



## Episode Transcript

### S1E1: The Overview

**Yvette Trujillo** Hello and welcome everyone to The Big View: Ending Poverty in Your Community. My name is Yvette Trujillo and I am the Chief Integrity Officer at Circles USA. And I am here today with our Executive Director at Circles USA, Kamatara Johnson. Hey, Kamatara. Hello! So we are with Circles USA and at Circles, our mission is: building community to end poverty through intentional friendships, personal transformation and systemic change led by the people closest to the challenge and our vision for the future that we want to be living into is: all individuals live in equitable and thriving communities where poverty no longer exists.

This podcast is all about getting a better understanding, a higher level understanding of the experience of poverty. So we take that 30,000 foot level view of poverty, and we break it down into these bite sized chunks to help you understand what's actually happening for folks. What are they living through and how you can make a real difference right where you are, right in your community.

So this first season of our podcast, we're going to unpack the five stages of moving from surviving to thriving. After 25 years of work in the anti-poverty arena, Circles USA has seen this pattern over and over again: moving from surviving to thriving involves five key stages. It's Crisis Intervention, Stabilization, Readiness, Placement, and Advancement. So today, what we're going to do is we're going to give you a brief overview of the five stages and then in our follow up episodes, what we're going to do is take a deeper dive into each one of these stages. And we hope that you'll join us as we take this journey from surviving to thriving.

So now we're just going to take a moment to briefly, briefly define each of these stages. Kamatara is going to do that for us so that we can get a ground floor understanding of what each stage entails.

**Kamatara Johnson** Awesome, thanks Yvette. So I'm going to share my screen for a moment here. So if you're watching the video you will see it. Well, if you're listening to this in podcast form then maybe go to YouTube, at least for this one so you can see this slide. Because we have an image that synthesizes the 5 Stages to Prosperity, or how to move from surviving to thriving.

And I have to say, this is the number one image that, when we talk to communities, it really gets people's attention. It gets them to understand the actual movement that needs to happen. Why are people stuck? What's happening in our community? It just answers a lot of questions. So this shows you the five stages. So just to process again: Crisis Intervention, Stabilization, Readiness, Placement, and Advancement. And underneath each of these little flags of movement, you can see just some examples of what a community might have in those different arenas.

And each community, of course, is so very different. If you're a rural, if you're urban, you know what resources do you have? But let's say, you know, for Crisis Intervention, I'm in crisis. There is an emergency. My life could be in danger or I don't have the very, very basics food, shelter, safety. So the the things you might have in your community like shelters, police, drug treatment programs, the emergency room, all of that... critical. And people in crisis intervention are the experts to help me with the acute crisis I am experiencing.

But when I can get out of the immediate crisis, then I shift into Stabilization. A little more long term care, let's say. So this is where maybe there is counseling. And, you know, health care sure is going to be helpful. And hopefully housing assistance and food stamps. And you know, what are the programs in the community, that could help me to not just go right back into crisis, because we want to get people to move left to right through this diagram or through these five stages, not to just keep looping in Crisis Intervention.

So in Stabilization, I'm going to try to get myself put back together in all the different arenas in my life, not just where the crisis was. And then once I'm stabilized, I can shift into readiness. So how do I ready myself for for what I would like in my life? I have enough space in my life, enough stability that I could maybe be forward looking.

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So I gotta get ready. So that would be things like workforce training and soft skills assessment, or financial literacy career counseling, the local tech college, or what internships are available? I don't know, we're going to try to find "What do I need to be able to get to where I want to go?" And then once I've done that, okay, I've gotten the certificate, I've gotten the training or I've connected with the practice I needed to do, then can I get placed. A shift into Placement.

So those kind of job networks and fairs or career services or anything that can get me into a really healthy, beautiful employer where I can use my newfound skills, that is the

next step. So now I am placed, and then when I'm at that beautiful workplace now I'm using my skills. And the big question there is, do I have a line of sight?

Is there advancement? Could I keep going and growing and offering more and not only to my workplace, but maybe to my community? So there's a big growth that happens as I'm moving along this continuum from surviving to thriving. And then part of thriving is that advancement. Like I am leaving poverty permanently behind because I have advanced in in my workplace and in my community.

So that way, if something does come up, like a mini crisis or something happens, I can take care of it and not get thrown all the way back into complete crisis or experiencing poverty yet again. I really move the ball down the field far enough that that that can't impact me as as much like I have my emergency savings or I have other options, my safety net is in place with people and funds and options, so that advancement is where people leave poverty behind permanently.

So I'm curious about what thoughts does this bring up for you?

**YT** Well, I just, I mean, I appreciate right, that these are stages and also what's occurring to me is that, you know, progress is never like this forward, perfect ascension into...

**KJ** Linear.

**YT** But it's just not. And that I really want to just honor that for people. Like you can feel like I'm in Readiness, things are going really well, and then something happens and then that process is, you know this, these are just kind of the forward movement into this beautiful experience of thriving.

And yet just like any other progress in life, it is a squiggly line. But what a beautiful thing it is that we have this map and that there's a different way of looking at and understanding each of them. So that we can show up with people as they're progressing in this process. I just, I love that, I love that this is a process that is one of, standing with.

**KJ** Yes.

**YT** Standing with individuals as they take this journey of a squiggly line to the really wonderful experience of thriving.

**KJ** Thanks, Yvette. It really can be the two steps forward, one step back. Or like they say, "Fall down nine times, get up ten." How do we support each other to get up that next time? But this map also helps us to ask important questions. What do we have at each stage of the journey in our communities to walk alongside folks, to support them?

Or what warm handoffs or connection points do we have between these phases? Because oftentimes these amazing services we have in our community are siloed. So then we, it doesn't necessarily flow, or people might get trapped or stuck or fall in

between the cracks. So not only, how do we, what do we have in our community to support people at each stage?

But how do we connect those stages? How do we follow an actual human being through their life journey? How do we support that? And think of the, let's say, the "end user experience", the actual beautiful whole person that's going through this, as opposed to these individual transactional silos that sometimes occur in in community, is not, certainly not on purpose, but it's just sort of the nature of how government agencies sometimes work or community nonprofit... How do we connect all of these and, and where are the gaps and holes and traps and things that aren't going well that a community could repair.

And then what what is working well and how do we foster more of that? And then how do we build all the relationships it takes to walk along together? And that's the building community to end poverty that Circles focuses on. We can build community across these five stages and have agencies that work together with whole families and multi-generations.

And that's the beauty of this, really bringing everyone together for that, for the thriving that everyone experiences. Like we all win when you are thriving and I am thriving, we all want the same thing. So how do we work on that together? But in a way that respects people's dignity, in a way that really sees people and sees the whole person and, and honors this whole journey.

Like you were saying, it can be a squiggly line. It's not this perfect... You know, "I'm going to spend one month in each stage." Yeah. Sorry. Not quite. But yeah, it asks important questions for communities to survey their own landscape and their own resources and how they function as a community, because we know there is enough to go around.

We do have enough that we can all be thriving. We just have to figure out how to do better for each other.

**YT** Right, right. And identify, you know... part of the work is identifying what is there, what's available that's already in place. And how can we work together to have those systems that are in place really optimized? Right. So it can, you know, it can say like, oh, what's wrong with the system? Actually, what are the ways that we can work within this system?

Right? So that it so that it serves us to the highest degree. And then if there are hiccups, if there are things that are challenges, we work together to come up with possibilities, right? And how do we how do we do that, we do it together, right? We do in community. We listen to people who are having a lived experience of engaging with those systems, with engaging in whatever's happening in each one of those stages.

And then we can take a look at, okay, where are the hiccups, where are the hiccups, and how can we help to make positive change? That empowers the people that are working in them and the people that are owning them. What are the people that are in the systems that are just kind of operating with what's been going on?

Well, maybe the information, the feedback, hasn't been brought in such a way that change can happen.

**KJ** I just love that. It's just, it's a collective impact that we are all going to be working together. We're going to be listening to people with the lived experience, who are closest to the challenge, who understand the most. And then we're working together to build a community where everyone can thrive. And that's definitely the goal of Circles USA.

**YT** Absolutely. Well, I'm really, really excited to be starting on this journey, to be having this conversation. Thank you so much for joining us today. I hope that you'll come back and join us as we dive a little more deeply into that first stage, Crisis Intervention, and we'll see you next time.

**KJ** Thank you.