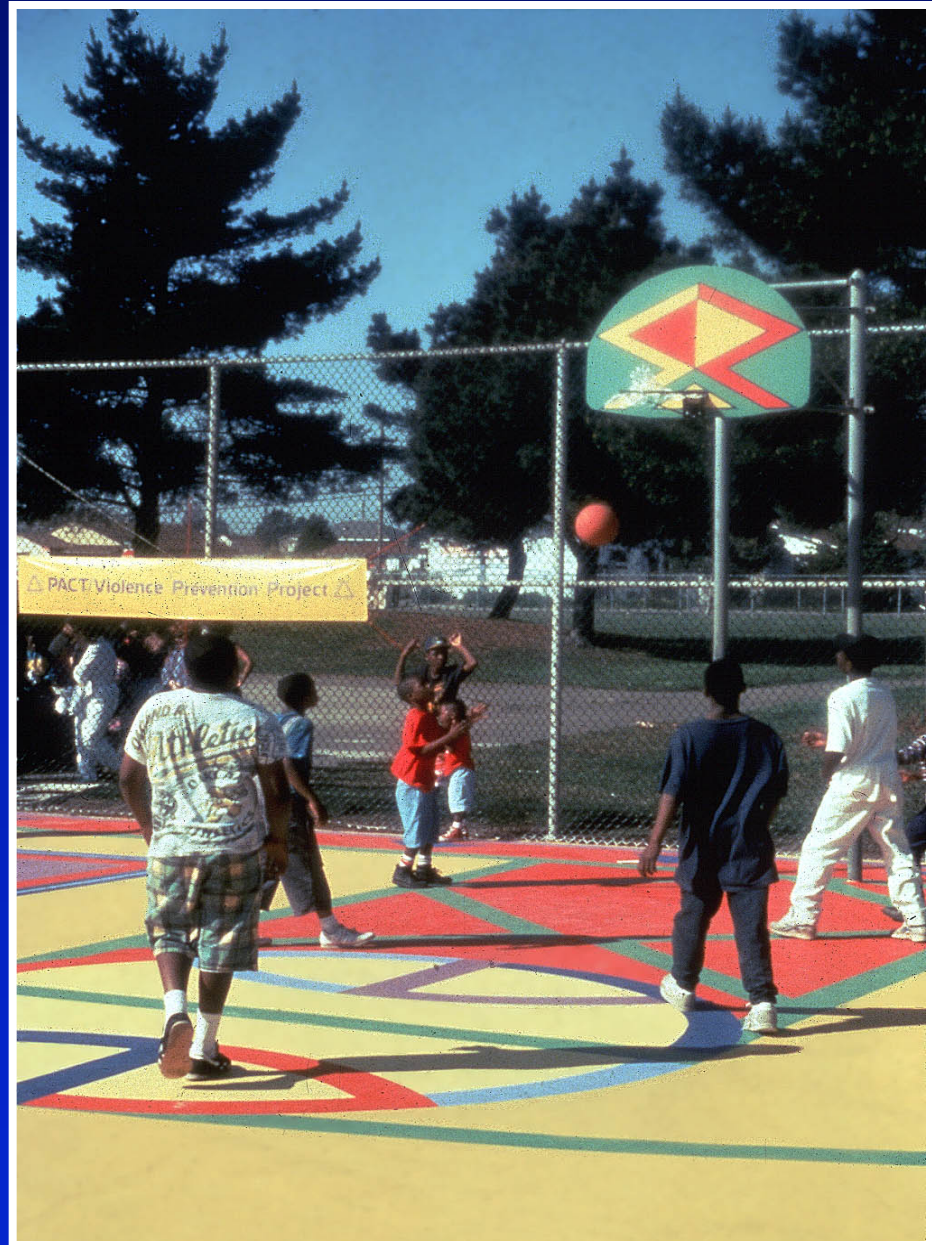


# The Community Environment

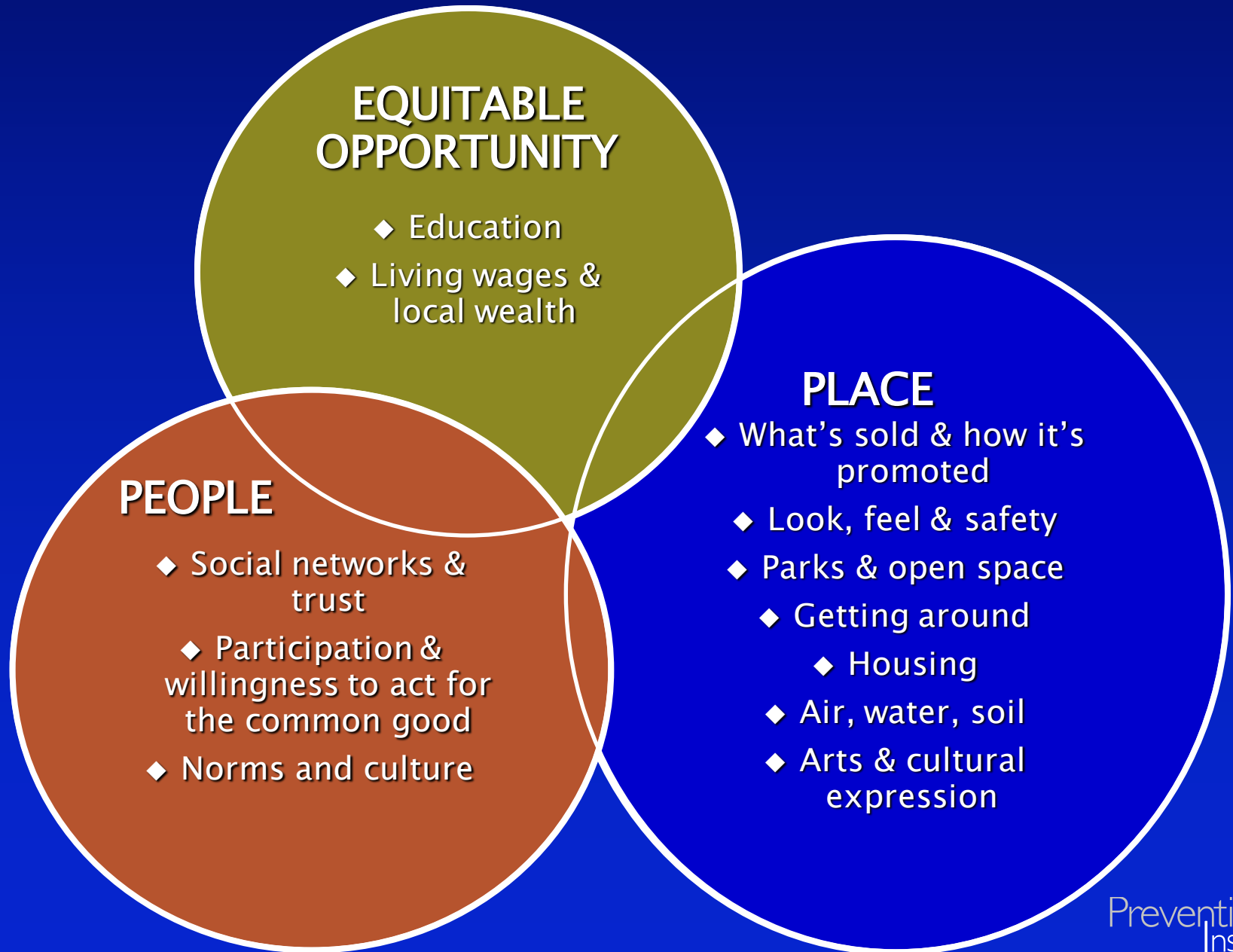


# THRIVE

**Tool for  
Health and  
Resilience  
In Vulnerable  
Environments**



# THRIVE





# Symptoms of Community-Level Trauma

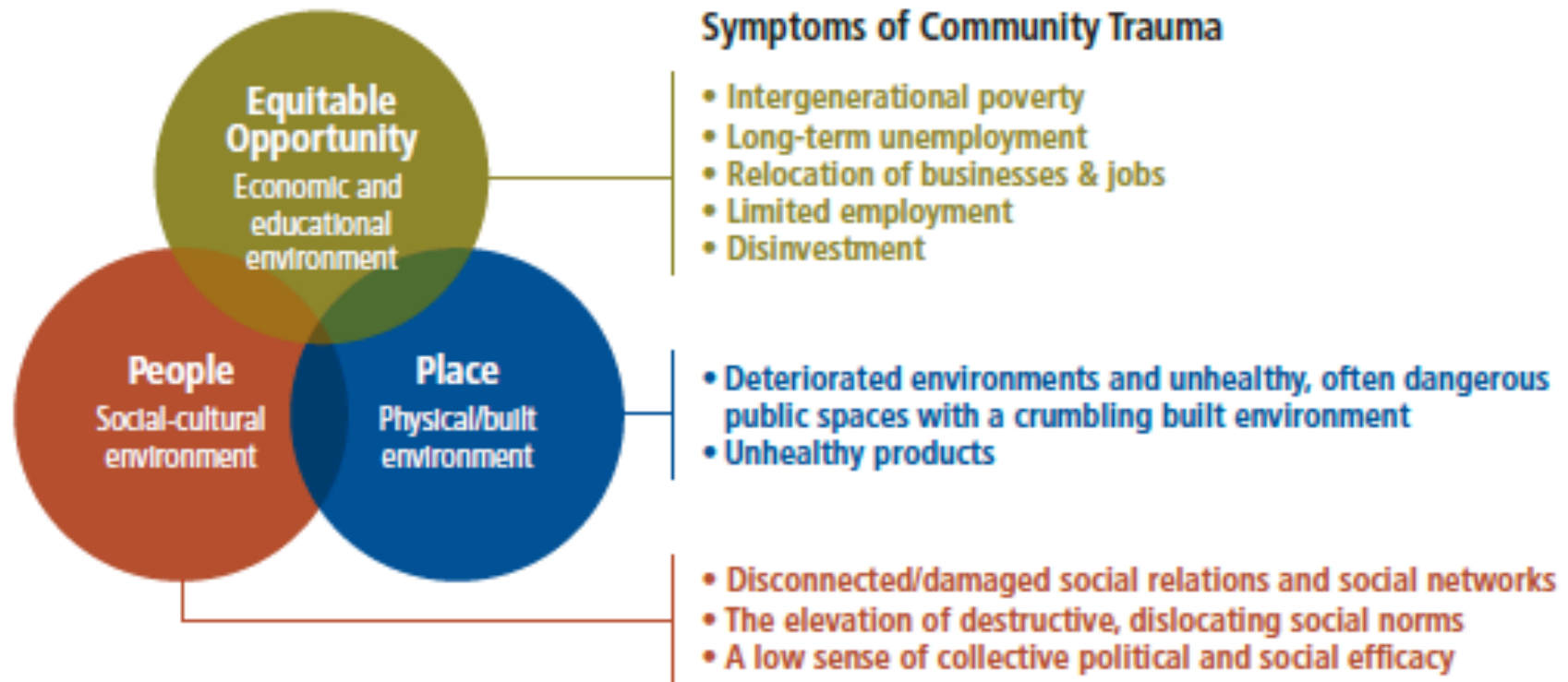
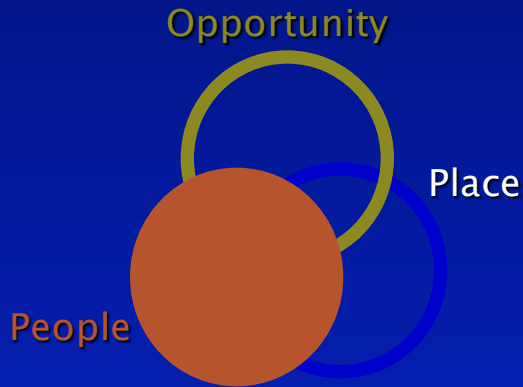


Figure 1 The Community Environment

# Social-Cultural Environment

## PEOPLE

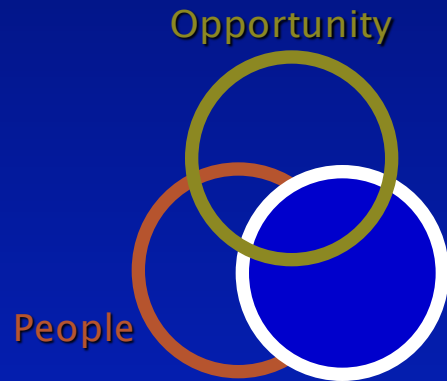


- **Damaged, fragmented or disrupted:**
  - social relations (esp. intergenerational)
  - social networks and
  - infrastructure of social support
- **Low sense of collective political and social efficacy**
- **Elevation of destructive social norms promoting violence and unhealthy behaviors over affirming, community oriented positive social norms**





# Physical/Built Environment

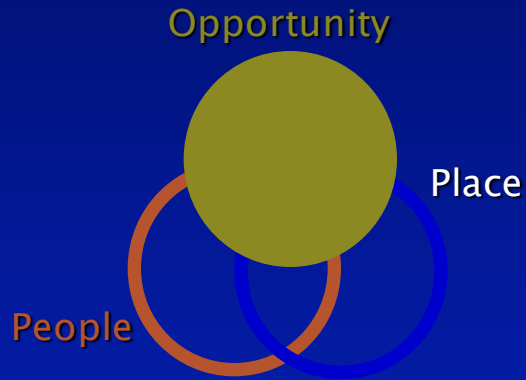


PLACE

**Deteriorated environments and unhealthy, often dangerous public spaces with a crumbling built environment.**



# Economic/Educational Environment



# OPPORTUNITY

- Intergenerational poverty
- Long term unemployment
- Relocation of businesses, corporations and jobs
- Limited employment opportunities
- Government and private disinvestment





# Violence

Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological or emotional harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.

*World report on violence and health: summary.*

World Health Organization

# Structural Violence

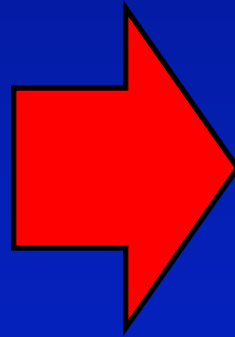
Structural violence refers to harm that individuals, families and communities experience from the economic and social structure, social institutions, relations of power, privilege and inequality and inequity that may harm people and communities by preventing them from meeting their basic needs.

# Root Causes

- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Racism
- ◆ Oppression
- ◆ Inequality
- ◆ Sexism
- ◆ Power Dynamics
- ◆ Classism
- ◆ Heteronormativity

# Root Causes = Structural Violence

- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Inequality
- ◆ Racism
- ◆ Sexism
- ◆ Oppression
- ◆ Power Dynamics



**Trauma**



Figure 2 The Production of Trauma from Violence



**Figure 2** The Production of Trauma from Violence

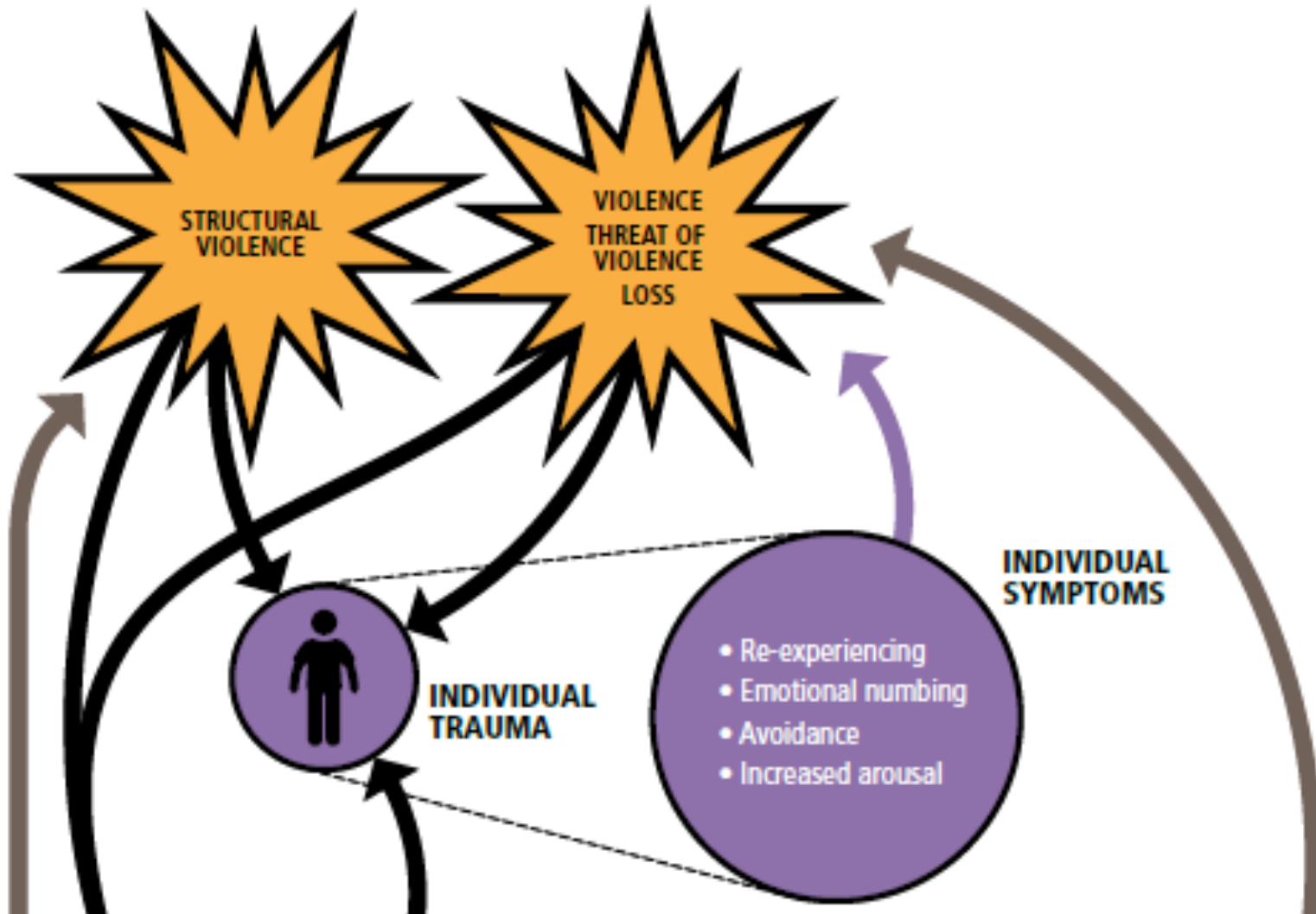


Figure 2 The Production of Trauma from Violence

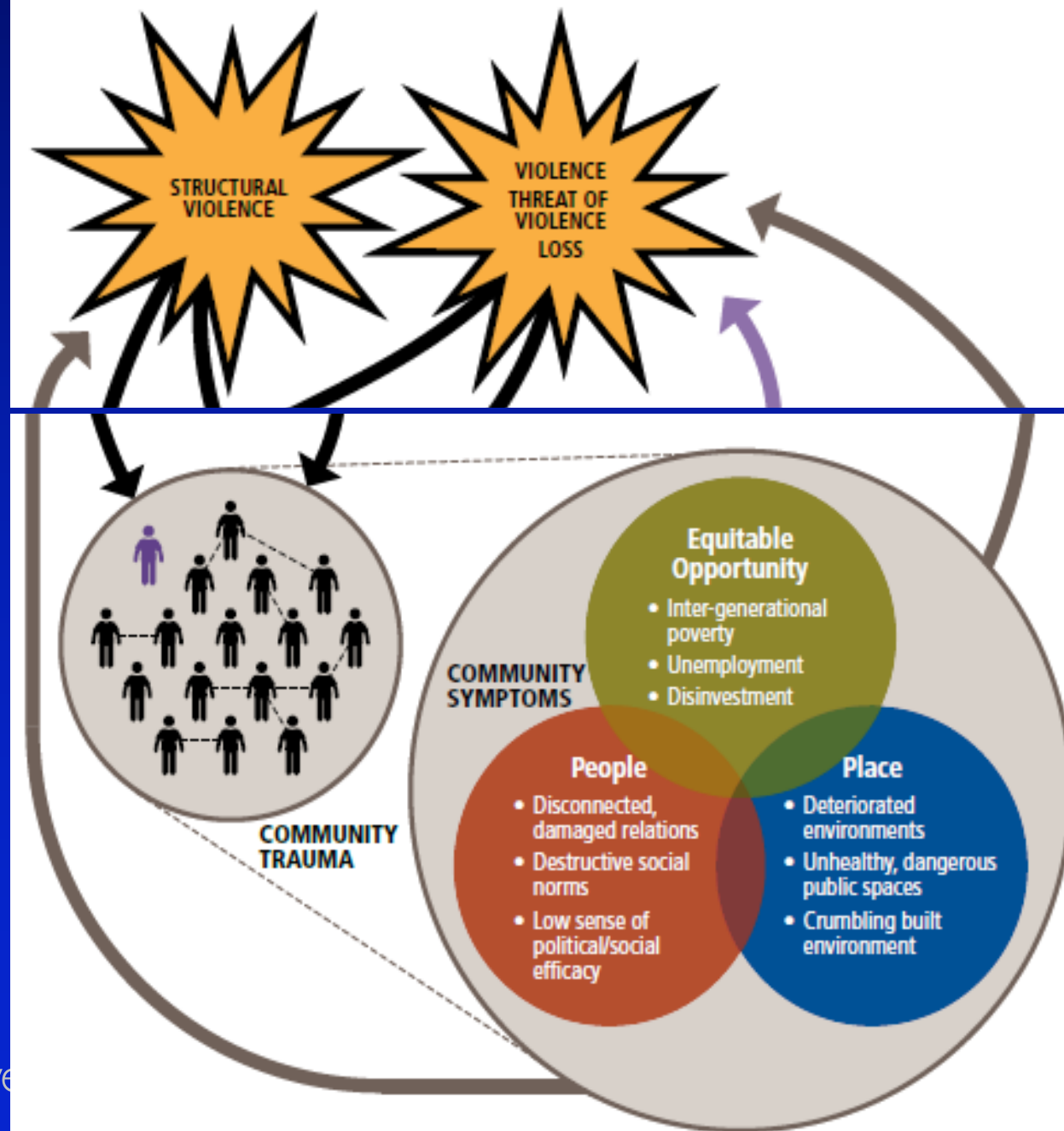
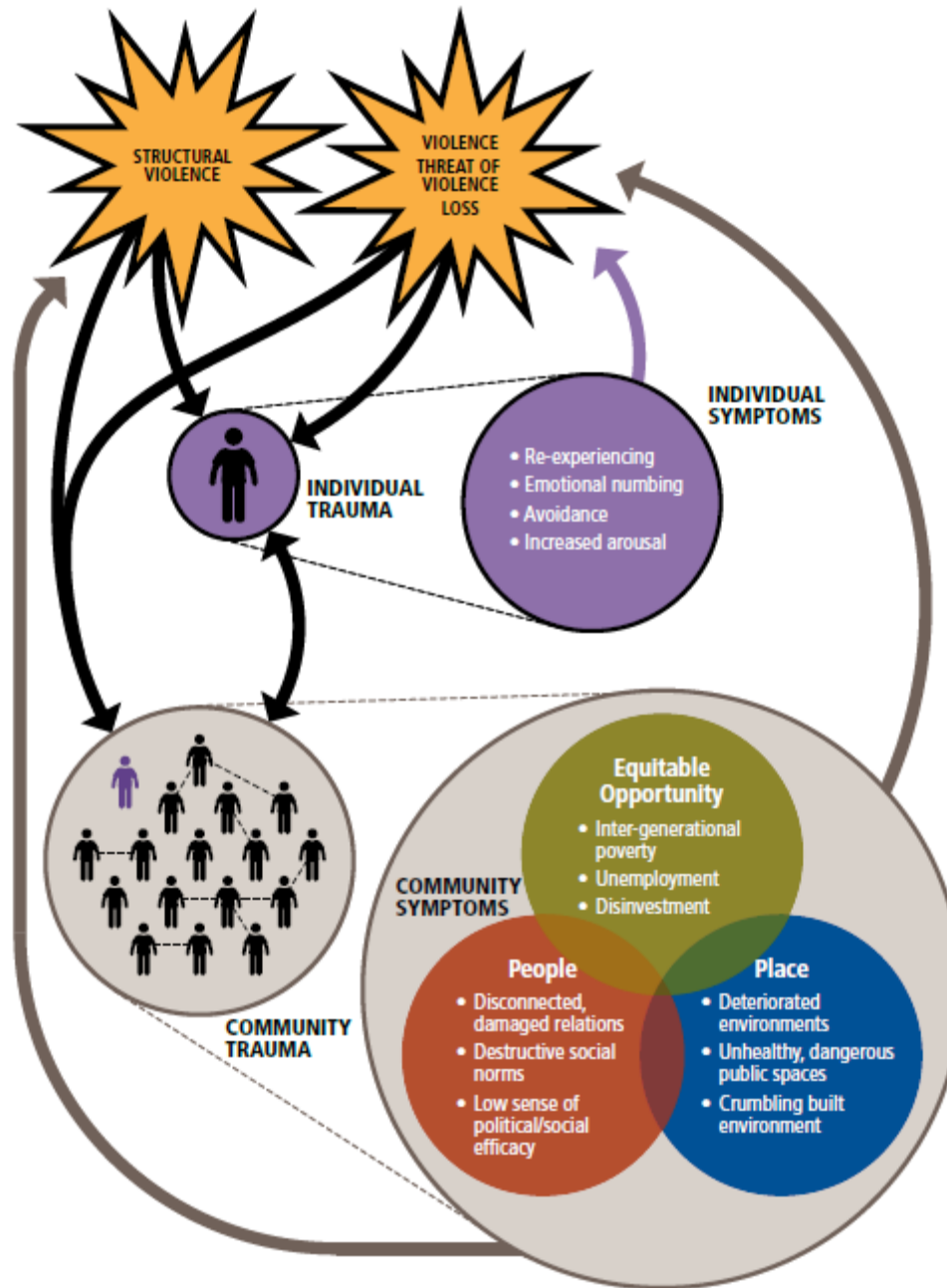


Figure 2 The Production of Trauma from Violence





# The Key

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## A Framework for Preventing Violence And Building Community Resilience

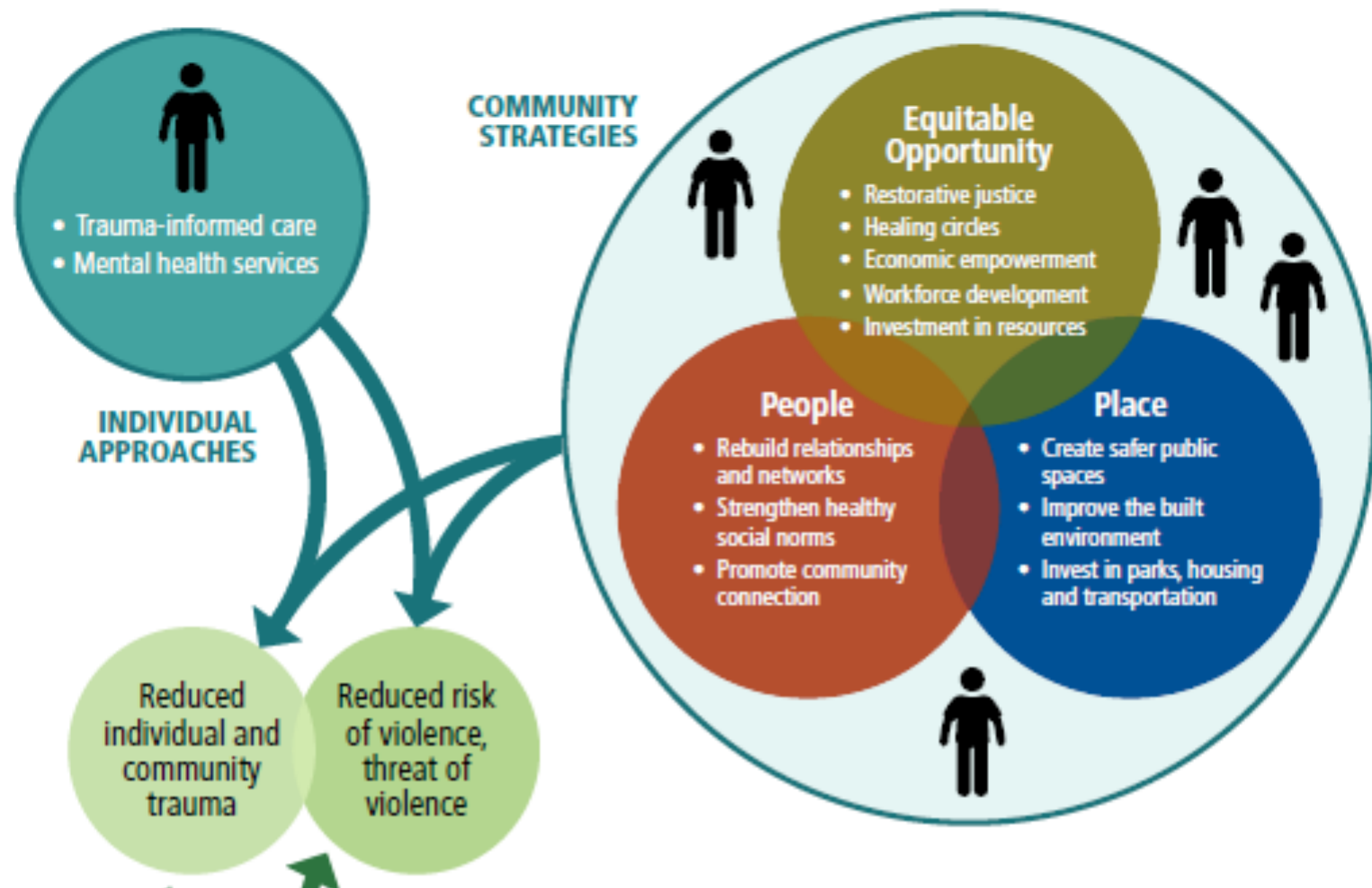
**Building Community Resilience  
Requires Comprehensive  
and Sustained Policy and Action**

# Toward a Resilience Framework to Address and Prevent Community-Level Trauma

- ◆ **Community resilience:** the ability of a community to recover from and/or thrive despite the prevalence of adverse conditions.
- ◆ In the context of community-level trauma, this means putting the conditions in place in which the community can heal from trauma and/or be protected against the impact of trauma.



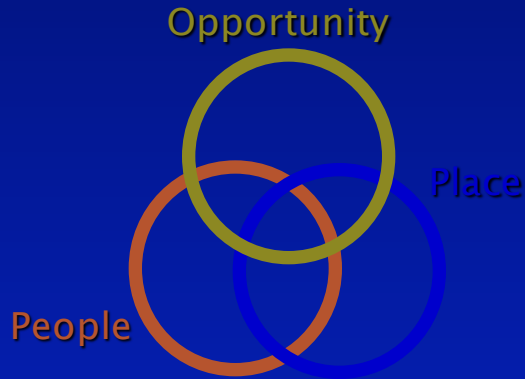
**Figure 5 Promoting Community Resilience: From Trauma to Well-being**





# Social-Cultural Environment

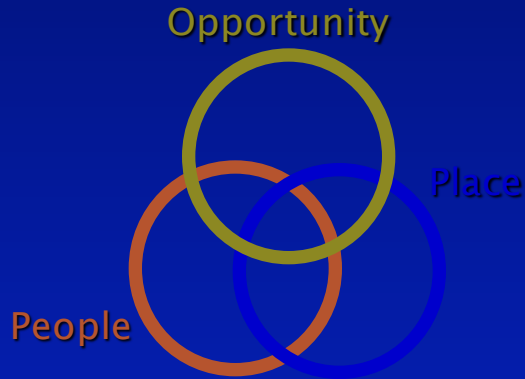
## PEOPLE



- Rebuild and revitalize:
  - social relationships, esp. intergenerational
  - social networks
  - infrastructure of social support
- Strengthen and elevate social norms promoting: healthy behaviors, community connection and community orientation
- Establishing collaborations promoting these community level strategies while rebuilding community social networks

# Social-Cultural Environment

## PEOPLE



- Change the narrative about community and the people in it
- Shift community social norms
- Organize and promote regular positive community activity
- Provide a voice and element of power for community folks around shifting and changing environmental factors as well as the structural factors

# Isle de Jean Charles

*Louisiana*



Photo: NY Times

# Isle de Jean Charles

*Louisiana*



Photo: Karen Apricot



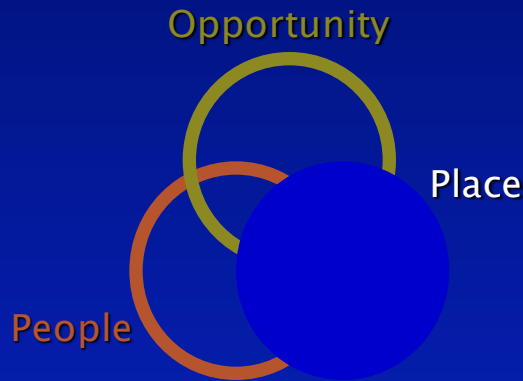
# Isle de Jean Charles

*Louisiana*



Photo: Josh Haner / NY Times

# Physical/Built Environment



PLACE

- Create safer public spaces through improvements in the built environment by addressing parks, housing quality and transportation
- Reclaim and improve public spaces

# New York City



Photo: NY Times



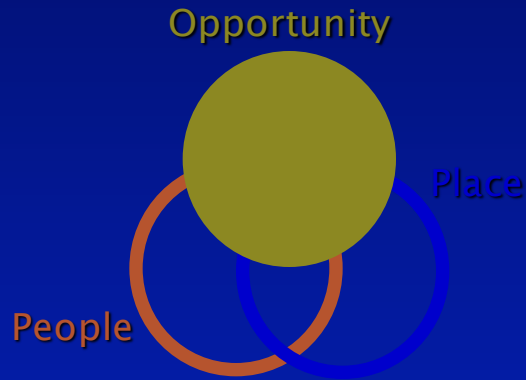
# Gentilly Resilience District

*New Orleans*



Photo: [www.NOLA.gov](http://www.NOLA.gov)

# Economic/Educational Environment



## EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITY

- ◆ Restorative Justice
- ◆ Healing Circles
- ◆ Economic empowerment/opportunity and workforce development
- ◆ Strategies to increase community wealth and resources that can resist the economic pressures that result in dislocation and gentrification



# Springfield Innovation Center

*Springfield, MA*



# Community Strategies

- ◆ Shift Community Social Norms
- ◆ Enhance Social Connections and Networks
- ◆ Rebuild Intergenerational Connections and Relationships
- ◆ Organize and Promote Regular Positive Community Activity
- ◆ Providing more of a voice and element of power for community folks around shifting and changing environmental as well as structural factors
  - ◆ Change the community narrative

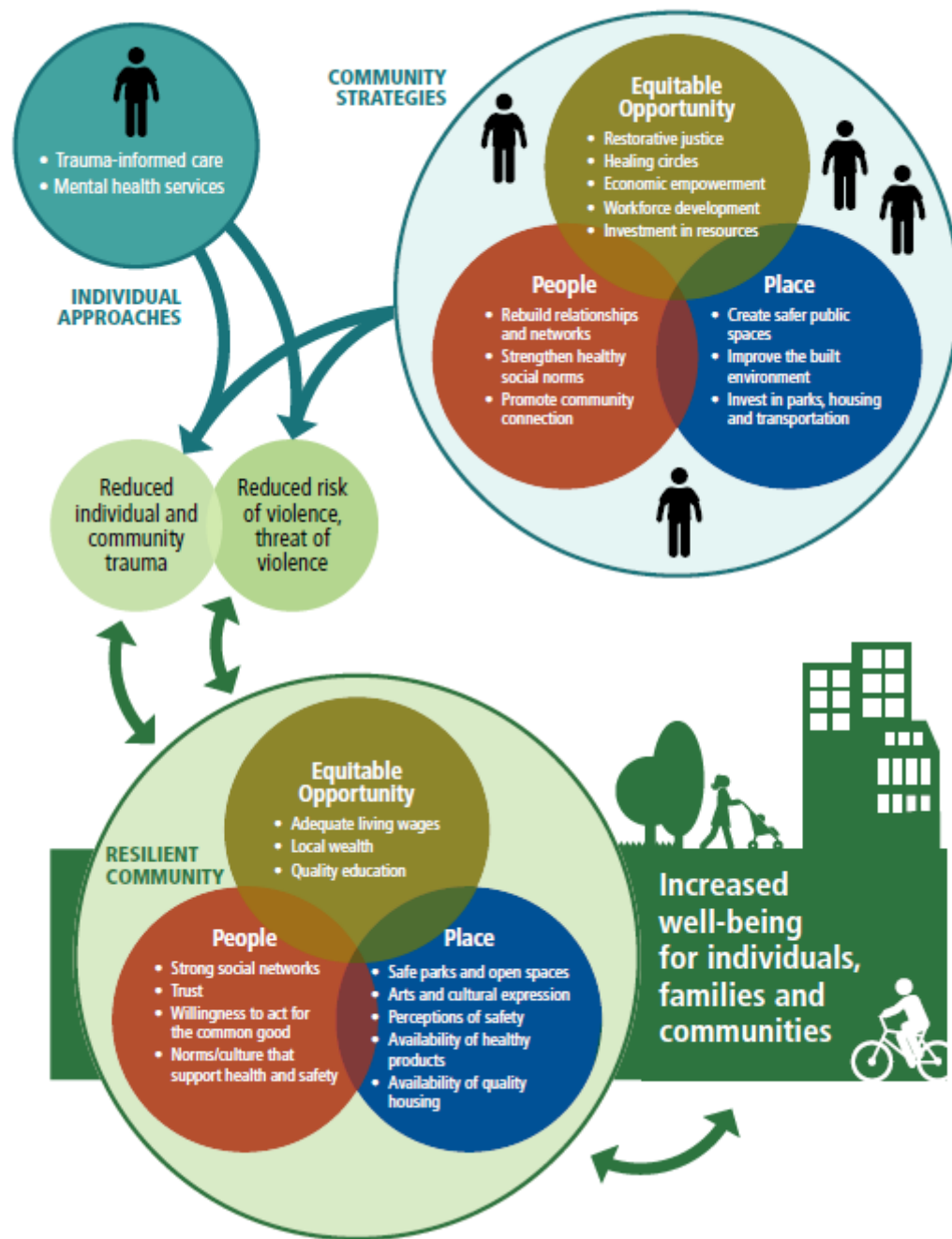
# Community Strategies

◆ Reclaim and  
Improve  
Public Spaces

# Community Strategies

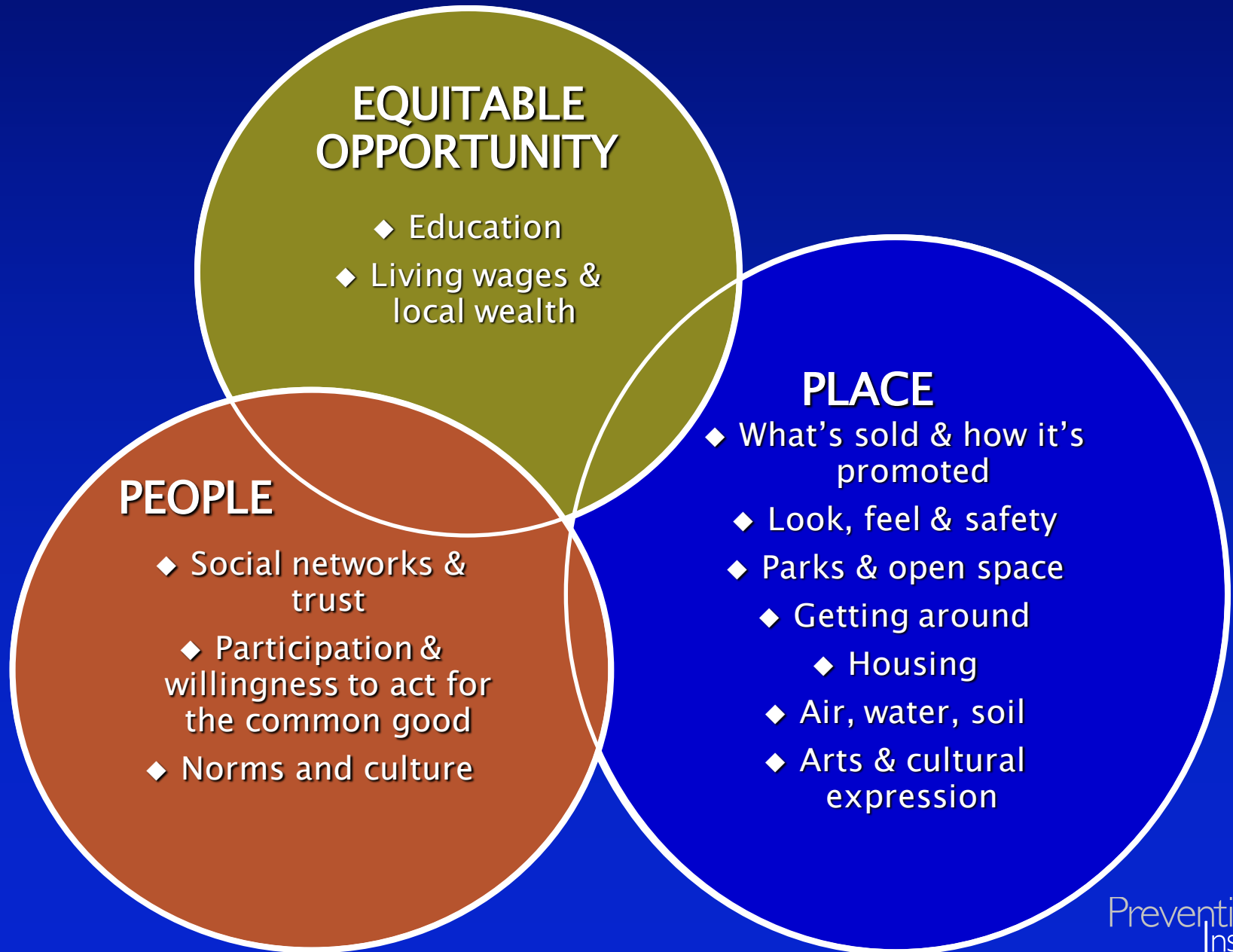
- ◆ Sustainable  
Community  
Economic  
Development
- ◆ Restorative Justice
  - ◆ Healing Circles

Figure 5 Promoting Community Resilience: From Trauma to Well-being






# THRIVE



# Neighborhood Resilience Factors

	CM	TDV	IPV	SV	YV	Bullying	Suicide	Elder Abuse
<b>Coordination of services among community agencies</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Access to mental health and substance abuse services</b>	<b>X</b>						<b>X</b>	
<b>Community support and connectedness*</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

NOTE: CM (Child Maltreatment), TDV (Teen Dating Violence), IPV (Intimate Partner Violence), SV (Sexual Violence), YV (Youth Violence)

\*Community support and connectedness typically measured at the individual level

Source: Wilkins, N., Tsao, B., Hertz, M., Davis, R., Kleven, J. (2014). **Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence**. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oakland, CA: Prevention Institute.







# Your Turn

Comments?

Questions?

Reflections?

Q & A

Thoughts about how  
this applies to your  
work?



# Your Turn

What symptoms of community trauma have you seen manifest in the communities you serve?

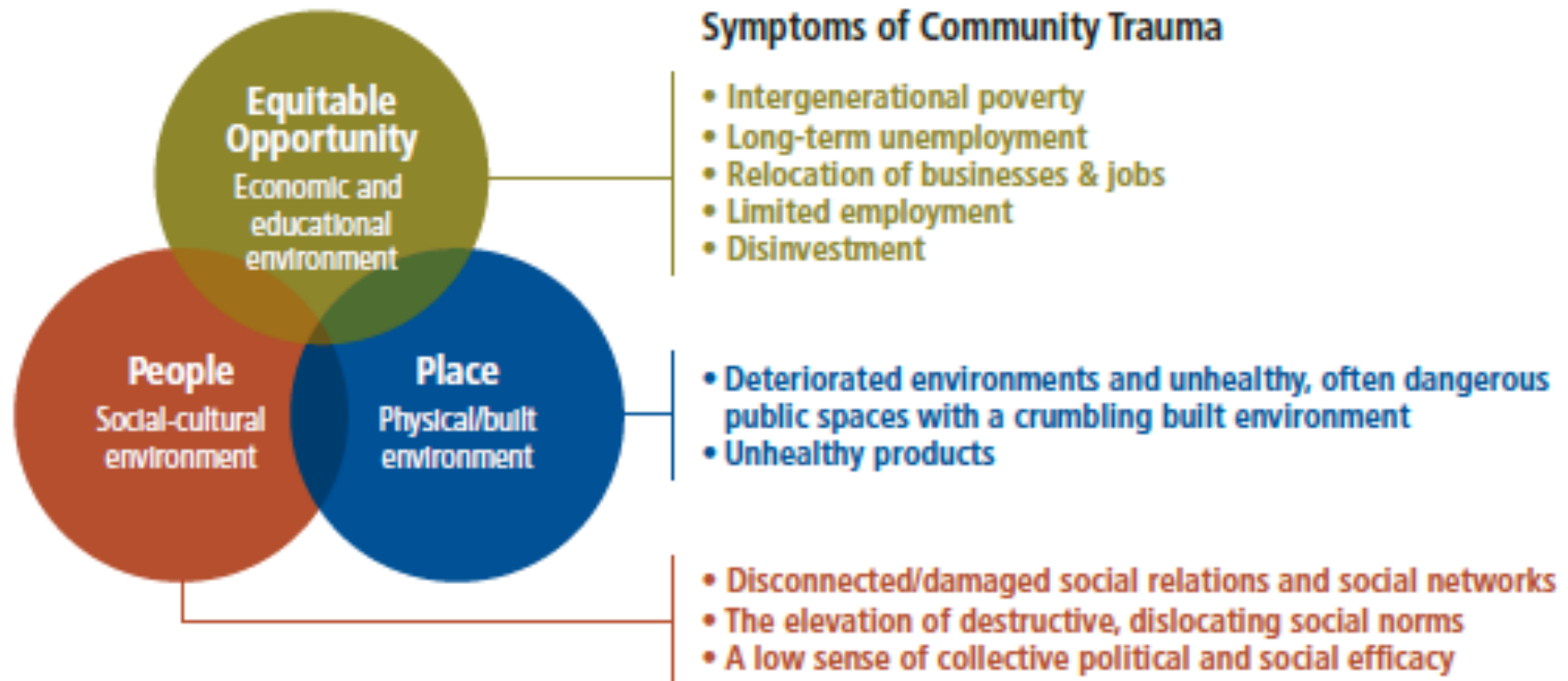


Figure 1 The Community Environment

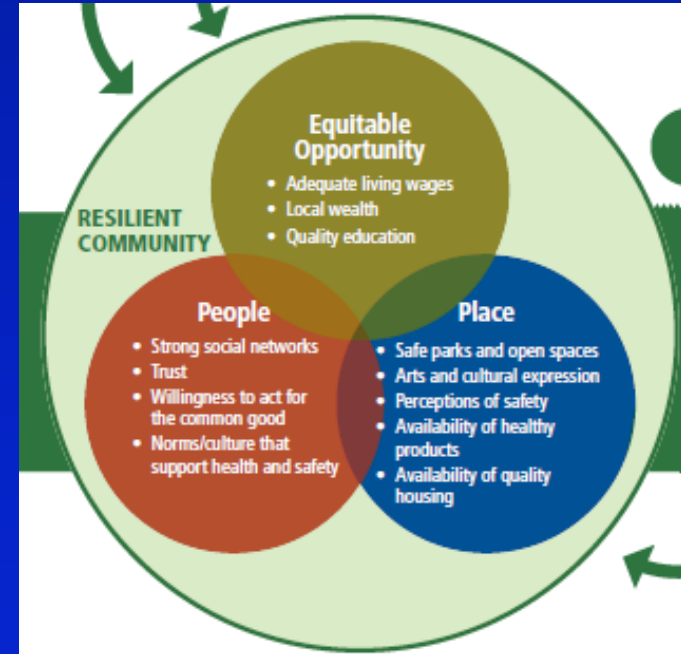
# Your Turn

In what ways is community trauma a barrier to implementing effective solutions to promote health, safety and well-being in the communities you serve?



# Your Turn

What are some strategies that might be effective in the communities you serve to heal from trauma and prevent trauma in the first place?



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