



Building a Culture of Transformational Resilience in Communities for Climate Traumas and Toxic Stresses

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**A Very Dangerous Ecological--Turned Mental Health—
Turned Psycho-Social-Spiritual—Turned Humanitarian Crisis—
is Rapidly Growing...**

The Harmful Human Reactions to Climate Impacts!



**The Adverse Psychological & Psycho-Social-Spiritual
Reactions to Climate-Enhanced Traumas & Toxic Stresses**

Trauma and Toxic Stress Are Epidemic In Our Communities Today



Childhood and Family Trauma (ACEs)



Interpersonal Violence and Terrorism



Homelessness and Poverty



Racism, Sexism, and Other Forms of Systemic Oppression



Increasing Speed of Life and Workplace Trauma



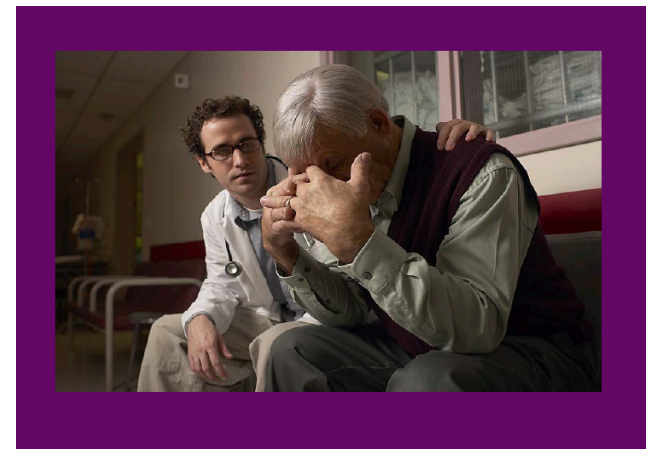
Increasing Economic and Funding Competition



Wage Stagnation and Economic Inequality



Compassion Fatigue and Burnout in Helping Professions



Now Add the Rising Frequency and Intensity of Climate Change-Enhanced Disasters!

Windstorms



River Flooding



Heat Waves



Droughts



Coastal Storm Surges



Wildfires



...and many other surprising disasters.

Equally Important: More Ongoing and Intense (Toxic) Stresses From Experiencing, Seeing, or Worrying About...



- Our future and our children's future
- Loss of place, community, culture and natural environment
- Disruption of close family and friend social support networks
- Involuntary migration
- Water, food and other resource shortages
- New illnesses and diseases
- Economic disruptions and job losses
- Disaster-triggered crime or violence
- Intensified racism, sexism, and other systemic oppressions
- Many other surprising chronic toxic stresses



We *MUST* Grasp What is Happening!

Even With Aggressive Emissions Reductions:

- It will worsen for decades and increasingly intermix fast-growing disasters with ongoing and intense or toxic stresses offering less & less time for recovery.
- It will aggravate racism & other systemic oppressions, disrupt social support networks & other critical protective systems, & magnify many health inequities
- The resulting psychological and psycho-social-spiritual maladies might be as bad as the physical impacts and could stall or derail efforts to cut emissions.



Collective Traumas

**Climate traumas and ongoing toxic stresses will increasingly
generate collective traumas
greater than any single trauma on its own.**

Summary of Risks If Climate-Enhanced Traumas are Left Unaddressed

Stress Reaction From Release of Cortisol & Adrenaline

• Physical Reaction:

Increased blood pressure, pulse rate, difficult breathing, cold sweats, muscle tension, aches & pains, sleep disorders

• Mental Reaction:

Excessive fear, worry, guilt, lost trust, shattered assumptions and lost meaning

If not discharged, what began as helpful adaptive reactions can become harmful



Maladaptive Coping

- Self-numbing via legal or illegal substance, food, tobacco abuse
- Seeking relief via diversions like overworking
- Seeking relief by focusing our distress on others via aggression or violence
- Dissociation, denial, reenactment
- Less ability to cope, problem solve, and enhance wellbeing

If many people experience this



Trauma-Organized Groups & Organizations

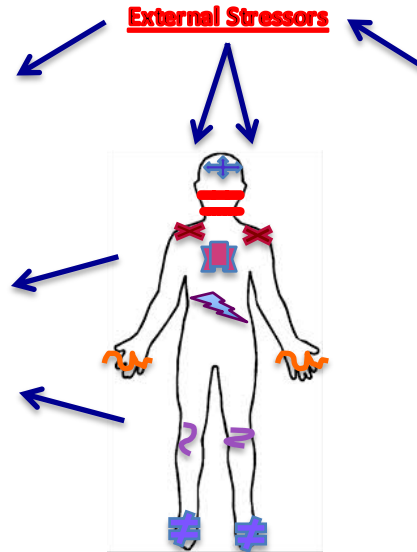
- Inability to grasp effects of trauma on group
- Dictatorial leadership, inequitable actions, poor communications
- Siloed systems leading to poor performance
- Failure to see or correct errors or injustices
- Inability to learn and improve
- Denial or disregard for social & enviro impacts
- Constant psycho-emotional violence, low sense of trust and safety

If many individuals & groups experience these reactions



Trauma-Organized Communities

- Hoplessness, despair, meaninglessness
- Low empathy and concern for others
- More authoritarianism and extremism
- 'We vs. Them' polarization and racism
- Self-harm: drugs, alcohol, tobacco abuse
- Interpersonal harm: violence, crime
- Little concern for impacts on the natural environment or climate
- Vicious cycles become difficult to stop



But the Climate Crisis Also Offers The Opportunity for Profound Transformation!

It is a primal truth that, as painful as it can be, adversity is often our greatest impetus for learning, growth, and transformation.



In Era of Non-Stop Trauma & Toxic Stress Communities Can
Build a Culture of Transformational Resilience





Transformational Resilience

It will be impossible to “bounce back”
to a 3.6 F (2C) or higher temperature increase...



All community members must develop capacity to
think & act in healthy ways even in ongoing unhealthy conditions...

and learn how to use adversities as

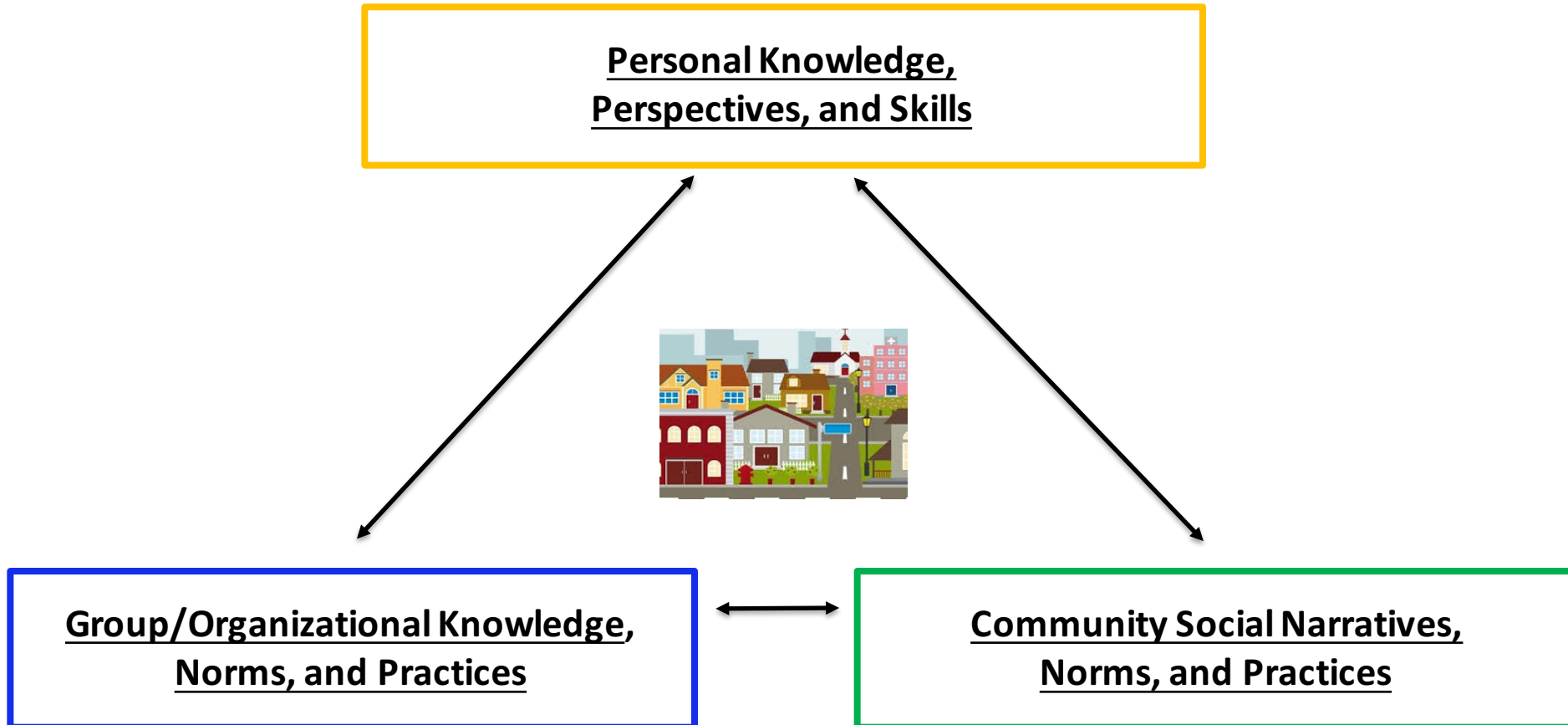
transformational catalysts to find new meaning, direction & hope
in ways that increase personal, social, and ecological wellbeing.

Building a Culture of Transformational Resilience in Communities is

Everyone's Job!

- » K-12, college, and adult educational professionals
- » ACEs, youth, and family health programs
- » Faith-based organizations
- » Mental health and other social service providers
- » Health care professionals
- » Senior citizen programs
- » Racial and social justice and equity groups
- » Environmental and climate groups
- » Community planning organizations
- » Disaster planning and management
- » Police and security officers
- » Justice system
- » All other types of public agencies
- » Business leaders
- » Elected officials
- » Many other respected community leaders

Building a Culture of Transformational Resilience in Communities Is a Function of the Interplay Among Multiple Factors



The Three Pillars of Communities with a Culture of Transformational Resilience

Trauma-Informed & Resilience-Skilled Residents



Healthy Social Environment

Enabling Culture



Pillar I

Trauma-Informed and Resilience-Skilled Residents

- All adults and youth can gain a basic understanding of how the trauma and toxic stress affect their thinking, emotions, behaviors and health.
- Everyone has the opportunity to learn and continually practice age and culturally appropriate “Presencing” and “Purposing” skills and tools—with a major focus on enhancing personal wellbeing by helping others and the natural environment.
- All business, non-profit, civic, and government leaders understand how groups can become trauma-organized and learn how to transition them to trauma-informed human resilience-enhancing social systems.

Pillar II

Healthy Social Environment

- Community leaders jointly role model and promote positive social narratives that encourage safe, healthy, just, equitable, and ecologically sustainable behaviors.
- People have ongoing opportunities to meet neighbors and build and maintain robust social support networks (bonding, bridging, and linking networks).
- Strong working coalitions and ongoing communications exist among diverse public, private, non-profit and civic organizations in the community.
- Everyone has regular opportunities to engage in activities that benefit the common good through regular neighborhood and community projects.
- Community employs restorative justice as much or more than criminal justice.
- Healing Circles and similar venues are available for people to share distress and/or grieve after loss.

Pillar III

Enabling Culture

- Community norms and practices are focused on enhancing safety, health, social justice and equity, the natural environment, and individual and social resilience.
- Community prioritizes ongoing assessment and elimination of ecological impacts.
- Locally-designed and supported approaches are used to prevent and resolve root causes of problems rather than just their symptoms.
- Continual willingness to honestly examine and alter long standing assumptions, practices, and policies that undermine safety, social justice, resilience, or nature.
- Continual willingness to use adversities as catalysts to learn, grow, and change even if it means disrupting or ending long-standing customs and approaches.
- Collective actions used to resolve problems with democratic decision-making.

The Three Pillars of a Community With Culture of Transformational Resilience

Trauma-Informed and Resilience-Skilled Residents

- Widespread knowledge of how trauma and toxic stress can affect individuals and groups.
- Every adult and youth has opportunity to learn & practice age & culturally appropriate Presencing & Purposing skills.
- All business & civic leaders know how to shift from trauma-organized to resilience-enhancing entities.

Healthy Social Environment

- Leaders jointly role model and promote social narratives fostering safe, healthy, just, equitable & sustainable actions
- Promotion of robust social support networks.
- Working coalitions and ongoing communications among diverse community organizations.
- Opportunities for people to engage in activities that benefit the common good through regular community projects.
- Restorative justice used as much or more than criminal justice.
- Healing circles and similar venues exist for people to share distress and grieve after loss.

Enabling Culture

- Norms and practices enhance safety, health, social justice, environmental protection, & personal & social resilience.
- Continual assessment & elimination of ecological impacts.
- Continual willingness to honestly examine and alter long standing assumptions, practices, and policies.
- Locally-designed & supported approaches to prevent and resolve root causes of problems rather than symptoms.
- Willingness to use adversities to learn, grow, and change even if it means abandoning long-standing approaches.
- Collective actions used to resolve problems through democratic decision making.

The 'Wheel of Change' for Building a Local Culture of Transformational Resilience

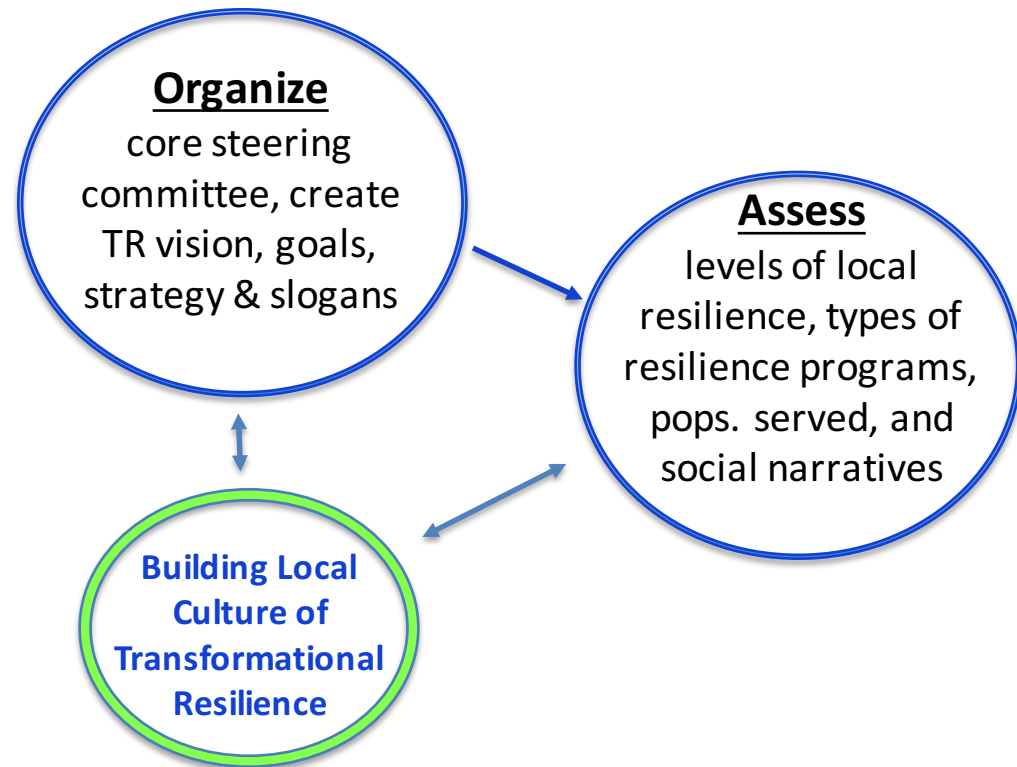


Adapted from *Leading Change to Sustainability* (Doppelt 2003) and *Self Healing Communities*, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The 'Wheel of Change' for Building a Local Culture of Transformational Resilience



The 'Wheel of Change' for Building a Local Culture of Transformational Resilience



Complete Community Resilience Inventory

Step 1: Assess Community Resilience

- Assess ACEs, alcohol & drug abuse, crime and violence
- Assess responses to previous disasters
- Assess community leadership and organizational capacity

Step 2: Inventory Resilience Education Programs

- Number of resilience education & training programs
- Locations (e.g. what neighborhood etc.)
- Populations served (e.g. youth, adults, education levels)
- Accessibility (e.g. cost, days/times offered etc.)
- Type of resilience information and skills shared
- Protective factors focused on

Step 3: Complete Gap Analysis

- Populations with and without access to age and demographically appropriate information and skills

Assess Community Norms

Community norms are the attitudes and behaviors of the majority of people in any neighborhood or community

Example

If most people in a neighborhood or community do not smoke then not smoking is a “normative behavior”-- an accepted community norm.

Not smoking is normal, acceptable, and perhaps even expected of that population.

Assess Social Narratives

The continually repeated stories people hear that describe appropriate thinking, behaviors and responses to different personal, social, and environmental situations.

Ask Community Members:

- Where they get information and news
- What or who's perspective they trust the most
- What message they hear most about key issues
- Who or what local groups do they hear from most

Summarize and Confirm Existing Narratives

- Write descriptions of narratives that dominate different neighborhoods, populations, and the community at large.
- Ask people if they are accurate

Develop and Continually Promote New Narratives

- Outline the thinking, responses, and behaviors that promote safety, health, social justice and equity, and Transformational Resilience.
- For each, develop a simple sentence to explain the thinking & action, e.g. “take a moment to calm yourself before reacting” and find a graphic to represent it
- Test the narrative with target audience before promoting it.

The 'Wheel of Change' for Building a Local Culture of Transformational Resilience



Creating Urgency in the Community

Use multiple means and educational approaches:

- Social media
- Letters to the editor
- Opinion editorials
- Blog postings
- Brown bag lunches
- Workshops
- Presentations to different groups
- Many other means

The 'Wheel of Change' for Building a Local Culture of Transformational Resilience



Resilience Programs Seek to Cultivate a *Resilient Mindset*

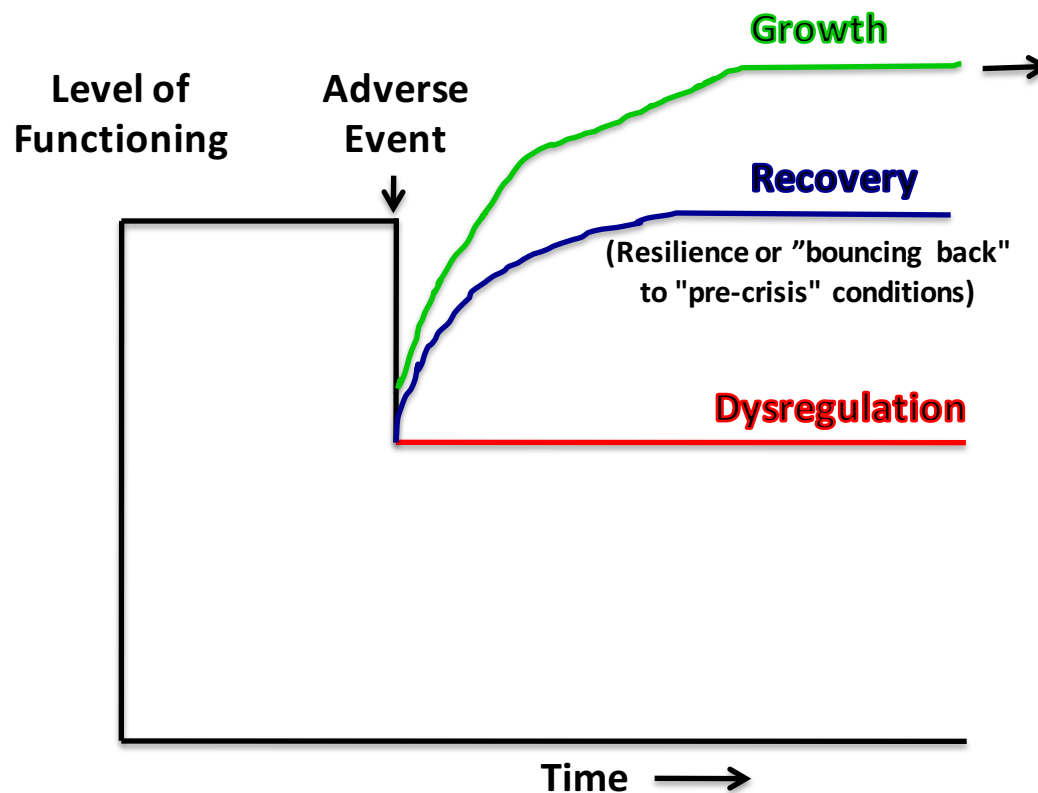
I understand how **trauma and toxic stress** can affect **my mind & body** (I'm trauma-informed)

I have **skills, social supports, and other resources** I can use to **calm my mind & body** and **think and act in healthy ways** even in **unhealthy conditions** (Presencing skills)



I have **skills** to use adversities as **catalysts** to **learn, grow,** and find **meaning and hope** by **joining with others** to **help people** and **nature** (Purposing skills)

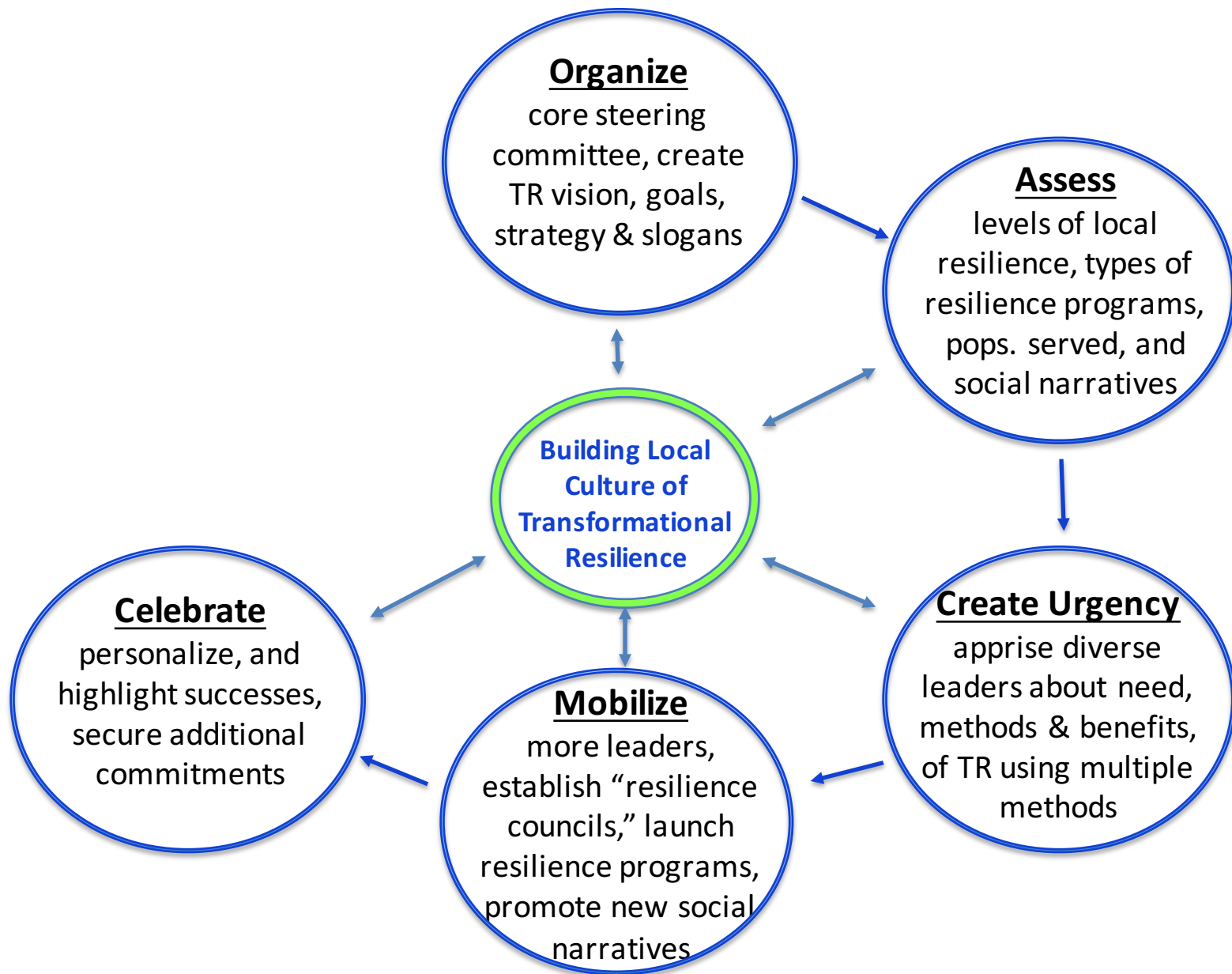
A Resilient Mindset Also Helps People Use Adversity as Catalysts to Find New Meaning, Direction and Hope in Ways That Increase Personal, Social, & Ecological Wellbeing



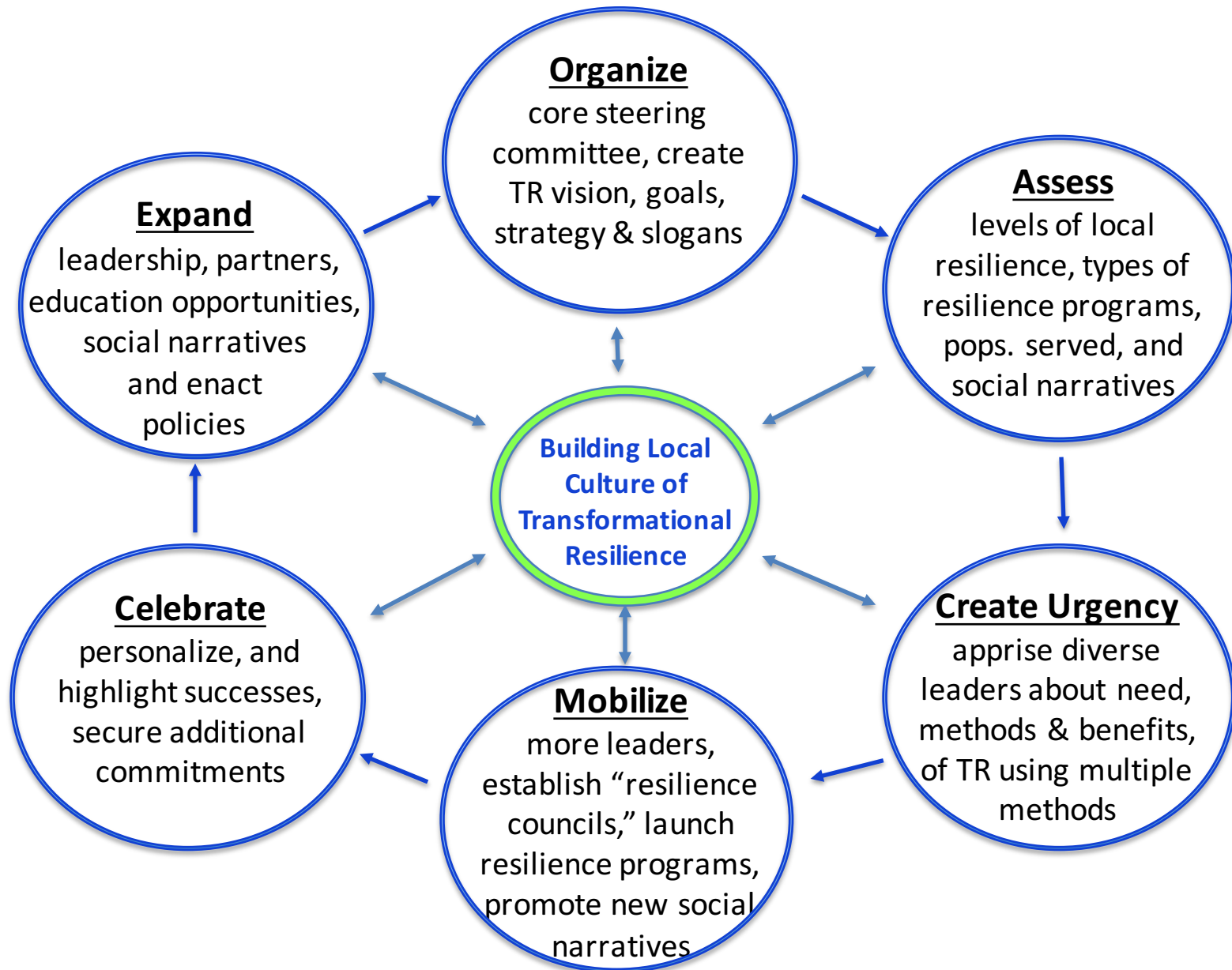
Adversity-Based Growth:
moving beyond previous levels of functioning while holding on to the pain of adversity

Requires a Choice:
Continue as before,
or use the experience to learn, grow, and find new meaning, direction & hope

The 'Wheel of Change' for Building a Local Culture of Transformational Resilience



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Examples



Creating Sanctuary
In the Columbia Gorge

Applications of TR To Common Traumas and Adversities

- Transformational Resilience emphasizes the **biology of the nervous system** and **influence of cultural norms** and avoids implications of **mental weakness** or **moral failings**.
- Information, skills, and tools are **“dose based”**—the more they are practiced, the stronger and easier they become to activate.
- Information and skills are **easy to learn, teach,** and can be **rapidly self-administered.**
- Transformational Resilience is **not therapy,** but can be **very therapeutic.**
- **Helpful for almost anyone experiencing trauma and toxic stress:** children, parents, caregivers, educators, police and security officers, social service and mental health providers, disaster response practitioners, public health professionals, social justice, climate and environmental professionals and others.



Applications of TR During and After Disasters

Research shows individuals with enhanced resilience skills often develop greater self-awareness and awareness of their context that enables them to:

- Engage in **self-care** *and* **care of their families and other people**
- Help rebuild their neighborhoods and communities
- Be open to new ways of creating better communities to meet the challenges from the past, present, and future.



Application of TR to the Climate Crisis

Research shows people with enhanced resilience skills often develop greater self-awareness and awareness of their context that enables them to:

- See their interconnectedness with the environment.
- Be open to new ways of living that create more ecologically sustainable options to meet the challenges of the present and future.
- Focus on a purpose greater than themselves such as helping others or the natural environment (called “eudemonic” wellbeing).



As in disasters, greater awareness of “context” supports thinking outside the box and opens people to choices that can positively impact the environment and climate.

How Can You Get Involved?

- Help expand existing local resilience initiatives to include Presenting and Purposing for climate change-enhanced traumas and toxic stresses.
- Help launch new community-based Transformational Resilience Initiative.
- Join the ITRC: Connect with like-minded people, get news updates, share events. Sign up at: <http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/intl-tr-coalition/>

**Building A Culture of
Transformational Resilience Is Possible!**

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

— D.H. Lawrence

**Let's Launch a Movement to Make The U.S.
and All Other Nations...**



**Trauma-Informed
Human Resilience-Enhancing Societies for
Climate Traumas & Toxic Stresses!**

Research Basis of The Information Provided in This and Other ITRC Webinars

- Bob Doppelt, *Transformational Resilience, How Building Human Resilience for Climate Disruption Can Safeguard Society and Increase Wellbeing* (Greenleaf Publishing).
- The Prevention Institute. *Adverse Community Experiences and Resilience: A Framework for Addressing and Preventing Community Trauma*. (2016).
- RAND Corp. *Building Community Resilience to Disasters* (Technical Report, 2011).
- Canadian Red Cross. *Predictable and Preventable: Best Practices for Building Resilience and Addressing Interpersonal and Self-Directed Violence During and After Disasters*.
- Dr. Sandra Bloom's two books: *Destroying Sanctuary* and *Restoring Sanctuary*.
- Eastern Mennonite University. *STAR: Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience*.
- Howard Pinderhughes and Rachel Davis. *Addressing and Preventing Trauma at the Community Level* (Unity Network, 2013).
- Unity Network. *The Unity Urban Agenda for Preventing Violence Before it Occurs Bringing a Multi-Sector Prevention Approach to Scale in U.S. Cities*. (2010).

**More research is available in the ITRC Library found by scrolling down on this link:
<http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/intl-tr-coalition/>**

About the Presenter

Bob Doppelt is Executive Director of The Resource Innovation Group, which is affiliated with Willamette University. For 10 years he directed the Climate Leadership Initiative in the Institute for a Sustainable Environment at the University of Oregon, where he still teaches part time. He is trained as a counseling psychologist and in environmental science and has combined the two fields throughout his career. He is also a long-time mindfulness teacher and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Instructor. In 2015 he was named one of the world's "50 Most Talented Social Innovators" by the CSR World Congress.

He is the author of 4 best-selling books on the processes involved with altering human-ecological systems to enhance wellbeing. His newest book *Transformational Resilience* (Greenleaf Publishing 2016) describes "Presencing" and "Purposing" skills and other tools to build personal resilience as well as psycho-social-spiritual resilience within organizations and communities for climate disruption.

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