SUPPORT SYSTEMS POTENTIAL ADULT LEARNERS NEED

ACE OF FLORIDA CONFERENCE

MARGARET PATTERSON, PHD

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OVERVIEW

- Icebreaker

- Why CAPE? - Adult Nonparticipation in Education

- A Conceptual Model of the Pathway – Who Is Missing Out

- Fishbone Analysis – Getting to Root Causes and Solutions

- Cause Mapping: Large Group Activity

- Two Categories of Solutions

- External Initiatives as Support Solutions: Small Group Activity

- Personal Initiative as Support Solutions: Small Group Activity

- Putting It All Together and A Final Thought on Openness

BUT FIRST... AN ICEBREAKER

Think of a time when you were learning – who or what was your biggest support?

WHY CAPE?

- Nonparticipants include high-school early leavers, immigrants, and others who are not in adult education
- 36 million adults per PIAAC-USA data (Patterson & Paulson, 2014 and 2016) – that is **1 in 6 of those aged 16 to 65**
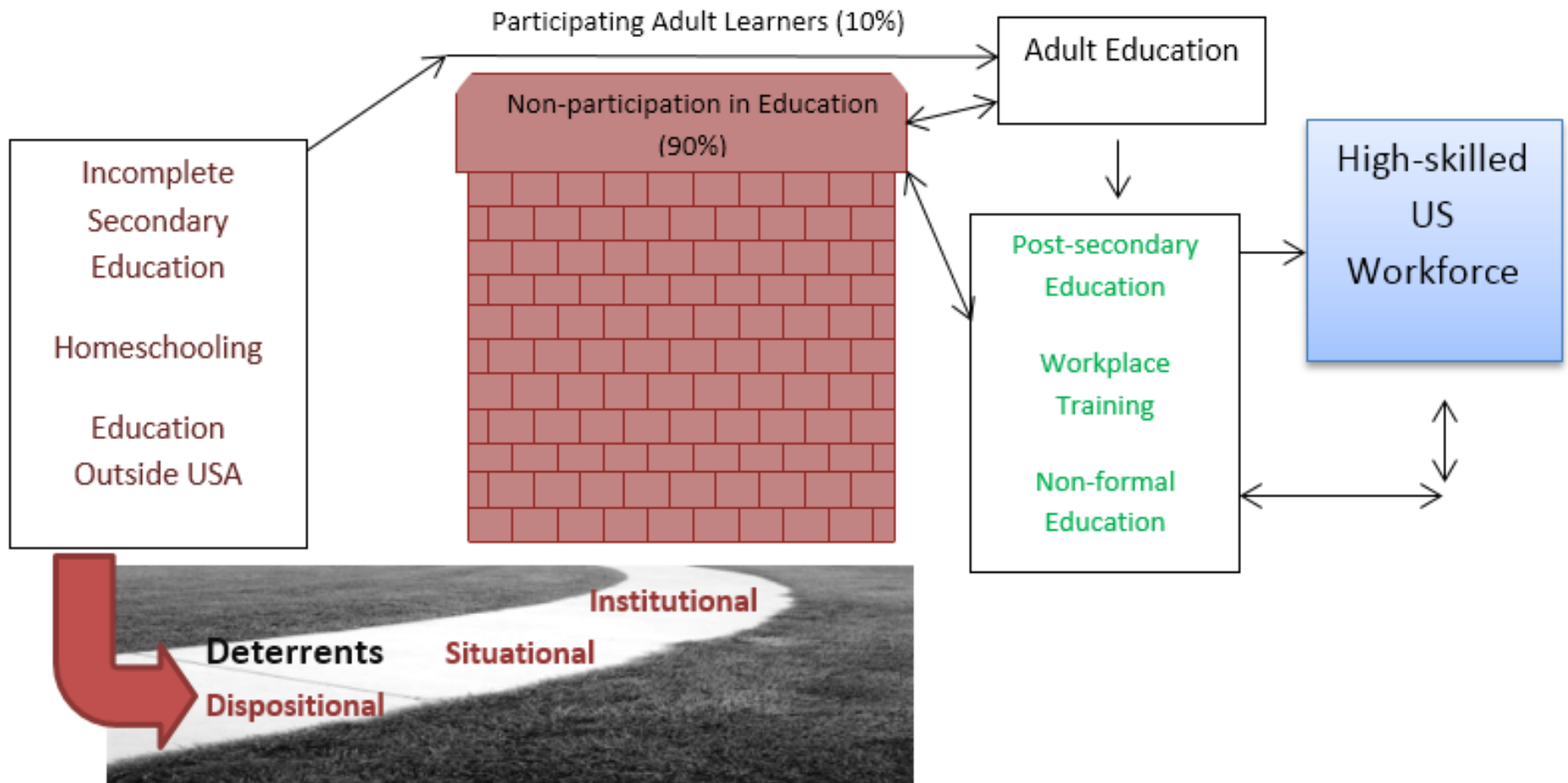- Adult education serves approximately 10% **- what about the other 90%??** (Patterson, 2018)
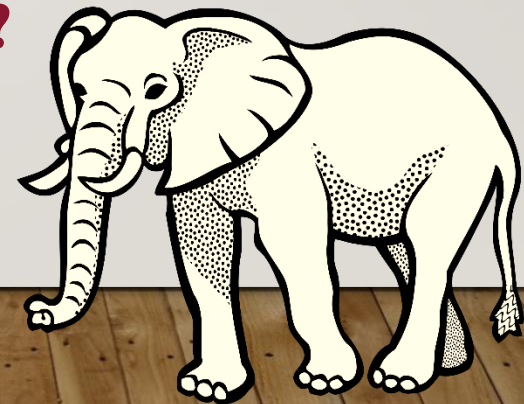
THE PATHWAY–WHO IS MISSING OUT

WHY CAPE? – 2

- Critiquing adult participation in education
- VALUEUSA is committed to adult **learner involvement and leadership**
- VALUEUSA believed **adults themselves** could best answer questions on why they don't participate
- Special thanks to Dollar General Literacy Foundation
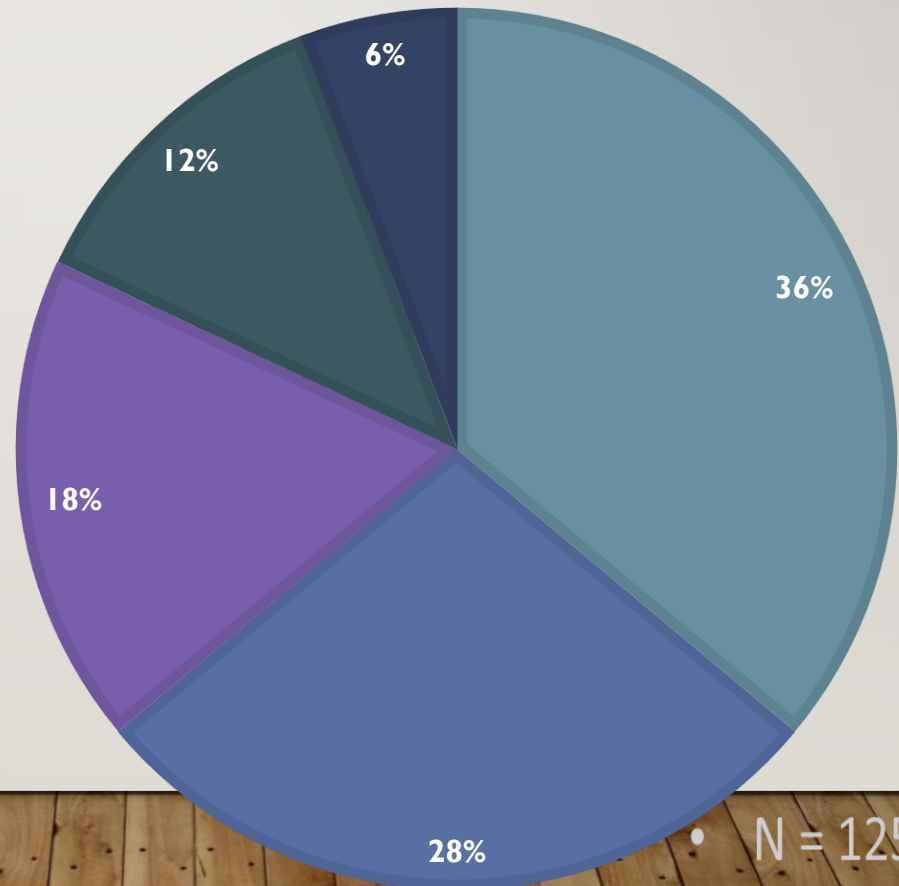
WHY CAPE? - 3

- CAPE evaluated deterrents and solutions
- CAPE research team surveyed and conducted group interviews with125 adults
- These data inform the field of adult education to motivate adults to participate (500+ adult educators)

WHY CAPE? - 4

- Completed grade 10-11 (median)

- 25% participated in adult education previously

- 43% male, 57% female

- Median age 35 (18-75 years)

INTERVIEWEE AGE

- 18-29 Years
- 30-39 Years
- 40-49 Years
- 50-59 Years
- 60-75 Years

6%

12%

36%

18%

28%

- N = 125

WHY CAPE? - 5

- Median health was "good", with 23% "fair" or "poor"

- 27% employed, 66% unemployed

- 84% earned < $18,000 last year

DETERRENTS

- Survival!

- Education is stressful!

- Support system

- Support needs (influence of

  past, fear, anxiety)

Top Situational Deterrents	Times Mentioned
Transportation	248
Family Needs	199
Money	139
Support System	104
Community Pressure	79
Work or Job	75
Early Leaver Situations	63
Unemployment	45

Top Dispositional Deterrents	Times Mentioned
Influence of the Past	80
Health	45
Accountability for Behavior / Habits	44
Time for Self	43
Anxiety or Fear	42
Disabilities	41
Lack of Energy or Motivation	33
Loss of Confidence	30

Top Institutional Deterrents	Times Mentioned
Institutional Requirements	43
Adult Educators Providing Help	43
Authority Challenge	15
Existence of Adult Education	14

FISHBONE ANALYSIS – GROUP ACTIVITY

- Total Quality Management technique
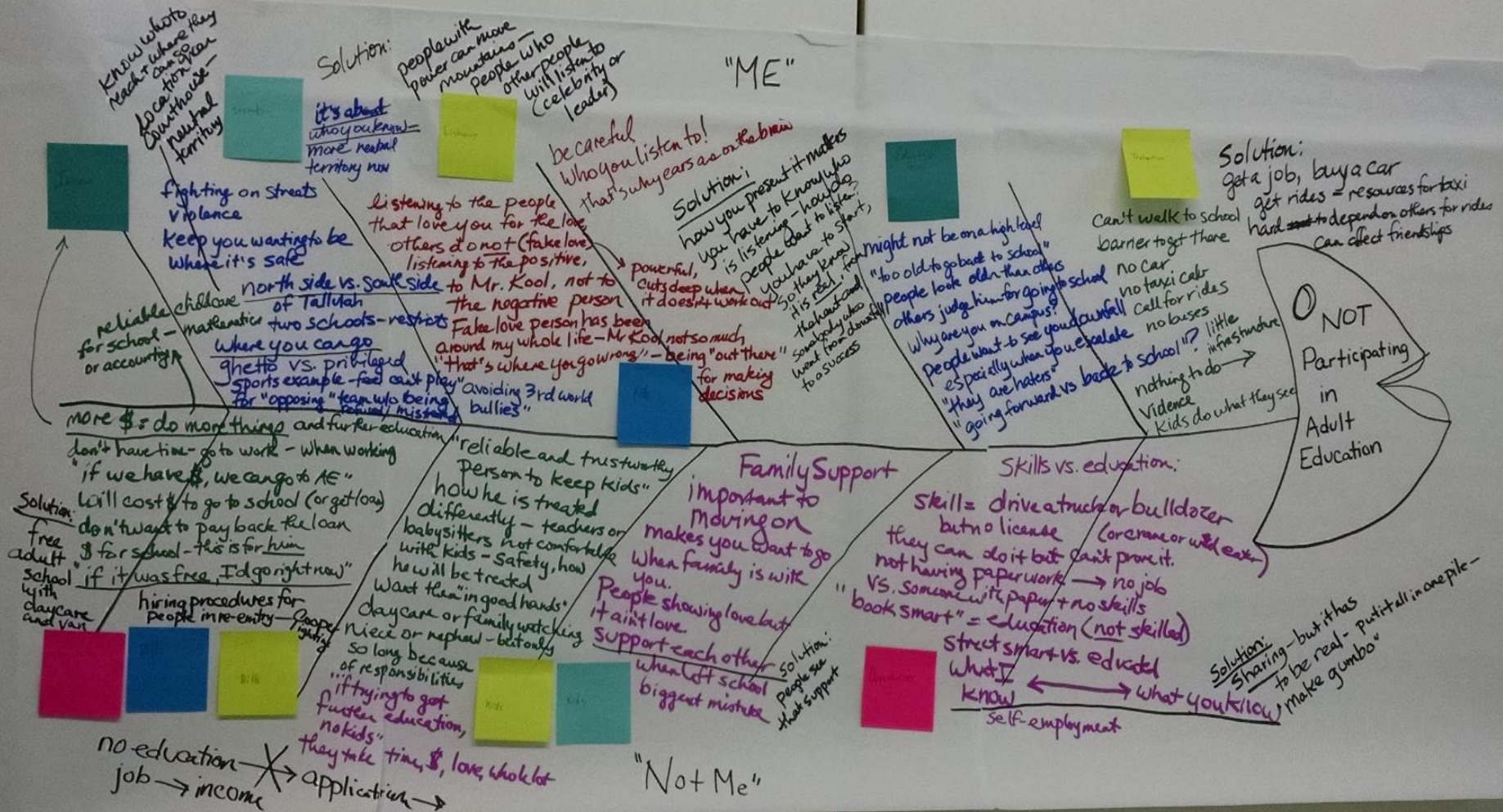
- Root cause analysis (McComb, 2015)

- Why, why, why?
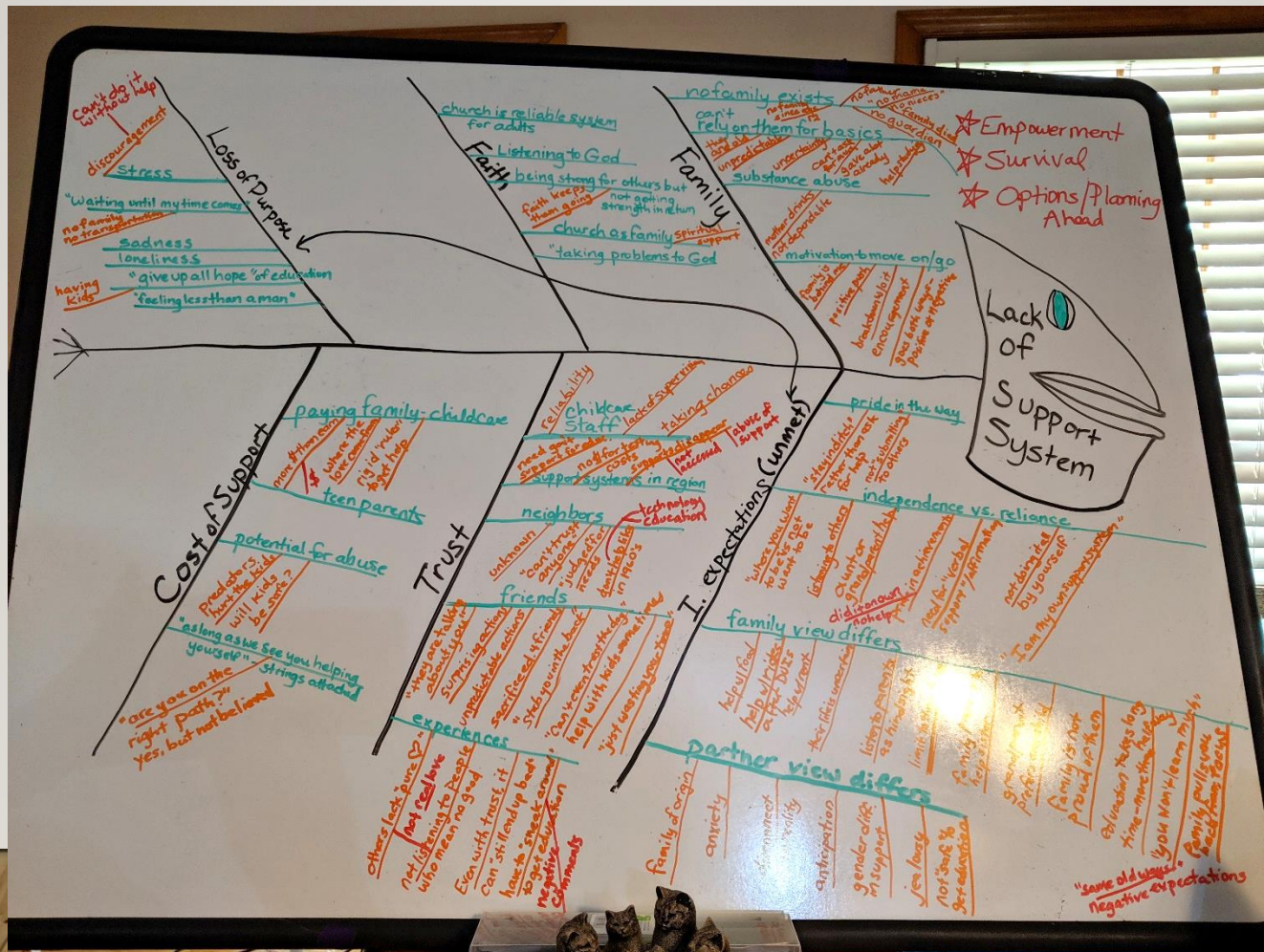
  Let's try it on the wallchart…
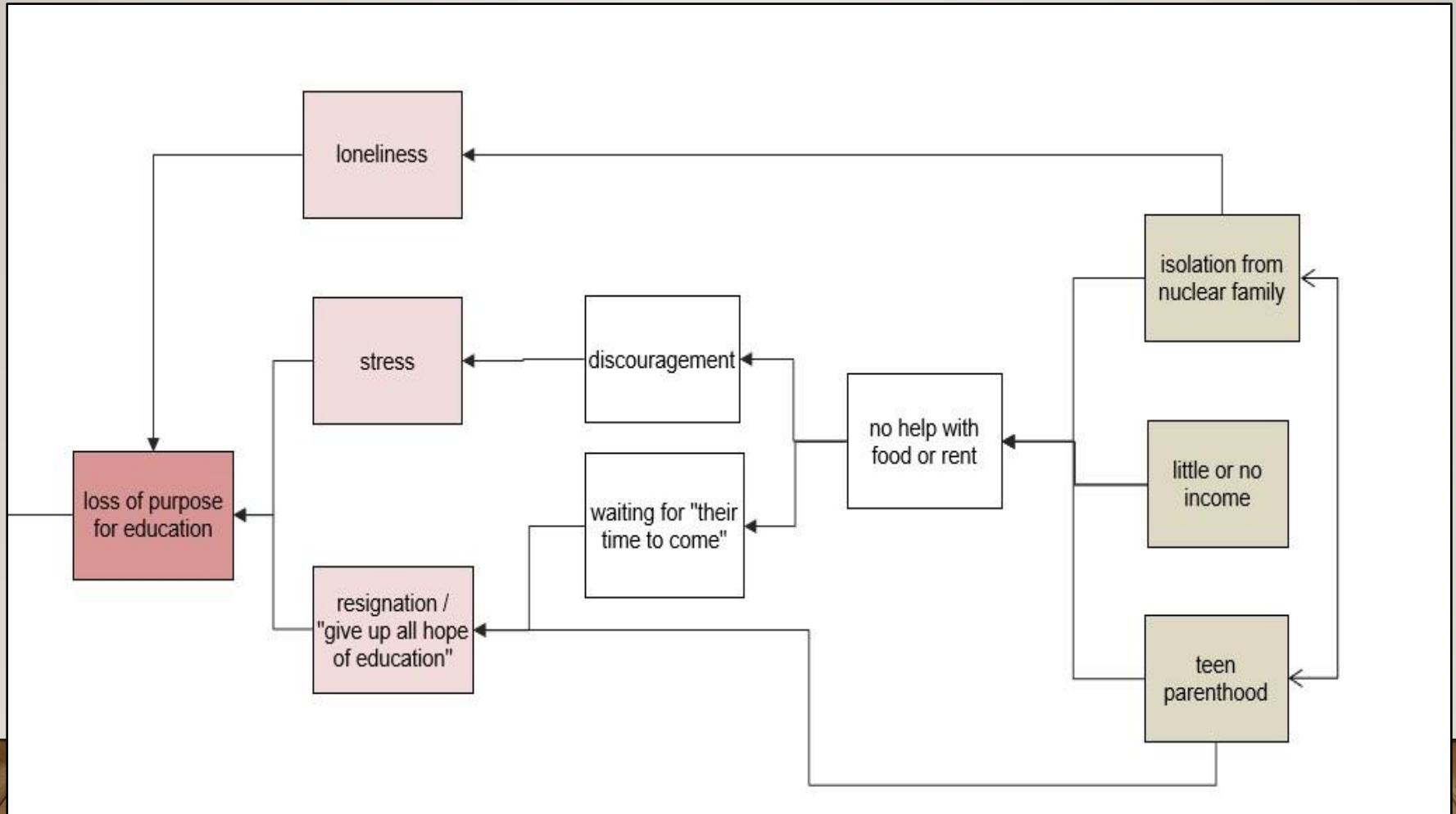
BREAK TIME!! – 10 MINUTES

FISHBONE ANALYSIS - 2

FISHBONE ANALYSIS - 3

CAUSE MAPPING

CAUSE MAPPING 2 - ADULT VOICES

- Patrice: "discouragement causes stress"

- Group 1: unmet expectations and family dynamics

- Group 2: wariness of "support" (AKA with friends like these, who needs enemies?)

- Elmont and Jamal: listening and family support

CAUSE MAPPING – 3 (PATRICE)

Patrice, one of three young mothers in a group related how "discouragement causes stress. If you start getting discouraged, like …'I ain't going to get my GED because I don't have no support, I don't have no help', you're going to get discouraged to the point where it is stressing you out. It makes you feel like you don't even have a purpose to be here."

CAUSE MAPPING - 4

disappointment ("where the love come from?") or stress from "strings attached"

no help with rides

license

substance abuse

length of time for education is a big commitment

family reliability keeps changing

nuclear family life is uncertain

nuclear family has limited resources (time, $, advanced age)

empowerment to options

"family gave a lot already"

family imposes rigid "rules" or charges for help ("more $ than I earn")

nuclear family negative expectations of adult's "same old ways": "are you on the right path?"

difference in expectations (adult vs. loved ones)

family disbelief: "you won't learn much"

family is "not proud of" adult

favoritism to siblings or grandchildren
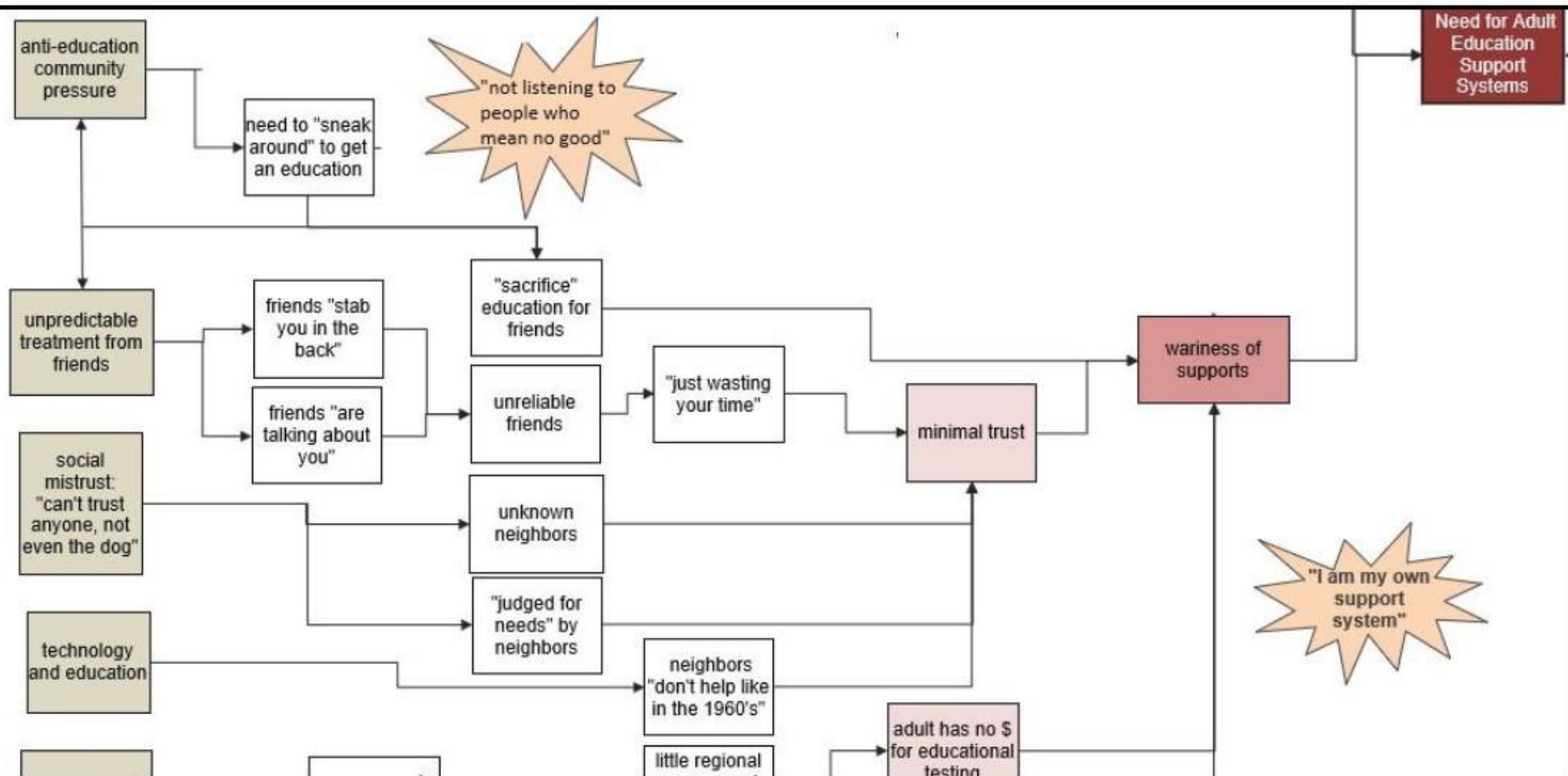
nuclear family preferences

CAUSE MAPPING - 5 (GROUP 1)

An interviewee related, "Kids are told, 'You ain't going to be nothing in your life.' They have people telling them that - doubters." Another group member added, "Everybody [in their family] is down on them." A man observed, "It's not a good look when you ain't got family support."

CAUSE MAPPING – 6

CAUSE MAPPING – 7 (GROUP 2)

In another group, a woman stated about friends, "There's no support. They are talking about you."

A man in her group pitched in:

"Some people... aren't there for you. They say, 'You don't need to go to school to get a raise.' Or they say, 'You ain't going to make it.' A lot of things to discourage you."

CAUSE MAPPING – 8 (GROUP 2)

A man in that group explained,

"Sometimes, … you may get up and want to have a change, saying, 'I need to better myself.' But then you hang around friends or family, and they say, 'You [are] 25 years old, what do you want with school?' …So you sneak around, tell them you got a job on the side, then you just get to the point where you feel like you don't want to hear the negative comments. Sometimes the embarrassment factor will drive you away from trying to do good, especially if you grew up in a negative environment to start with. Now all your boys are doing their gang banging stuff and you know they don't want you to better yourself."

CAUSE MAPPING – 9 (ELMONT AND JAMAL)

- Elmont advised, "Listening is a powerful thing. You have to be careful who you listen to. Listening is the number one priority…. That's why ears are on the head by the brain." He said, "So, if you listen to the people …who don't mean no good, you go straight down." He paused. "You don't see it coming. It's from a person who you really think a lot of, [as] being in your corner. That's why it's so vicious and it cuts so deep, because you don't expect it. So, they got a lot of power. If you listen to the good guy, it leads you to a good direction… If I'd have listened to my parents, I would be in school and graduated."

- Jamal added, "When you're trying to go to school, and the family's behind you, it makes you just want to go."

BREAK TIME!! – 2 – 10 MINUTES

TWO CATEGORIES OF SOLUTIONS

- Of 25 groups interviewed, adults in 23 groups identified specific support-related solutions which could remove barriers to participating in adult education

- Solutions fell into two major categories: external initiatives and personal initiative

TWO CATEGORIES OF SOLUTIONS – 2

- External initiatives are those offering adults support from organizations, including:

  - community services for navigating systems,

  - transportation, and

  - childcare

- External initiatives also include:

  - tutoring support and

  - support groups for emotional and mental health issues

TWO CATEGORIES OF SOLUTIONS – 3

- Another category of support requires personal initiative from prospective adult learners

- Personal initiative involves:

  - making connections to find a new personal support system,

  - holding onto faith and spirituality, and

  - participating in support exchanges

EXTERNAL INITIATIVES AS SOLUTIONS – WHO ARE YOUR PARTNERS?

Let's work in small groups to discuss and take notes on adults' recommendations of solutions involving external initiatives

PERSONAL INITIATIVE AS SOLUTIONS – 2 WHO ARE ADULTS' PARTNERS?

Let's work in small groups to discuss and "draw" adults' recommendations on solutions requiring personal initiative

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

What did your groups learn? Please show us your notes / drawings

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER – 2

What did you hear today that you can use in your program?

A FINAL THOUGHT

Staying Open to New Approaches:

- Implementing even low-cost solutions is not simple. *One interviewee advised openness to trying new ways of reaching and serving adults.* "Make it happen [adult education] and then see who wants it. That's the thing. They don't make it happen. Present it first, and then if you present it, and then people see it, don't just judge it [for them], let people see it in their face for themselves."

A FINAL THOUGHT - 2

Staying Open to New Approaches:

- Implementing even low-cost solutions is not simple. *One interviewee advised openness to trying new ways of reaching and serving adults.* "Don't you be the mistake, present it and see how many people are going to participate. Don't say, 'They ain't going to do it.' How do you know what they are going to do? They might do it… Don't vote it out before you give people a chance."

CONCLUSION AND CONTACT INFO

- **Questions before we part?**

- If you'd like to discuss **further solutions to recruitment or retention issues** you are facing, please contact **Margaret** at **margaret@researchallies.org**

- website: **www.researchallies.org**

- For information on VALUEUSA or adult learner leadership, please contact **Marty at office@valueusa**

QUOTES: HOWARD

"Too many people have failed in the whole system".

Offer 'alternative systems and alternative classes for alternative people.'"

QUOTES: SIERRA

- *Sierra said,* "You have to make sure you can trust a person, because if not, they'll stab you in the back faster than a heartbeat. Family will do it to you, and people you grew up with thinking they were your friends, they'll get you in a heartbeat, too. I found out who my real friends were when I went down. I lost my job and my apartment, don't have one of them [friends] now, except for one… I don't even trust the dog."

QUOTES: ANTOINE AND JEROME

- *Antoine suggested a* "free adult school with… a van that would come pick you up, to show that they really care about you trying to get your education."

- *Jerome thought about c*ar grants for a used vehicle for people without cars – "people could get grants through churches. It would help car dealers that have lots of quality used cars that they can't sell because people cannot afford to buy them."

QUOTES: LAMONTE

Lamonte talked about sharing skills: "I show you what I know. We can work together. There's the skills. You know what you know, and I know what I know. Put it all in one pile and make gumbo."

QUOTES: SHERRONA

Adults worried about "not enough guidance" on technology. *Sherrona asked,* "Don't put me on the computer alone."

QUOTES: EVELYN

- *Evelyn advised,* "You don't give them confidence, you help them learn, so they can *get* more confidence. Help them make their own decisions."