

**To:** United States Communities

**From:** Community Leads for the Mobilizing Action for Resilient Communities Initiative 2015-2018 and Allies

**Subject:** Addressing Trauma and Building Resiliency as Comprehensive Disaster Planning and Response

**Date:** 6.25.2018

This memo is intended to make observations about communities affected by disaster-related trauma, and to offer recommendations for trauma-informed recovery. Community examples provide case studies or models for other communities grappling with similar issues. Suggested resources and tools provide communities with support for accelerated action.

Memo authors represent active cross sector networks that contribute to resilient community infrastructure development, awareness building, resource marshaling, and relationship building. Resilient communities invest in developing these networks prior to disasters as they are critical for trauma-informed disaster response.

Writers of this memo supported efforts to mobilize communities in addressing adversity and trauma, including trauma resulting from the following disasters: California's Wildfires (2017), Florida's Hurricane Irma (2017), Texas and related states experience with Hurricane Harvey (2017), Oregon's Wildfires (2017). In addition, mobilizers helped to address past man-made and natural disasters including 9/11 (2001) and East Coast Communities' of Hurricane Sandy (2012).

Please review our top 11 observations and recommendations, which are detailed in the pages that follow:

	<b>Observation</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
<b>1</b>	Communities with awareness of childhood adversity, toxic stress, and trauma are better prepared to deal with disaster-related trauma.	Support increased awareness of adverse childhood experiences, toxic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, trauma-informed agency practices, and other trauma-related topics.
<b>2</b>	Communities who address the needs of vulnerable populations pre-disaster avoid exacerbating problems in post-disaster times.	Assess community needs and work to build resiliency pre- and post-disaster.
<b>3</b>	Post-disaster community leaders can draw on experts and case studies to message the effects of trauma to the broader community.	Coordinate community presentations and outreach campaigns messaging the signs and symptoms of trauma and supports for healing.
<b>4</b>	Schools are heavily impacted by disaster-related trauma, and need community support to best serve the needs of students, families, and staff.	Identify school-focused disaster-related trauma resources and develop action plans for disaster preparedness and response.
<b>5</b>	Communities responding to disaster need both long-term and short-term trauma responses, but often resources are most readily available for short-term recovery efforts.	Ensure fundraising, legislation, and other efforts to garner resources to prevent and prepare for disaster-related trauma and to ensure a 10-year recovery effort for communities affected by disaster.
<b>6</b>	A community is made stronger when community members are actively and effectively engaged in a participatory recovery planning process. Many community members experience childhood adversity, community level adversity, and other traumas before disaster strikes, and the disaster may elicit a unique response for this affected population. Others may experience their first trauma with the disaster.	Engage trauma survivors in building community resiliency and or recovery efforts. Collaborate with and empower community members to identify, develop and contribute to decision making.

7	Post-traumatic growth or transformation is possible.	Prepare communities to better manage disaster-related trauma by strengthening coping skills. Instill a message of hope in communities with services and communications focusing on strengthening social connections and visioning a future.
8	Local governments leading disaster recovery often struggle with budget impacts, and may not have the resources to address mental health needs which often increase after disasters.	Identify low cost and high impact peer support models prior to disaster events.
9	Foundations, governments, nonprofits, and community members struggle to understand the specific needs of community members as the recovery process progresses. It can be difficult to prioritize and direct resources without ways to measure or understand need.	Develop surveys and metrics for assessing needs, determining resiliency, and measuring community well-being.
10	Disasters can be disruptive and provide the opportunity for community leaders to be innovative.	Establish clear guidance/framework for response efforts that provides structure while also allowing for flexibility and innovation.
11	Lack of coordination is often the “second disaster” harming communities seeking to recover.	Cross Sector Networks increase coordination.

**Observation 1:** Communities with awareness of childhood adversity, toxic stress, and trauma are better prepared to deal with disaster-related trauma.

**Recommendation 1:** Support increased awareness of adverse childhood experiences, toxic stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, trauma-informed agency practices, and other trauma-related topics.

**Increase Awareness of Adversity, Trauma, and Toxic Stress**

<b>Community Examples:</b>	<b>Resources &amp; Tools:</b>
<p><a href="#">Sonoma County ACEs Connection</a> is an online community as well as a grassroots community coalition (formed in 2016) focused on bringing the community together to prevent, heal, and treat ACEs while promoting resiliency.</p>	<p><a href="#">ACEs Connection.com</a>: online resource and community sharing tool</p>
<p>Several Sonoma County community partners created a <a href="#">ACEs and Resiliency Fellowship Program</a> in 2016 to train 56 community educators. <a href="#">Results</a> of more than 100 community presentations conducted in 2017 show increased awareness of the impact of adversity and trauma on the developing brain and bodies.</p>	<p><a href="#">ACE Interface</a>: Training Program and curriculum for advancing the neuroscience, epigenetics, adverse childhood experiences, and resilience.</p>
<p>Sonoma County Office of Education’s January 2017 bulletin on <a href="#">“Trauma-Informed Teaching Knowing Our Students’ Stories and Fostering Resilience”</a> with definitions and resources for teachers or community members.</p>	<p><a href="#">“How to: ACEs and Resiliency Fellowship”</a>: March 2018 article with tools and links for creating a training program and trauma awareness campaign in your community.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Bob Doppelt</a>, Executive Director of <a href="#">The Resource Innovation Group</a> (TRIG) shares his book <a href="#">Transformational Resilience: How Trauma-informed Responses to Climate Disruption Can Catalyze Positive Change</a>, which encourages communities to prepare for the psycho-social-spiritual maladies generated by rising global temperatures that will produce many new traumas and stresses for individuals, groups, and communities while aggravating many existing traumas.</p>

**Observation 2:** Communities who address the needs of vulnerable populations pre-disaster avoid exacerbating problems in post-disaster times.

**Recommendation 2:** Assess community needs and work to build resiliency pre- and post-disaster.

Addressing Vulnerabilities and Building Resiliency	
Community Examples:	Tools:
<p>December 5, 2017 Sonoma County Board of Supervisors approves: “<a href="#">Homeless Services Actions to Ensure Safety of Homeless Persons Affected by the Sonoma Complex Fire, and to Ensure Inclusion of Homeless and Precariously Housed Persons in Disaster Recovery</a>” to expand beds at hall, extend winter shelter hours and dates, and to conduct a special homeless count survey looking at fire impacts.</p>	<p><a href="#">Disaster Recovery Homeless Toolkit 2018</a>: outlines a community planning process that brings together organizations and individuals who can address the needs of homeless and other vulnerable populations in a disaster.</p>
<p><a href="#">Seniors plan for next disaster</a> showcases Sonoma County senior providers taking action to build resilience in vulnerable senior populations in May 2018. Seniors are especially at risk during disasters as they may not hear, see, or smell trouble and they can be isolated or immobile.</p>	<p><a href="#">Disaster mental health preparedness in the community: A systematic review study</a>. This study provides an overview of mental health preparedness and related tools that communities and individuals will need to prepare for natural disasters.</p>
<p>“<a href="#">Hurricane Irma: What we learned</a>” highlights the need to provide shelters for pets (among other important lessons.) Pet loss during disaster can cause impactful distress for pet owners (<a href="#">source</a>).</p>	<p>The Center for Disease control offers tips and resources for preparing for pet safety in disaster <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
	<p>The Health Equity Institute and Bridge Housing San Francisco offers community mobilization strategies in <a href="#">TRAUMA INFORMED COMMUNITY BUILDING A</a></p>

	<a href="#">Model for Strengthening Community in Trauma Affected Neighborhoods</a>
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**Observation 3:** Post-Disaster community leaders may need help messaging the effects of trauma to the broader community.

**Recommendation 3:** Coordinate community presentations and outreach campaigns messaging the signs, symptoms of trauma and supports for healing.

Messaging Community About the Effects of Disaster Related-Trauma	
Community Examples:	Tools:
<p>December 5, 2017 presentation to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors by <a href="#">Dr. Robert Macy</a>, International Trauma Center and <a href="#">Dr. Melissa Brymer</a>, UCLA-Duke National Center for Child Traumatic Stress. See the archived video (this portion starts at exactly 05:03) of the December 5 meeting, Item 52: <a href="#">Board of Supervisors Meeting</a></p>	<p>Peace 4 Tarpon in Tampa Bay, Florida, points website users to Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) tools:</p> <p><a href="#">Tips for Survivors: COPING WITH GRIEF AFTER A DISASTER OR TRAUMATIC EVENT</a></p> <p><a href="#">Tips for Health Care Practitioners and Responders: Helping Survivors Cope with Grief After a Disaster or Traumatic Event</a></p>
<p><a href="#">mysonomastrong.com</a> - MySonomaStrong.com is a self-help service designed to help survivors who have experienced a recent disaster learn more about post-disaster stress and cope more effectively with the effects of the disaster.</p>	
<p><a href="#">Resilience Network of the Gorge</a> in Oregon hosted a <a href="#">free community event</a> to process stress and build resilience skills that encouraged community growth and healing in response to the adversity of the Eagle Creek Fire of 2017.</p>	

**Observation 4:** Schools are heavily impacted by disaster-related trauma, and need community support to best serve the needs of students, families, and staff.

**Recommendation 4:** Identify school-focused disaster-related trauma resources and develop action plans for disaster preparedness and response.

Partnering with Schools to Connect Students and Families with Resources	
Community Examples:	Tools:
<p>Sonoma County Office of Education: <a href="#">“Growing Through Adversity”</a> February 2018 bulletin describing impact on schools with resources for caregivers and teachers</p>	<p><a href="#">The National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement</a> (NCSCB) at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work is dedicated to helping schools support their students through crisis and loss. The NCSCB provides free immediate technical assistance and training to schools and communities that are responding to crises, with a focus on supporting their students, both short-term and throughout long-term recovery. Our toll-free number is answered 24 hours a day. If your school is experiencing a crisis, please contact the Center now at 1-877-53-NCSCB (1-877-536-2722) or <a href="mailto:helpnow@schoolcrisiscenter.org">helpnow@schoolcrisiscenter.org</a></p>
<p>Live Oak Charter School in Sonoma County hosted the <a href="#">Schoolbox Project</a> on Sunday and Monday October 15 and 16 to help train and support volunteers, parents and educators in responding to the wildfire crisis. Training video and key messages <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<p><a href="#">Trauma Aware Schools</a> including consulting services with <a href="#">Dr. Marlene Wong</a>. Wong was identified by the White House as one of the "pre-eminent experts in school crisis and recovery"</p>
<p><a href="#">First 5 Sonoma County webpage</a> with Resources to help families of young children cope during disasters and traumatic events, published in 2018</p>	<p><a href="#">Activities from Sesame Street on helping children to cope during stressful and traumatic events</a></p>

	<p><a href="#">Sesame Street resources on Emergency Preparedness</a></p> <p><a href="#">Here for Each Other: Helping Families After a Fire</a> (Activity book from Sesame Street)</p>
<p>Peace 4 Tarpon in Tampa bay Florida points website users to Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) tools:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Parent Guidelines for Crisis Response</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Practical Suggestions for Assisting Children in the Aftermath of a Tragedy</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Teacher Guidelines for Crisis Response</a></li> </ol>	<p><a href="#">Once I Was Very Very Scared</a>: A book to help children and grown-ups (parents, teachers, and other important adults) understand how stress can affect children and ways to help them.</p>
	<p><a href="#">Simple Activities for Children during Evacuations</a></p>

**Observation 5:** Communities responding to disaster need both long-term and short-term trauma responses, but often resources are most readily available for short-term recovery efforts.

**Recommendation 5:** Ensure fundraising, legislation, and other efforts to garner resources to prevent and prepare for disaster-related trauma and to ensure a 10-year recovery effort for communities affected by disaster.

**Develop Resources for Long-term Recovery Needs**

<b>Community Examples:</b>	<b>Tools:</b>
<p>Community Foundation Sonoma County established the Sonoma County Resilience Fund in 2017, a disaster fund addressing our community’s mid- to long-term recovery needs. Watch the <a href="#">video describing the fund</a> or visit the <a href="#">website</a>.</p>	<p><a href="#">SBP</a> (originally called the St. Bernard Project when the initiative began rebuild efforts in a New Orleans parish) offers online resources and consulting to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rebuild homes quickly after disasters by mobilizing private sector innovations and assigning a single point of contact to make the home rebuilding process faster and more predictable.</li> <li>2. Share rebuilding innovations with other rebuilding organizations to allow for efficient, predictable recovery on a national scale.</li> <li>3. Prepare home and business owners prior to and following disaster with specific steps to mitigate risk and improve resilience.</li> <li>4. Advise policy makers immediately after a disaster so they can deploy federal dollars sooner, and in a way that empowers an efficient recovery.</li> <li>5. Advocate for the reform of disaster recovery strategies in the U.S. to improve the predictability and speed of recovery.</li> </ol>
<p>United States Congressional Bills: <a href="#">H.R.4397 - California Wildfire Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2017</a>; <a href="#">S.1892</a> - A bill to provide tax relief related to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.) and others shown on <a href="#">Congress.gov here</a>.</p>	

[“Sonoma County housing bond seen by supporters as way to bolster housing stock”](#) details Sonoma County’s consideration of new affordable housing initiative after 2017 wildfires.

**Observation 6:** A community is made stronger when community members are actively and effectively engaged in a participatory recovery planning process. Many community members experience childhood adversity, community level adversity, and other traumas before disaster strikes, and the disaster may elicit a unique response for this affected population. Others may experience their first trauma with the disaster.

**Recommendation 6:** Engage trauma survivors in building community resiliency and or recovery efforts. Collaborate with, and empower, community members to identify, develop and contribute to decision making.

Empower Trauma Survivors to Support Recovery Efforts	
Community Examples:	Tools:
<p><a href="#">Coffey Strong</a>: a web resources built for Coffey Park, by Coffey Park. This is an informational resource for Coffey Park residents affected by the October wildfires.</p>	<p><a href="#">Community-Driven Climate Resilience Planning: A Framework (2017)</a></p> <p>This report outlines a framework, informed by community-based organizations from across the country, to meaningfully engage vulnerable and impacted communities in defining and building climate resilience. The guide seeks to use climate resilience activities to better build momentum for change, build a new economy and community-based financing, deepen democracy and improve governance, and activate ecological and cultural wisdom.</p>
<p>In 2017, Sonoma County neighborhoods affected by the wildfire self-organized to create “block captains” to share resources and information related to recovery. Pamela Van Halsema is featured in this</p>	<p><a href="#">After Great Disasters</a> outlines the value of participatory planning process from six international disasters</p>

<p>news story: “<a href="#">Coffey Park residents face 'comfortable unsettledness' four months after Sonoma County fires.</a>” Pamela organized a <a href="#">Town Hall on Toxic Stress in Childhood</a> sharing her own family’s story days before the fire in October 2017.</p>	
<p><a href="#">SoCo Rises</a> is comprised of a diverse group of Sonoma County community leaders, focused on advancing best practices in disaster recovery, by elevating the collective assets of our diverse community. This group hosted community listening sessions and a town hall to engage trauma affected community members in planning for recovery.</p>	<p>During the January 2018 <a href="#">Preparing People for Climate Change in California</a> Dr. Maryam Kia-Keating on <a href="#">Empowering Communities to Build Resilience Using Participatory and Human-Centered Approaches.</a></p>

**Observation 7:** Post-traumatic growth or transformation is possible.

**Recommendation 7:** Prepare communities to better manage disaster-related trauma by strengthening coping skills. Instill a message of hope in communities with services and communications focusing on strengthening social connections and visioning a future.

<b>Transformative Growth (or Post Traumatic Growth)</b>	
<b>Community Examples:</b>	<b>Tools:</b>
<p>January 2018 Conference: <a href="#">Preparing People for Climate Change in California</a> trained Sonoma County and other statewide community members how to develop transformational resilience.</p>	<p>The Resource Innovation Group, led by <a href="#">Bob Doppelt</a>, offers workshops guiding individuals and organizational in developing “purposing and presencing” skills. <a href="#">Click here for a brochure about the Transformational Resilience Program Workshops.</a></p>
<p><a href="#">Mental health collaborative tackles fire-related trauma in Sonoma County</a></p>	<p>Skills for Psychological Recovery (SPR), is an intervention designed to follow</p>

<p>describes efforts to train providers to offer Skills for Psychological Recovery.</p>	<p>Psychological First Aid (PFA) in the weeks and months following disasters and mass violence events. SPR aims to help survivors gain skills to manage distress and cope with post-disaster stress and adversity. <i>The <a href="#">SPR Field Operations Guide</a></i> was developed jointly by the National Center for PTSD and the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, with contributions from individuals involved in disaster research and response.</p> <p>SPR is designed for delivery by mental health and other health workers with a basic credentialing course.</p>
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**Observation 8:** Local governments leading disaster recovery often struggle with budget impacts, and may not have the resources to address mental health needs which often increase after disasters.

**Recommendation 8:** Identify low cost and high impact peer support models prior to disaster events.

Peer Support Models: Low Cost & High Impact	
Community Examples:	Tools:
<p><a href="#">“Outreach and Peer-Delivered Mental Health Service in New York City following September 11, 2001.”</a> (article printed in the Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal in 2008)</p>	<p>The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides technical assistance for peer recovery models. Learn about the role of peer workers and access recovery-related resources about peer supports and services <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p>The Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County started a fund for wildfire mental health support and established a</p>	

<p><a href="#">collaborative of mental health providers</a> in Sonoma County in 2018. The Foundation provides counselor training, individual counseling sessions, yoga classes, and an on-line app to support the mental health of wildfire survivors.</p>	
<p>Sonoma County launched the <a href="#">California HOPE program</a> to provide outreach and counseling to those emotionally impacted by the Sonoma Complex Fires in October 2017. California HOPE is a federally funded program that can send crisis counselors to meet people wherever they are (at home, school, business, etc.) to provide crisis counseling, resource navigation, and disaster recovery education.</p> <p>California Hope is funded by the Federal Emergency and Management Agency (FEMA) and is administered by the California State Mental Health Authority (CMHA).</p>	

**Observation 9:** Foundations, governments, nonprofits, and community members struggle to understand the specific needs of community members as the recovery process progresses. It can be difficult to prioritize and direct resources without ways to measure or understand need.

**Recommendation 9:** Develop surveys and metrics for assessing needs, determining resiliency, and measuring community well-being.

<b>Assessing Community Well-Being</b>	
<b>Community Examples:</b>	<b>Tools:</b>
Rosa Ana Lozada, L.C.S.W.	2017 <a href="#">Canterbury Well-being Study and Index</a> : The survey’s purpose was to

<p>CEO, Harmonium Inc. served as the lead for the <a href="#">San Diego Mobilizing Action for Resilient Communities grant</a>. She is available as a consultant to share her expertise in assessing resources, identifying needs, and mobilizing for action.</p>	<p>inform the monitoring of earthquake recovery by collecting data from greater Christchurch New Zealand residents on self-reported well-being, impacts of the earthquakes, perceptions of the recovery, and wellbeing.</p>
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**Observation 10:** Disasters can be disruptive and provide the opportunity for community leaders to be innovative.

**Recommendation 10:** Establish clear guidance/framework for response efforts that provides structure while also allowing for flexibility and innovation.

<b>Disasters Leading to Disruptive Innovation</b>	
<b>Community Examples:</b>	<b>Tools:</b>
<p>The County of Sonoma instituted a <a href="#">suite of policy changes</a> in May 2018 intended to encourage construction of more new homes, loosening restrictions on granny units and lowering other development hurdles seven months after nearly 5,300 residences were lost here in last year’s devastating wildfires.</p>	
<p>Sonoma County <a href="#">builds tiny homes for veterans on County lands</a> in May 2018.</p>	
<p>Sonoma County, California <a href="#">considers a housing bond for November 2018 Ballot</a>.</p>	
<p>The City of Santa Rosa, California creates the “<a href="#">Housing First Fund</a>” to assist with landlord risk mitigation, provide landlord incentives and tenant assistance.</p>	

<p>To help <a href="#">prepare and train Sonoma County residents for jobs in the construction industry after the October wildfires</a>, the Sonoma County Workforce Development Board (WIB), in partnership with the Human Services Department Employment and Training Division, secured \$3.25 million in emergency funds from the California Employment Development Department in February 2018. Residents applied through Sonoma County Job Link.</p>	
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**Observation 11:** Lack of coordination is often the “second disaster” harming communities seeking to recover.

**Recommendation 11:** Cross Sector Networks increase coordination.

Cross Sector Network Coordination	
<b>Community Examples:</b>	<b>Tools:</b>
<p><a href="#">The Power of Networks: Four NCTSN Sites Respond to the 2017 Hurricane Season</a> (includes Florida)</p>	<p>The <a href="#">National Disaster Recovery Framework</a>, used in California after the wildfires, defines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>roles and responsibilities</i> of recovery coordinators and other stakeholders,</li> <li>● <i>a coordinating structure</i> that facilitates communication and collaboration among all stakeholders, guidance for pre- and post-disaster recovery <i>planning</i>.</li> </ul>

<p>Community Foundation Sonoma County and Napa Valley Community Foundation engaged the Center for Effective Philanthropy’s (CEP) Advisory Services to conduct the “<a href="#">2018 Wildfire Response Survey</a>.” This survey helps nonprofit organizations communicate needs to government partners, funders, and other stakeholders.</p>	

Community Leads for the Mobilizing Action for Resilient Communities Initiative  
2015-2018:

1. Katharine Briar Lawson, Albany/Capital Region, New York
2. Rosa Ana Lozada, San Diego County, California
3. Holly White-Wolfe, Sonoma County, California
4. Claire Ranit, Columbia River Gorge Region, Oregon
5. Robin Saenger, Tarpon Springs, Florida

Allies:

1. Bob Doppelt, The Resource Innovation Group
2. Gayle Kennedy, ACEs Connection
3. Clare Reidy, Health Federation of Philadelphia