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Many young people who endure social marginalization (such as people of color, those who are unhoused, LGBTQ-identified, and other identities and experiences associated with marginalization in our society) have been pushed out of home and school settings due to oppression and discrimination. Many other young people may be connected to family and school systems, but do not feel valued or affirmed based on their identities and experiences.

Given the relationship between social isolation, oppression and poor wellbeing, many young people are seeking settings where they may receive support and care. Third place settings - such as after school programs, parks, libraries, community centers, among others - may be uniquely poised to support and affirm young people who do not find such care elsewhere.

"...third places—public settings which offer sociability and community connection—may foster adaptive responding through the mutually constitutive (i.e., mutually reinforcing and interrelated) mechanisms of psychological sense of community and social capital."
This conceptual paper offers a new model for understanding adaptive responding among young people who experience social marginalization (such as young people of color, LGBTQ young people, young people who are unhoused, among others).

This paper proposes that third place settings -- non-home/non-school or work settings -- are uniquely equipped to support young people in developing a sense of community and social support, especially when support has been limited or cut off in other spaces in their lives.

However, the theoretical model also recognizes the discrimination that young people who hold marginalized identities face, especially in public settings. To account for this, I integrated the theory of informal social control into the model. Social policing (maintaining the status quo by making others that are “different” feel that they are unwelcome in public spaces) potentially inhibits young people from experiencing a sense of community in third place settings.

**What Does This Mean For?**

**Practice:** Practitioners such as staff at libraries, parks, and community centers may consider how their practices may support (or hinder) the ways that young people seek to accrue peer and adult support as well as their desires to experience a sense of community in these settings. Similarly, practitioners in these settings may consider how their physical spaces can help welcome and affirm young people, especially considering that many such young people have been pushed out of first (home) and second (school) spaces.

**Social Action:** Beyond creating public and community settings that are affirming for young people, we need to consider how policies - such as loitering laws - specifically target young people and people experiencing homelessness. This includes dismantling present loitering laws, as well as the inherent desire within so many of us to police one another in our communities and public spaces.

**Research and Evaluation:** Future research should test this conceptual model, which will require evaluating the following assumptions:
- Third places foster social capital and psychological sense of community.
- Informal social control is implemented as social policing of young people who experience marginalization.
- Social policing moderates the relationships between participation in third places, accruing social capital, and experiencing a psychological sense of community.