

# GUIDE

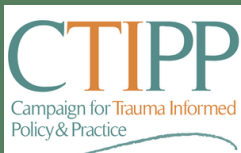
## Creating Transformational Resilience Coordinating Coalitions *for & by* Community



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# A WORD FROM THE ITRC

No matter how quickly emissions are reduced, the long global climate crisis will change the course of human history. Life will not end.

But every person alive today, located in every part of the world, and all future generations, will be impacted in ways that generate significant distresses and traumas. The consequences will close the door to many of the ways society functions today.

Yet, we should never forget that the crisis will also open the door to new pathways.

It will not be easy. But we can address these challenges.

By returning the responsibility for preventing and healing distresses and traumas to neighborhoods and communities where it naturally belongs, everyone can enhance their capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience. In doing so, people will be inspired to create innovative solutions to the climate emergency and many other challenges.

Organizing community-based initiatives across the globe won't solve all our problems. But it will mitigate many of them, and spur new thinking, approaches, and policies that can put humanity on a safer, healthier, just, and equitable regenerative path.

*Best regards,*



ITRC COORDINATOR

# A WORD FROM CTIPP

I was 12 years old when *An Inconvenient Truth* was released. It was the first time I learned about the “planetary emergency,” which is now commonly called the “climate crisis.” Having just started middle school, I became anxious about what the world would look like as I grew older.

The traumatic impacts of extreme weather events are widespread. Of course, cascading disasters have major impacts on those who directly experience them. Many more experience secondary and vicarious trauma because they know individuals or communities who have been devastated, are deeply troubled by reports they read or see in the news, or are impacted for a variety of other reasons.

We have also seen the transformational nature of healing and resilience as we navigate emerging crises. There is a realistic sense of hope, yet we need to be intentional in pursuing a better world.

There are many dimensions to a comprehensive solution to truly address such a wicked problem. We need to be as proactive as possible and ensure that we generate support for people.

Generating community-led, trauma-informed, prevention-oriented, resilience-focused, and healing-centered initiatives around the world is a critical dimension of a comprehensive solution. We hope this handbook helps and inspires grassroots action and care globally.

*Best regards,*

*Jesse Kohler*

CTIPP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





# STEP-BY-STEP *guide*

This handbook describes how a Resilience Coordinating Coalition (RCC) can be formed and operate in a neighborhood or community.

It begins by discussing the benefits of organizing an RCC, the initial steps that are typically involved with doing so, and whether to work through an existing organization or coalition or form an altogether new one. It follows the five foundational areas for developing and sustaining an RCC.

A checklist is provided at the end of each foundational area that RCCs can use to determine the degree to which they have covered all of the core issues involved with getting organized.



## Introduction to the Five Foundational Areas Involved with Building Universal Capacity for Mental Wellness and Resilience for the Climate Crisis

As with other aspects of working with neighborhoods and communities, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing the five foundational areas. The sequence in which they are addressed is not that important. The strategies the Resilience Coordinating Coalition's (RCC) Resilience Innovation Teams develop to address them must be built upon the interests and concerns of local citizens, the local assets, and additional ones that can be formed.

This means each RCC will likely emphasize different foundational areas at different times. Some will be more difficult to address than others, especially if the community is already traumatized by poverty, income struggles, racism, inequalities, other systemic oppressions, or serious climate impacts. However, it is important for the RCC to always keep the five foundational areas in mind because they are all essential.

Further, engagement in any of the five foundational areas can activate a virtuous cycle that enhances involvement in some or all others. By keeping all five front and center, for example, efforts to build robust social connections can be enhanced by bringing residents together to create supportive local economic, physical/built, and natural environments.



As they engage in those activities, residents can also increase their literacy about mental health and resilience and learn how to engage in certain practices that can greatly enhance those capacities.

As social cohesion grows and people increase their literacy about mental wellness and transformational resilience, they will be less concerned about being stigmatized if they participate in trauma-healing gatherings. This will increase the community's ability to heal suffering and trauma.

Remember that RCCs can start by emphasizing any of the five foundational focuses but do so in ways that loop back to address other areas. In addition, major transformations usually happen only after long periods of small achievements.

RCCs must stay focused and prioritize achieving incremental but visible progress while not expecting swift, large-scale changes, as any type of failure will likely undermine progress. If RCC members stay at it, the small successes will build on themselves and eventually produce surprising positive fundamental changes.

## **1) Build Social Connections Across Boundaries in the Community**

After the founding members of the RCC steering committee/board or directors have clarified their mission, core values, and operating principles and, in other ways, become organized, they can begin to engage residents in activities that strengthen their capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience and implement local solutions to the climate crisis.

### **DREAMING IN ACTIVITY:**

**Consider what an RCC in your community would do for your community. Write down 1–3 goals you feel are essential for your RCC. When finished, compare these goals with one another. Consider what goals are similar and different and what values are reflected in these goals.**

We recommend starting with one of these options:

## Trauma Healing Gatherings, Conferences, and Asset Mapping

**Trauma Healing Gatherings.** Suppose communities are already traumatized by different types of toxic stresses or acute events. In that case, it is important to start with gatherings that allow residents to share their distress and trauma in a safe and supportive environment, hear from other residents who are experiencing something similar, and then learn simple resilience skills that help them begin to heal. The healing gatherings should also allow residents to meet and interact with people they do not know. This can begin to build new social connections that will be vital to sustaining mental wellness and resilience as the climate emergency accelerates.

**Conferences and Workshops.** In communities that are distressed but still functioning sufficiently, an RCC can begin its activities by holding a conference keynoted by a well-known speaker who can offer a vision of how the community can begin to address its challenges. Another approach is to begin with workshops by well-known speakers.

**Asset Mapping and the Creation of a Community Resilience Portrait.** In communities not seriously traumatized, or as a follow-up in distressed communities after trauma-healing has been underway for a while, the RCC can launch its initiative by actively engaging residents in discussions to identify the issues they care about most. The discussions should focus on what community members see as vital for their health, wellness, and resilience and avoid venting about gripes and pet peeves. After identifying what they care about, the discussion should shift to helping residents see how those issues are often linked to their capacity to remain psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually well and resilient.

After these discussions are completed, residents can begin to map the local protective factors, or assets, that can be used to address their concerns and enhance their capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience. This approach engages residents through a strength-based wellness and resilience lens. Identifying the interests of residents and their views of local assets is best done before the RCC develops its specific goals, objectives, and strategies because the information that emerges will shed important light on how the five foundational areas involved with building universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience can be enhanced.



It will also help residents understand which local protective factors they can strengthen, risk factors they can minimize, and those they have little influence on. For example, there are many ways residents can connect those who are isolated with neighbors or nearby civic or faith-based groups. However, residents alone will have little sway over federal or state minimum wage laws that affect local poverty rates.

### **How to Develop a Community Resilience Portrait**

A comprehensive "Community Resilience Portrait" identifies the strengths, resources, and other protective factors that can help residents respond to adversities in safe, healthy, equitable, and resilient ways. The entire process should unite residents in dialogues that build the social connections needed to prevent and heal distress and traumas and motivate people to reduce their contribution to the climate emergency. Please note there is no one-size-fits-all approach to this work. Each community should use a method that fits their local demographics, conditions, and resources. Below are the steps commonly used to complete the process.

#### **Clarify Geographic Boundaries**

- 1) Define the geographic boundaries of the area that will be assessed. Work with residents to decide what geographic areas to focus on when discussing issues and what regions should be defined outside the focal area.
- 2) Identify demographics. This includes the number of people who reside in the area and their make-up, including age, gender, ethnicity, disabilities, income levels, and more.

## **REFLECTION ACTIVITY:**

**As your RCC maps out its geographic boundaries, consider who is represented in your leadership and how multiple perspectives can be invited into the RCC.**





## **Collect Information**

- 1) Determine what assets are important to map (e.g., physical, mental, ecological, artistic, etc.).
- 2) Identify assets' location, services they provide, number and type of people served (and who is excluded), hours of operation, cost of engagement (user fees, etc.), influence in the community, and other similar factors.
- 3) Identify risk factors and areas (e.g., isolated groups, poverty locations, etc.)

Note: The RCC can organize the initial information in a short, easy-to-read draft, "Resilience Snapshot." The draft asset maps can make it easy for people to make sense of the information.

This can kick off conversations among residents about the assets in their area that help foster mental wellness and resilience. Ensure everyone knows that significant deletions, additions, and improvements are expected in the document and maps when a final "Community Resilience Portrait" is completed.

**Develop Community Resilience Profile.** If a draft Resilience Snapshot was developed, the information included should be combined with the material generated during the surveys, interviews, meetings with residents, and asset mapping processes to produce a thorough profile of the community's capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience.

The Community Resilience Profile should, to the extent possible, provide a comprehensive picture of the strengths, resources, characteristics, and other protective factors that are available to help residents enhance their capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience during ongoing adversities (and possibly factors that can undermine that ability as well) and engage in climate solutions.

The Community Resilience Profile should openly declare any important limitations when concluding. This can include, for example, whether enough relevant data was found or if the information is somewhat outdated, limited in scope, or narrowly focused on specific issues, populations, or sectors.

The opinion should also state whether the perspectives of residents who participated represent the entire community, or whether they might only reflect certain neighborhoods or sectors, and which areas, populations, or sectors are not well represented in the feedback.

After the Community Resilience Profile is completed, residents should again be actively engaged in discussions that build on their previous dialogues and focus on strengthening existing assets, establishing additional ones, and enhancing the capacity of all adults and youth to prevent and heal distress and traumas.

Suppose it has yet to be previously addressed. In that case, this is when the need for the community to reduce its contribution to the climate emergency and prepare for climate impacts can be added to the discussion to identify possible paths forward. The information that results should be used by an RCC to form its goals, strategy, and action plan for building universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience.

## Asset Mapping

Asset maps allow residents to see, in visual terms, the strengths, resources, and other protective factors that exist in their community. When people identify assets and see their location on a map, they often have a greater ability to determine how they can be used to address their concerns. The maps also help people think about how additional assets can be formed and how local capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience can be enhanced.

When the map is complete, ask residents what they feel the next steps are, including what they are willing to do to strengthen existing assets or form new ones and how they can personally engage in climate solutions.

We have developed a six-step process for forming and operating an RCC to get everyone on the same page, constantly practice good communication and conflict resolution, and foster natural leaders whom others respect and respond to. Some recommendations included:

- Your mission statement should answer basic questions and highlight your top priorities for local residents.
- Your vision statement should be an ideal, vivid picture of why the work is important. Clear values will help attract participation.
- Operating principles and goals will guide decision-making and put values into practice.
- There are multiple structures to consider, though a more formal one is more sustainable. Consider multiple funding sources like donations, grants, and part of existing grants.

# CHECKLIST

*To what extent is the RCC building robust social support networks across boundaries in the community?*

	Yes	No	Comments
Do RCC steering committee/board and Resilience Innovation Team members have a good grasp of the importance of building robust social capital in their community?			
Does the RCC have a strategy to build robust Bonding relationships in the community?			
Does the RCC have a strategy to build robust Bridging relationships in the community?			
Does the RCC have a strategy to build robust Linking relationships in the community?			
Does the RCC have a strategy to encourage local Bonding, Bridging, and Linking social support networks to share stories that promote safe, healthy, just, equitable, and resilient norms of behavior?			
Does the RCC have a way to determine the extent to which social capital is being enhanced in the community?			

## 2) Ensure a Just Transition by Creating Healthy, Safe, Just, and Equitable Climate Resilient Local Physical/Built, Economic, and Ecological Conditions

The need for a just transition applies to local physical/built conditions, including transportation, housing, and public spaces. It is also urgently needed in the energy, jobs, and economic sectors. A just transition is necessary to ensure that efforts to conserve and regenerate local ecological systems and species occur in an equitable manner.

### Key Elements of Supportive Local Physical/Built, Economic, and Ecological Conditions



Residents feel the impacts of poor local conditions, so they often point to some aspect of local physical/built, economic, or ecological conditions as their top concerns when asked what they care about most in their community.

Building healthy, safe, just, and equitable climate-resilient local physical/built, economic, and ecological conditions can increase the health and safety of residents. Focusing on these practical issues can also help communities overcome the isolation and disconnection many people experience today, often leading to social and political divisiveness. These actions are essential to reduce the community's contribution to the climate crisis and prepare for and adapt to its impacts.

RCCs need to make building supportive local physical/built, economic, and ecological conditions one of the five foundational focuses of their efforts to build universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience. The conditions of the places where people live, play, recreate, learn, and age significantly influence their capacity for mental wellness, transformational resilience, and physical health.

### **The Need for Community-Led Transportation, Housing, and Other Physical/Build Infrastructure Solutions**

As with the other foundational areas involved with strengthening universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience, entire communities must be involved in creating safe, healthy, just, and equitable climate-resilient local transportation, housing, and open spaces. Residents should be actively engaged and lead these efforts because the conditions of this physical/built infrastructure directly affect their lives.

"This work requires a collaborative approach," said Risa Wilkerson, Executive Director of Healthy Places by Design. "We have found that when you promote local capacity and leadership for collaboration, the work can build momentum for longer-term results... This requires that professionals take a step back and support local efforts... Social connection is a virtuous cycle. It builds on itself and leads to more civic engagement."

## **REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY:**

**What comes up for you when you read the words "healthy," "safe," "just," and "equitable"? How might these concepts look differently for different community members?**



Climate Resilient Communities (CRC), which operates in the southern peninsula of the San Francisco Bay area, builds alliances between local residents, schools, local governments, and community-based organizations to help under-resourced communities build physical resilience from climate-related impacts such as sea level rise and economic instability.

CRC's Climate-based Adaptation program works with and manages the North Fair Oaks Climate Ready Team and the East Palo Alto Climate Change Community Team. It responds to community priorities by establishing programs to help them prepare for and adapt to sea level rise and other climate impacts.

Executive Director Violet Wulf-Saena said that even when government funding exists to prepare homes for climate impacts, such as the state of California now provides, most low-income households don't know about it, don't know how to apply, or find the application process too complicated.

So CRC created the Resilient Home program that helps families in the East Palo Alto and Belle Haven areas access funds to install new roofing solar panels and prepare for climate impacts.

"My experience has been that solutions identified by communities actually do work in protecting people and helping them survive," said Wulf-Saena. "It is not what government prioritizes, it is what communities prioritize that is key."



## Build Healthy, Safe, Just, and Equitable Climate-Resilient Local Economic Conditions

### **Model Regenerative Economic Conditions During RCC Meetings and Events.**

RCCs can show their commitment to building a just and equitable climate-resilient local economy by purchasing goods and services for events from locally owned and operated companies that pay their employees living wages, even if they are more expensive than huge chain stores can provide.

**Organize a Regenerative Economy Resilience Innovation Team.** The teams should jointly plan and implement actions that spur the growth of locally owned and operated small businesses that produce ecologically restorative goods and services. As they do so, the capacity for mental wellness and resilience of everyone involved will be enhanced. Examples include:

**Adopt a Community Bill of Rights.** To ensure a just transition to a socially, economically, and ecologically healthy and equitable restorative economy, RCCs can push for adopting a local Community Bill of Rights (CBR). A CBR moves decision-making away from the top-down, centralized government and corporate decision-making that dominates many communities to one that empowers residents to make just and equitable decisions on issues that affect their community and their lives.

**Follow the Institute for Local-Self-Reliance's Twelve Recommendations.** The ILSR issued a report in January 2022 [describing](#) twelve ideas RCCs can use to make small business development the driving force in their local economic development strategies. They include:

1. Build a strong infrastructure to cultivate, grow, and support small businesses
2. Close the racial entrepreneurial gap
3. Develop grocery stores in underdeveloped communities
4. Cultivate small-scale manufacturing and local and regional supply chains
5. Improve small business procurement policies and practices
6. Buy commercial property and place it in a community land trust
7. Create local delivery services
8. Promote small businesses and shopping small
9. Capitalize a publicly owned bank
10. Support employee business ownership
11. Improve broadband access for small businesses;
12. Invest in commercial district improvements that help small businesses.

**Educate and Train the Adult Workforce.** Workforce development and job readiness programs must enhance working-age people's knowledge, skills, and capacities to engage in cradle-to-cradle business development and jobs.

**Organize Economic Regeneration Consulting Services.** BRING is a non-profit organization in Springfield, Oregon that offers a wide range of services that help local businesses shift to a cradle-to-cradle economic model.

Their Rethink program provides free hands-on advice to local firms on reducing waste, recycling more, and efficiently using electricity, water, and materials. Businesses that meet certain benchmarks receive a Rethink Recognition Award and publicity for their efforts. BRING's consulting services offer local firms fee-based greenhouse gas inventorying, waste studies, and other technical services. Their Construction Materials Recovery and Reuse Program promotes sustainability in the local building community.

**Provide Innovative New Sources of Capital.** Access to capital is often a major barrier to starting a business. In Seattle, some business owners have bypassed traditional lenders and used crowdfunding to bankroll aspiring firms.

As part of Washington state's Fund Local Program, dozens of businesses turned to a hybrid form of crowdfunding developed by Community Sources Capital for the funds to open or expand their operations.

**Establish "Shop Local" Campaigns.** Much like the Institute for Local Self-Reliance's report calls for, "Shop Local" and "By Local" campaigns are important because they can motivate residents to support local businesses by maximizing their purchase of goods and services. RCCs can use the approach developed by Connect Our Future to establish Shop Local campaigns.

**Grow Community Farms.** Fresh vegetables provide both economic and health benefits for everyone, especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and low-income residents who live in food deserts.

To ensure that residents have healthy foods, RCCs can support food systems grounded in justice and equity by mirroring the approach developed by Soul Fire Farm, an Afro-Indigenous-centered community farm located in New York "committed to uprooting racism and seeding sovereignty in the food system."



The farm trains "the next generation of activist farmers and strengthening the movements for food sovereignty and community self-determination." Their food sovereignty programs "reach over 160,000 people each year, including farmer training for Black and Brown growers, reparations and land return initiatives for northeast farmers, food justice workshops for urban youth, home gardens for city-dwellers living under food apartheid, doorstep harvest delivery for food insecure households, and systems and policy education for public decision-makers."

**Plant Urban Orchards and Gardens.** RCCs can use the model the [Chicago Rarities Orchard Project](#) developed to plant orchards in city parks, squares, and other locations that provide local residents with fruit, shade, and beauty. They can also use the [American Community Gardening Association's](#) resources to start and maintain community gardens in public spaces.

**Help Households Reduce Their Carbon Footprint.** [Sustainable Ballard](#) and its sister organization, [Groundswell Northwest](#), an all-volunteer organization in Seattle, Washington, created a menu of actions households can take to reduce their carbon footprint. Each action was assigned a specific number of points. If a household could reach a specific total, it was awarded a Green Household yard sign. Many people engaged, and RCCs can use a similar approach to help households reduce their ecological footprint.

These examples are again offered merely to demonstrate that there are many ways RCCs can help build supportive local economic conditions. RCC members should innovate and develop strategies that resonate with residents.



## Create Local Healthy, Safe, Just, and Equitable Climate-Resilient Ecological Conditions

The health of local air and water, the vitality of ecological systems, and biodiversity also affect mental health and psycho-social-spiritual well-being. Separation from nature can also produce mental health problems.

Efforts to replenish local ecological systems, including investments in soil health, will also help communities in other ways. Ecological protection and restoration programs can help communities conserve the open spaces they value, protect clean air and water, and enhance human health.

### **Model Ecologically Restorative Practices During RCC Meetings and Events.**

RCCs can demonstrate their commitment to restoring both local and global ecological systems by using 100 percent recycled paper, nontoxic writing instruments, cups and dishes that can be reused, and other ecologically sound materials at all meetings and events. When they are available, the RCC can hold events in facilities powered by solar panels or other clean, renewable energy sources.

RCC members can also calculate their own personal and household ecological footprints, share what they found with other coalition members and the public, and publicize how they reduce them. They can calculate and continually reduce the ecological footprints of events they hold and let residents know about them.

**Organize Local Ecological Restoration Innovation Teams.** The teams can actively engage residents and many types of civic, non-profit, private, and public organizations in crafting and implementing strategies that help local organizations eliminate pollution and other forms of ecological harm throughout their entire value chain.

Like the two examples described above, the Innovation Teams can also engage residents in restoring local forests, grasslands, waterways, wetlands, and biodiversity and planting trees, flowers, and other vegetation throughout the community.

**Organize Habitat Restoration Teams.** Every year, Save the Bay, an NGO in the San Francisco area, engages thousands of volunteers to plant upward of 20,000 native plants across the Bay Area to restore wetland transition zone habitat for wildlife.



The number of plants and species planted at a restoration site, the pounds of invasive species removed, and other benefits have been enormous. RCCs can follow this approach and engage volunteers of all ages in restoring local ecological systems and species. They can also engage K-12 schools, higher education institutions, civic organizations like the YMCA and Rotary, and other groups and institutions in ongoing ecological restoration efforts.

**Form Local Watershed Councils.** When watersheds (river basins) have multiple land owners, the actions of any of them and the users can undermine the health of vegetation, soils, riparian areas, ground and surface water, and avian, terrestrial, and aquatic species. Accordingly, all land owners, managers, and regular users must be engaged in efforts to conserve and restore a basin.

RCCs can organize Watershed Councils to achieve this. These are voluntary, community-based, non-regulatory groups that come together regularly to analyze the health of their watershed and plan and implement projects to conserve and restore them. Most watershed councils work with government agencies and private landowners, and many, but not all, have paid staff.

RCCs can use this model to establish this type of collaborative group in their area. They can also advocate for state/provincial and national policies to authorize, support, and fund these community-based ecological conservation and restoration initiatives.

**Organize Neighborhood Tree Planting and Park Development Events.** Hundreds of residents in Seattle Ballard Neighborhood, organized block by block, have also planted 1,200 street trees in one day.

Groundswell Northwest has created twenty parks during the past twenty years, including areas reforested with native plants and creating a salmon estuary. RCCs can engage the Neighborhood Resilience Hubs, which help organize and many other neighborhood groups in similar activities.

## REFLECTION PAUSE:

**How has activism shaped your community in the past? What was the outcome? What could be changed or adapted to fit current needs?**

**Promote Urban and Rural Rewilding.** Rewilding restores an area to its original uncultivated condition. It shifts management away from the centuries-long practices aimed at providing for human needs and incorporates indigenous practices with new landscape designs to allow wildness to reclaim an area.

Many rewilding efforts occur in wild areas, including reintroducing biodiversity high up in the food chain to stabilize other species.

The reintroduction of wolves in Yellowstone National Park in 1995 is an example. But cities ranging from New York to Tokyo are also beginning to rewild by reintroducing native species, creating parks in open spaces and empty lots, and simply allowing nature to reclaim open spaces. RCCs can connect with the [Global Rewilding Alliance](#) and other organizations for information about how they can engage in wilding.

As before, these ideas are offered merely to spur the creativity of RCC members. The coalition can engage community members in many other ways to protect and restore local ecological systems. The key is to keep thinking outside the box.



## RCCs Will Need to Support Residents Involved with Activism

Effective advocacy involves several important ingredients. One is that all new proposals or policies that activists push for should be thoroughly researched, and residents should be asked for their input to ensure it meets their needs.

Media campaigns are also essential to generate sufficient pressure on business executives and elected officials to adopt a new practice or policy, and the campaigns often need to begin long before the specifics of new policy proposals are made public.

It will be vital for RCCs to help people involved with advocacy learn and continually practice both Presencing and Purposing resilience skills because these practices will help them calm their body, mind, and emotions as they engage in the work and use setbacks as catalysts to find new meaning, purpose, and healthy hope.

Activists will also need to devote time to develop the camaraderie and trust needed among their group to support each other in difficult times and avoid "eating their young" during times of stress.

***"Fall all of us, becoming indigenous to a place means living as if your children's future mattered, to take care of the land as if our life, both material and spiritual, depended on it."***

***(Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer)***

In a rich braid of reflections ranging from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten it's flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: awakening a wider ecological consciousness requires acknowledging and celebrating our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the world. Only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the earth's generosity and learning to give our gifts in return.

The principles and methods of finding healthy hope will also be very important. Above all, advocates must be willing to keep at it because any major change takes time. If advocates continually support each other, keep innovating and crafting new strategies, and remain relentless, they can succeed!

## A Just Transition Is Essential

Just transition initiatives include three ingredients:

1. Active participation of affected communities in planning and advancing actions
2. Anticipation of negative impacts through long-term planning and thorough impact assessments to foresee and address negative impacts and let people adapt through a gradual transition
3. Ongoing support through targeted financial programs and capacity building that prioritizes the most vulnerable.

A just transition requires that decisions about how and where to construct supportive transportation systems, housing, and public spaces must be made with the active involvement of community members—especially BIPOC residents and low-income groups—not government agencies or corporate interests on their own because the decisions about what occurs will affect their lives.

Similarly, residents must be actively engaged in decision-making about addressing polluting industries, landfills, and incinerators and restoring local ecological systems because those decisions will impact their families and them.

Decisions on all these issues must ensure justice and equity for every population and neighborhood. As they have throughout history, women can play a very important leadership role in a just transition. Residents' social connections with others as they engage in these activities will be as important as any specific external physical or policy changes achieved.

The more people develop relationships with others, the greater the likelihood they will be able to feel good and function well during the long climate emergency. This can also motivate them to become interested in other ways they can enhance their mental wellness and resilience.

# CHECKLIST

*For ensuring a just transition by creating safe, healthy, just, and equitable climate-resilient local physical/built, economic, and ecological conditions.*

	Yes	No	Comments
Did the RCC develop and implement strategies to build safe, healthy, just, and equitable climate-resilient local transportation systems?			
Did the RCC develop and implement strategies to build safe, healthy, just, and equitable climate-resilient housing?			
Did the RCC develop and implement strategies to build safe, healthy, just and equitable climate-resilient public spaces?			
Did the RCC develop and implement strategies to support local entrepreneurs in maintaining existing businesses and creating new locally-owned businesses that use cradle-to-cradle practices and provide living-wage jobs?			
Did the RCC develop and implement strategies to help local businesses eliminate ecological impacts throughout their value chain and in their products and services?			
Did the RCC develop and implement safe, healthy, just, and equitable climate-resilient strategies to support, conserve, and restore local ecosystems and biodiversity?			
Has the RCC taken steps to support activists who decide to become involved with pushing for new practices, regulations, and policies?			
Has the RCC taken explicit steps to ensure that all its efforts to create supportive local built/physical, economic, and ecological conditions are done in ways that ensure equity and justice?			

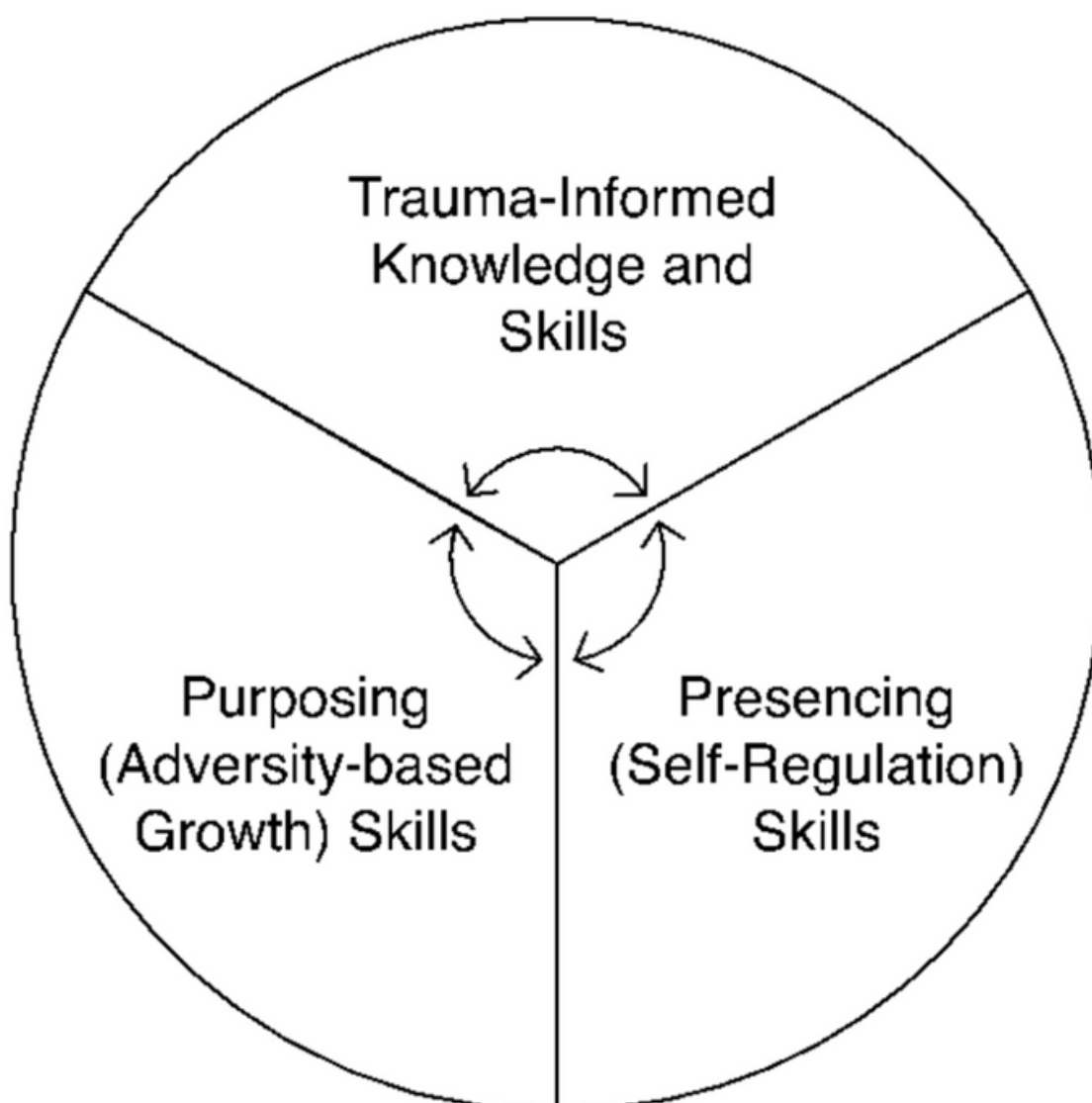


### 3) Create Universal Literacy About Mental Wellness and Transformational Resilience

Another foundational area that will be essential for RCCs to focus on during the long climate emergency is to help everyone understand what mental wellness and resilience involve and how to care for them.

This can be called mental wellness and resilience literacy. It flows from the concept of health literacy, which is the "degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information needed to make appropriate health decisions."

#### Mental Wellness and Resilience Literacy



Specifically, mental wellness and resilience literacy involve building the entire population's understanding of:

- How traumas and persistent, overwhelming (toxic) stresses can affect their body, mind, emotions, and behaviors, and undermine their mental wellness and resilience;
- Simple, self-administrable "Presencing" (or self-regulation and co-regulation) resilience skills and methods they can use to recognize signs of problems and deliberately calm themselves;
- Simple, self-administrable "Purposing" (or adversity-based growth) resilience skills and methods they can use to turn toward and learn from adversities and find new meaning, direction, and healthy hope;
- Knowledge and skills that enable them to support other people who experience mental health or psycho-social-spiritual problems;
- Knowledge of when and how to seek personal assistance and treatment for uncontrollable problems.

Enhancing these capacities will be extremely important during the constant stress and adversities generated during the climate crisis.

### **Support Trauma-Informed Approaches**

Dealing with distressing experiences generated by climate-driven cascading disruptions to essential systems and acute disasters will often feel overwhelming--as though all the world's pressures are upon us. Being trauma-informed relies on an ongoing commitment to a process of learning and growth.

## **REFLECTION PAUSE:**

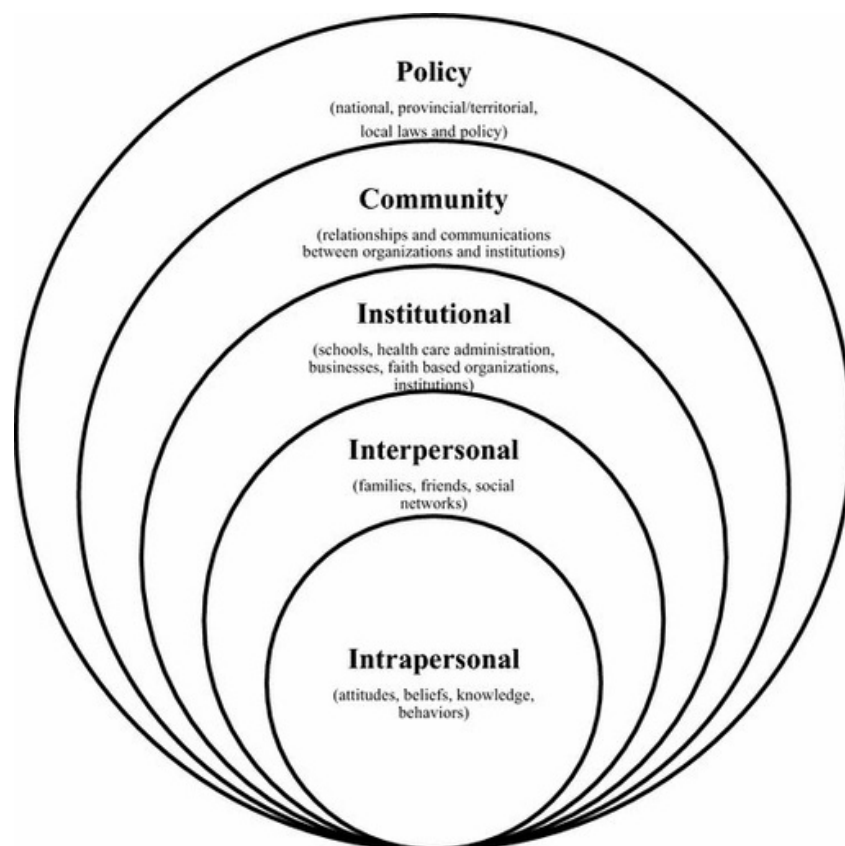
**Take a moment to take stock of your mental wellness and resiliency strengths. How do your previous experiences and coping tools empower future personal and community wellness?**

The field is too nascent, and we are always learning more about the brain–mind–body connections, so we must remain curious as we move forward, as it has been said that when people consider themselves “trauma–informed,” that is often when the work stops.

Trauma–informed approaches integrate safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, voice choice and empowerment, and recognizing the impacts of cultural, historical, and gender issues. Trauma–informed systems across all levels realize how trauma can affect people and groups, recognize the signs of trauma, have systems that can respond effectively to trauma, and resist traumatization and re–traumatization

The trauma–informed movement works to acknowledge that many people experience trauma, and it impacts individuals, families, and communities differently, and supports universal precautions so those who have experienced trauma, as well as those who have not, can thrive.

We must recognize that widely traumatic experiences, such as extreme weather and other impacts of the climate crisis, create persistent and ongoing toxic stressors. Trauma–informed approaches, therefore, are necessary at all levels across the social–ecological model as we work to support our society through these trying times.



## Help Everyone Learn Simple Presencing (or Self-Regulation and Co-Regulation) Resilience Skills

As people become trauma-informed, the next step is to teach them skills and methods to calm their body, mind, and emotions so they can get unstuck and move out of a high or low zone back into their "Resilience Growth Zone (RGZ)".

It can be helpful to share simple age and culturally-accountable information to help people understand why they feel good and can function well when they remain within their RGZ and why they can be distressed and function poorly when their instinctive Fight-Flight-Freeze-Fawn-Faint reactions are activated. They are pushed out of their RGZ and become frozen in a "high" or "low" zone.

People can then be taught simple ways to notice physical sensations in their body that signify they are stuck in a high or low zone, such as muscle tension and headaches, as well as psychological signs, such as constant ruminating about past or future problems, automatic fear-based reactions to noises or words, and other symptoms of problems.

This is one example of a presencing or self-regulation skills, which help people manage disruptive emotions and impulses rather than allowing them to control how they think, feel, and act.

**Presencing "resourcing" skills** help people remember, or rediscover, and utilize their skills, strengths, and resources to deal with a stressful situation. They help people tap into the skills, strengths, and resources they used in the past to overcome adversities and apply them to their present situation. Learning to recognize and manage "thinking distortions," such as catastrophizing and blaming others for the distress one experiences, are other helpful Presencing skills.

**Presencing "co-regulation" skills** are also important. Co-regulation involves interacting with other people to help both parties manage their in-the-moment thoughts and emotions in ways that help calm, rather than agitate, the other's emotions.

## REFLECTION PAUSE:

**How are community members and stakeholders held accountable to each other? Does this look different than keeping corporations accountable?**

## Help Everyone Learn Simple Purposing (or Adversity-Based Growth) Resilience Skills

Purposing is the third element of good mental wellness and resilience literacy. It can help people overcome despair by discovering new sources of meaning, direction, healthy hope, and courage during adversities.

Clarifying and living out one's most important values during adversities is one essential element of Purposing because it puts people in a better place to deal with adversities. Values are life concepts or principles that clarify what is important to us and guide our behavior. This can enhance our self-esteem, build self-confidence, and provide us with a sense of meaning and purpose that can reduce feelings of being overwhelmed by climate adversities.

In sum, finding a purpose in life that involves helping other people or the natural environment is a meaningful way to help oneself.

## How RCCs Can Build Universal Mental Wellness and Resilience Literacy

**Build Mental Wellness and Resilience Literacy among All RCC Members.** One of the first steps an RCC can take is to build mental wellness and resilience literacy among the people involved with the steering committee/board and the Resilience Innovation Teams.

**Organize a Mental Wellness Literacy Resilience Innovation Team.** The team should develop strategies that ensure that all adults and youth in the community have the opportunity to increase their literacy about mental wellness and resilience. Handbooks and other materials can be distributed to provide instructions on how to teach these issues. The strategies can include

- **Supporting Existing Adult Mental Wellness and Resilience Literacy Programs:** An RCC should survey the community to identify and support any mental wellness and resilience literacy programs for adults in the community.

## REFLECTION PAUSE:

**How are community members and stakeholders held accountable to each other? Does this look different than keeping corporations accountable?**



- **Supporting Existing Youth Mental Wellness and Resilience Literacy Programs:** An RCC should also identify and support existing youth mental wellness and resilience literacy programs.
- **Educating Community and Grassroots Leaders:** Mental wellness and resilience literacy education programs should also be offered to leaders of civic, non-profit, faith, neighborhood, private, and public organizations.
- **Educating Police, Fire, Emergency Responders, and Health Care Professionals:** All police, fire, emergency responders, health care, and other front-line workers should learn about mental wellness and resilience literacy.
- **Educating K-12 Education, Community College, and University Faculty, Staff, and Students:** Public, non-profit, and private educational institutions of all types, sizes, and locations in the community should be engaged in programs that build mental wellness and resilience literacy among their faculty, staff, and students.
- **Educating the General Public:** A constant stream of educational materials and training workshops should be offered to the general public to increase their mental wellness and resilience literacy.





# CHECKLIST

*For building universal mental wellness and resilience literacy*

	Yes	No	Comments
Did the RCC ensure that everyone in the community became trauma-informed?			
Did the RCC take steps to ensure that everyone in the community learned simple self-administrative "Presencing" skills?			
Did the RCC take steps to ensure that everyone in the community learned simple self-administrative "Purposing" skills?			
Did the RCC scan the community to identify and support existing adult-focused mental wellness and resilience literacy programs?			
Did the RCC scan the community to identify and support existing youth-focused mental wellness and resilience literacy programs?			
Did the RCC investigate and help organize many other age and culturally appropriate methods to build universal literacy about mental wellness and resilience?			

## **4) Foster Engagement in Specific Practices that Enhance Mental Wellness and Transformational Resilience**

As residents engage in activities that establish social connections, refurbish local built/physical, ecological, and economic conditions, and increase their literacy about mental wellness and resilience, they will become more interested in specific practices that can help them remain mentally well and resilient during persistent adversities.

Several different practices boost the capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience. However, research shows that some of the most important include practicing forgiveness, finding simple joys, laughing often, being grateful, continually learning, and caring for the body. RCCs can make education about the importance of these practices a stand-alone focus. They should also integrate engagement in the practices into the other foundational areas they focus on.

### **RESILIENCE PAUSE:**

**Pick a presencing skill:**

- 1. Say “soft” as you breathe in and “breath” as you breathe out**
- 2. Resourcing**
- 3. Tracking**
- 4. Grounding**
- 5. Six-second breathing**
- 6. Hand on belly and chest breathing**

**When using that skill of choice, notice what’s happening within without trying to change anything. Remember that when you see or experience devastating news and feel hopeless or helpless, first remember to come back to your breath or other mindfulness skills before doing anything. Don’t do or say anything until you have touched the peace and calm that presencing can bring, especially when distressed.**



Active engagement can release trauma from the nervous system which can help prevent and heal traumas

While building social connections through positive activities.

Offering experiences that can create emotional states that provide meaning in life during adversities.

And motivating some to find new meaning and purpose by helping others engage.

## Practice Forgiveness

The need for greater forgiveness will grow as the climate emergency plays out. People will often become furious at individuals and organizations that continue to damage the planet and harm society. In addition, the traumatic stresses generated by the climate emergency will cause many people to say and do offensive or hurtful things to family, friends, or others.

Forgiveness is not about forgetting someone hurt you, downplaying the harm they caused, excusing or letting the perpetrators off the hook, or making up with them. It is about those who were hurt choosing to let go of their resentment and desire for revenge. Practicing forgiveness can release unhealthy anger and resentment. This can lead to healthier relationships and improved mental wellness. It can also lower blood pressure, increase immune functions, and, in other ways, improve your physical health.

Forgiving ourselves will also be vital during the long climate emergency because we are likely to say or do hurtful things. Self-forgiveness involves understanding how traumatic stressors pushed you outside your Resilient Growth Zone, caused you to become stuck in a high or low zone, and led to poor decisions about how to think and act.

It also involves having empathy for yourself because of the situation you found yourself in, developing greater awareness of what is happening within and around you, and striving to act in ways that avoid harm.

## Examples of How RCCs Can Promote Forgiveness in Their Community

- Model Forgiveness During RCC Meetings and Events
- Promote the Enright Model of Forgiveness: One approach an RCC can use to promote forgiveness is the four-phase process developed by Robert Enright.
  - Uncovering phase: seeks to understand the offense and its impact on their life.
  - Decision phase: learns forgiveness and determines if they want to commit to forgiving
  - Work phase: seeks to understand the offender and potential reasons why the offender might have acted hurtfully.
  - Deepening phase: seeks to find a sense of meaning or purpose in their suffering.
- Utilize the REACH approach: REACH is an acronym for Everett Worthington's "REACH Forgiveness," a five-step process that demonstrates that forgiveness involves both a decision to forgive and an emotional transformation for the person who practices it.
  - R = Recall the hurt
  - E = Empathize with your offender
  - A = Make an altruistic gift of forgiveness
  - C = Commit to forgiveness
  - H = Hold onto forgiveness for the long-term
- Employ the Forgive for Good Method: Another approach an RCC can use to engage residents in forgiveness is Frederic Luskin's "Forgive for Good" method. This is a nine-step process in which participants are taught to reframe the experience of victimhood and transform it into a story of resilience.

Other Resources: The Fetzer Institute offers some excellent tools to help people engage in forgiveness. The International Forgiveness Institute also has good suggestions and examples that RCCs can use. In addition, The Forgiveness Project provides helpful information and tools. And Edward Worthington's report on The Science of Forgiveness, written for journalists, offers excellent recommendations.

## Find Simple Joys

Back in 2015, researchers found that 93 percent of Americans wanted to experience more joy in their daily lives. Like forgiveness, the COVID-19 pandemic is certain to have sustained or increased that number. The constant adversities generated during the long climate emergency will aggravate the lack of joy.

However, research shows that when people take the time to find joy in small things when they are distressed, their nervous system is calmed, blood pressure is reduced, stress is relieved, and more oxygen is released to the brain, which activates the release of endorphins and helps them feel more positive.

### Ways RCCs Can Help Residents Find Simple Joys

- **Take Time to Celebrate Simple Joys.** During RCC Meetings and Events. RCCs can practice finding simple joys during their meetings and events. This will help participants calm their bodies, minds, and emotions during adversities. As with the other practices described in this chapter, doing so will also provide a model other community members can follow.
- **Encourage Residents to Find Simple Joys.** In Seattle, Washington 2015, a rogue designer painted colorful new crosswalks on several streets. Neighbors loved them; the city made them permanent rather than removing them. This led to a community crosswalk program, allowing other neighborhoods to create colorful street art. It brought joy to residents, enhanced community pride, and increased pedestrian visibility and safety, all of which enhanced social connections. The simple act spurred cities like Atlanta, Los Angeles, and others to adopt similar programs. RCCs can promote similar types of heartwarming innovations.



- Urge Local Groups and Organizations to Promote Simple Joys. RCCs can also urge local groups and organizations to find ways to help their staff, customers, clients, members, and stakeholders find simple joys.
- Include Simple Joys in Community Activities. RCCs can also work with local governments, schools, and other institutions to make it easy for residents to engage in activities that promote simple joys.

## Find Simple Joys

Laughter can also connect people with others, providing the emotional support needed to respond constructively to climate adversities. It is guaranteed to boost morale and build trust when shared with others.

People enjoy coming together with others to innovate and transform local conditions when they feel connected to others they are working with, and laughter can generate these conditions. It can also be a force multiplier that allows people to let their guard down, show who they are, and build trust as they respond to challenging circumstances.

### Ways RCCs Can Help Residents Laugh Often

- Take Time to Laugh During RCC Meetings and Events. It will be important for RCC members to laugh continually during all its meetings and events. This will help everyone release stress and tension during ongoing climate adversities. Finding ways to enable consistent laughter during RCC gatherings when appropriate will help community members see that it is possible to laugh even during tedious meetings and other events.
- Train Community Members to Promote Therapeutic Laughter. Consider resources from the World Laughing Tour, the Association of Applied and Therapeutic Human, the International Society for Humor, and the Institute for Emotional Learning.

During its efforts to promote laughter, RCCs will want to make it crystal clear that laughter should never occur at the expense of others and that inappropriate forms of humor should never take place because this can diminish the wellness and resilience of both those who are laughed at and those who engage in this demeaning practice.



## Be Grateful

It will be vital for RCCs to promote the ongoing practice of gratitude to enhance universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience during persistent climate hardships. This will bring people into direct positive relationships with others and increase the givers' and the receivers' sense of well-being.

This can also help isolated individuals connect with others in neighborhoods and communities. When this occurs, gratitude can strengthen both "strong" and "weak" social ties. The new trusting connections can unify people and motivate them to work toward the common purpose of enhancing everyone's capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience and help them engage in solutions to the climate crisis.

RCCs can use both examples to design their unique community gratitude campaigns.

### Other Ways RCCs Can Promote Gratitude

- **Practice Gratitude During RCC Meetings and Activities.** An RCC can promote gratitude during coalition meetings and events as with forgiveness, finding simple joys, and laughing often. Offer a sincere welcome to people when they join the coalition. Whether three or thirty people attend a meeting, they should be openly thanked and shown gratitude for their presence.
- **Encourage Personal Gratitude Practices.** RCCs can also continually promote the personal benefits of practicing gratitude to residents. They can also inform the community that a smile or firm handshake is a form of gratitude and that many people find praying or other forms of devotion the highest form of gratitude. An RCC can also urge people to show appreciation for those in their bonding, bridging, and linking social support networks.
- **Appreciate Different Local Cultures.** RCCs can practice gratitude by learning about and appreciating the different cultures in the neighborhood or community. This can be done, for example, by offering culturally appropriate foods at different times of the year during gatherings and holding rituals and events that reflect the cultural, religious, or spiritual backgrounds of different populations.

- Hold Gratitude Celebrations. RCCs can embed gratitude within their strategies to build universal mental wellness and transformational resilience by holding regular informal and formal celebrations that give out awards and, in other ways, recognize the efforts of different people, groups, or organizations that have given to the community.
- Organize "Gratitude Circles." These groups of five to one hundred people or more come together to share gratitude for any other participant in the group they want to appreciate.

### Keep Learning

Research has found that learning is good for our brains because it keeps the synapses performing well. Staying curious also helps reduce and manage the symptoms of stress because it leads to a drop in stress-related hormones, a better sense of control and self-efficacy, and reduced anxiety.

It will be essential for everyone to learn how traumatic stresses can affect their body, mind, and emotions, as well as the thinking and behaviors of groups, and how those reactions can be prevented and healed.



Most importantly, continued learning will be essential to build a capable, entrepreneurial, empowered, and engaged population in their neighborhood and community to sustain mental wellness and transformational resilience as they engage in activities that help reduce the climate emergency to manageable levels.

### **Ways RCCs Can Help Residents Keep Learning**

- **Model Continual Learning During RCC Meetings and Events.** One of the most important ways an RCC can promote continual learning is to demonstrate it during coalition meetings and events. Members can share new insights gained through their work or recent conversations with others. They can also describe new perspectives they gained by reading books or documents and how it has altered their thinking or practices. In addition, they can continually acknowledge that they do not know and want to learn new things.
- **Raise Public Awareness of the Importance of Continual Learning.** RCCs can motivate residents to keep learning during the long climate emergency by continually raising public awareness of its importance. This can include the value of listening to people with different perspectives, reading new and interesting books and articles, or looking for new and challenging things. It can also include taking cooking, art, language, computer, or other classes, joining a book or film club, learning to play a musical instrument, or trying a new form of physical activity.
- **Connect People Who Want to Learn Similar Things.** Much like the Edmonton Canada Abundant Community initiative, RCCs can link people with similar interests to allow them to learn from each other. For example, people who might want to learn woodworking can be connected with others who are interested in this activity and are happy to share what they know.
- **Advocate for Equitable Access to Quality Education.** Another important step RCCs can take is to lobby for equitable access to quality education. This will be essential to prepare everyone for the long climate emergency. It can also promote social justice, peaceful relationships, and ecological restoration. Unfortunately, low-income communities, people of color, migrants, and other marginalized children and adults, as well as people living in rural areas, often do not have access to quality education.

- RCCs can advocate for universal, free, quality early childhood, primary, lower and upper secondary education, and higher education to change this. Access to education will enable everyone to contribute to their community constructively, achieve their potential as human beings, and inspire them to engage in solutions to the climate crisis.
- Advocate for Adult and Community Education (ACE). Equally important, RCCs can promote Adult and Community Education (ACE), called "community learning." This covers a wide range of learning opportunities designed to help people gain new skills, prepare for higher levels of education, return to learning, or develop an interest in new subjects. Very few public policies are dedicated to (ACE), primarily delivered by voluntary neighborhood and community organizations and continuing education programs. RCCs can lobby public education institutions to offer ACE programs to promote continued learning. They can also urge provincial/state and local/municipal governments to adopt policies that support and fund ACE programs.

## Care for the Body

There are many ways to enhance physical health. For example, getting the right sleep and consuming moderate amounts of alcohol are important. However, two actions that will be particularly helpful during the long climate emergency are regular exercise and eating healthy food.

Both will become more problematic as cascading disruptions to essential systems and acute disasters accelerate. RCCs should emphasize the importance during the climate emergency.

### Ways RCCs Can Motivate Residents to Care for Their Body

- *Promote Regular Physical Activity.* Research indicates that even modest physical activity can help improve mental and physical health.
- *Promote Access to Healthy Eating and Healthy Foods.* Having access to healthy food and healthy eating is often difficult for low-income communities and people of color. The cascading disruptions to essential systems and acute disasters generated by the climate crisis will often aggravate these problems by creating more food insecurity. This is why RCCs must make this a priority.



- *Practice Movement and Health Eating During RCC Meetings and Events.* Every RCC should be a role model for caring for physical health by engaging members in physical activity and eating healthy foods during all coalition meetings and events. Breaks should be taken during meetings to allow people to get up and move around. Fast foods should be avoided, and organically-grown fresh fruits and vegetables should be provided as snacks and meals.
- *Promote a Variety of Physical Activities.* To help people stay physically active during adversities, RCCs can urge residents to set goals and establish routines that can include regular running, fast or slow walking, stretching, sports and games, strength training, swimming, exercise classes, water aerobics, yoga, Pilates, dancing, bowling, bocce ball, gardening, bicycling, play with grandchildren (for older adults), and other forms of physical movement.
- *Create "Walksheds."* RCCs can urge residents to create their own "walksheds." This involves measuring and drawing a two-mile radius map around a residence that provides an easy thirty to forty-minute walk. Most people can walk two miles in about forty minutes and, in addition to getting good exercise, by regularly following their walkshed, they are likely to meet new people, discover local amenities, and support local businesses.
- *Promote Bike Sharing.* RCCs can support bike sharing, and if they live near a stream or lake, "paddle sharing." In the U.S. city of Minneapolis, for example, a paddle share system lets commuters travel down the Mississippi River between two stations on the river. The system connects people with the city bike share system, which allows commuters access to both modes of transportation.



- *Create Mobile Produce Markets and Healthy Local Food Stores.* As previously mentioned, many low-income neighborhoods where BIPOC communities live are food deserts. RCCs can change this by using the approach developed by the Fresh Moves Project to help these neighborhoods access the same farmer's market produce found in other parts of a city. RCCs can also partner with local farmers and other organizations to provide funding, training, and resources to help existing store owners stock and promote healthy foods and recruit the development of new health food stores.
- *Establish Climate Resilient Food Banks and Pantries.* Following the above, RCCs can also bring local farmers, non-profit, and public organizations together to provide fresh, healthy food for community members and educate them about diet and nutrition.
- *Support Farm-to-School Programs.* These can range from buying food from local farmers to serve at schools, farm field trips, hands-on learning in a garden, cooking demonstrations, and integration of food-related information into classroom curricula.
- *Promote Community-Supported Agriculture and Farmers Markets.* RCCs can promote CSAs, often called that provide members with a box or a share of the fresh food they produce and harvest weekly. Farmers markets are locations in communities where local farmers can sell the food they produce. CSAs and Farmers Markets can increase access to fresh, healthy foods, support local farmers, and keep food dollars circulating in the local economy.
- *Tap into the Approaches Offered by Common Threads, Fresh Roots, and Slow Food International.* Common Threads provides cooking and nutrition programs to underserved communities across the U.S. They take a hands-on, family-centered approach to education on nutrition, healthy eating, sustainability, and garden development. Fresh Roots, located in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, cultivates school gardens and provides food education at schools across Vancouver. They also turn school gardens into educational sites, mentor youth at garden clubs and summer programs, and empower students to grow their food. Slow Food International works in more than 160 countries to help people access good, clean, and fair food. They are also focused on combatting the environmental consequences of our food choices.

- *Utilize the Expertise Offered by Healthy Places by Design, the Center for Advancing Health Communities, and America Walks.* [Healthy Places by Design](#) partners with communities to design place-based strategies to ensure health and well-being for all. [The Center for Advancing Healthy Communities](#) "provides technical assistance and training for program implementation while expanding capabilities and resources, promoting healthful policy and environmental change, and collaborating to foster mutually beneficial partnerships." [America Walks](#) offers training and technical assistance programs to help communities "create safe, accessible, equitable, and enjoyable places to walk and move."

### **RCCs Should Establish Healthy Practices Resilience Innovation Teams**

To motivate residents to engage in the practices described in this section that help enhance their mental wellness and transformational resilience, RCCs can establish a Healthy Practices Resilience Innovation Team composed of residents and civic, non-profit, private, and public organizations. The team should continually innovate to develop new ways to engage residents in each of the six practices.

RCCs can use the checklist provided at the end of this section to assess how steps have been taken to motivate community members to engage in the six key practices described.

## **RESILIENCE PAUSE:**

**"Tracking" assists in stabilizing the nervous system. What we pay attention to amplifies. For example, paying attention to pleasant or neutral sensations in one's body can calm the nervous system. Focusing on unpleasant sensations can activate the nervous system.**

**When experiencing an unpleasant sensation anywhere in the body, try to deliberately shift attention to areas with pleasant or neutral sensations and note any changes in breathing, muscle tension, where the mind is going, etc. For more information, watch [this video](#) (2:42-7:55)**

# CHECKLIST

*For motivating residents to engage in practices that enhance mental wellness and transformational resilience*

	Yes	No	Comments
Did the RCC investigate and implement simple ways to motivate residents to practice forgiveness?			
Did the RCC investigate and implement simple ways to motivate residents to find simple joys?			
Did the RCC investigate and implement simple ways to motivate residents to laugh often?			
Did the RCC investigate and implement simple ways to motivate residents to be grateful?			
Did the RCC investigate and implement simple ways to motivate residents to keep learning?			
Did the RCC investigate and implement simple ways to motivate residents to care for physical health?			



## 5) Establish Ongoing Opportunities for Residents to Heal Their Distresses and Traumas

### Engagement in the Other Four Areas Will Often Foster Self-Healing

As previously stated, the long climate emergency is certain to cause millions of people to experience anxiety, depression, anger, grief, hopelessness, and other distressing emotions. However, for most people, these feelings will not be symptoms of psychopathology. They will be normal reactions to dysfunctional and often frightening external conditions.

Again, rather than pathologizing people, it will be important for RCCs to help everyone understand that the distress they feel is perfectly natural, given the state of the world. Helping people engage in the other four foundational areas of enhancing universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience will enable many to heal themselves--that is, become whole again.

Healing can often be difficult because distressed and traumatized people fail to understand what they are experiencing or how to deal with it. Often, they can only attend to their basic needs, such as finding shelter or putting food on the table.

This is why RCCS must take the lead in organizing ongoing healing opportunities. Ruben Cantu from the Prevention Institute said, "It only takes one person or group to recognize the need for people to heal, and they are usually leaders of their community."

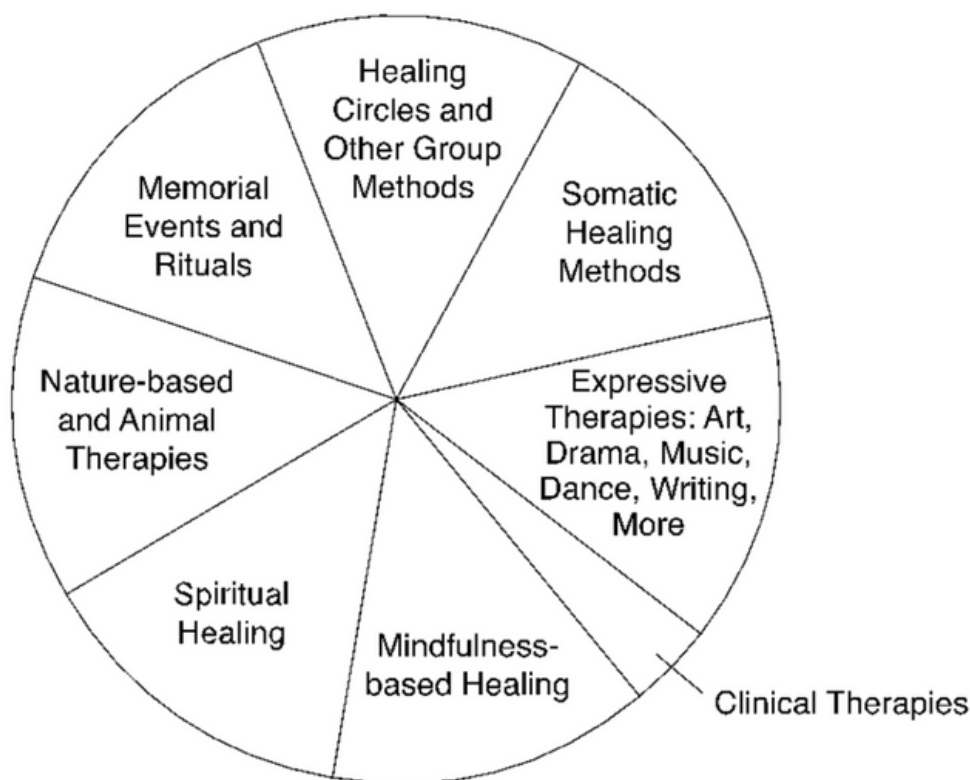
### **Healing Circles and Other Group and Community-based Therapeutic Methods.**

Healing circles are widely used today to support people with cancer, those who have lost loved ones, and individuals who have experienced racism or been subjected to many other systemic oppressions.

An important element of healing circles is the focus on strength-based dialogues that enable people to identify the assets and resources that enable them to survive a harmful ordeal. They also emphasize community-building in a shared environment, which creates solidarity, collective healing, and the proliferation of resilience.

**Other Forms of Healing Opportunities.** RCCs will also need to help establish therapeutic art, theatre, written dialogues, journaling, drawings, different forms of mindfulness, connecting with nature, and other healing methods. The approaches an RCC pursues should be shaped by the age, demographic, and cultural make-up of the neighborhoods and communities they are engaged with.

### **Examples of Age and Culturally-Accountable Healing Opportunities for the Climate Crisis**



#### **The Therapeutic Importance of Memorial Events and Rituals**

In addition to direct healing opportunities, when communities are traumatized by climate-related events, it will also be therapeutic for residents to come together to hold public rituals and ceremonies that memorialize what happened and honor those who were injured, lost, or seriously affected. These events often happen spontaneously when people gather for vigils, including placing pictures, cards, or flowers in symbolic locations. Planning other types of memorial events will ensure people throughout the community are aware of them and can attend.

Memorial ceremonies will also be important to keep the adversities alive in the public eye, highlight the need to support the survivors, and pressure elected officials, business leaders, and others to adopt practices and policies that reduce the climate emergency to acceptable levels.

Community rituals and memorial events can also serve as a venue for victims to demand justice from perpetrators and seek redress. They can be a powerful way to help people learn lessons from what occurred and take collective action to prevent future traumas and improve local conditions.

### **Ways RCCS Can Establish Ongoing Healing Opportunities**

- *Model Healing Practices During RCC Meetings and Activities.* Many members of the RCC board/steering committee and Resilience Innovation Teams are certain to be distressed, and others will be traumatized as the climate emergency worsens. In addition to encouraging them to participate in formal healing events, simple healing practices can occur during meetings and events.
- *Organize Trauma Healing Resilience Innovation Teams.* RCCs can also form a Trauma Healing Resilience Innovation Team composed of neighborhood groups, volunteer organizations, and faith-based, non-profit, private, and public organizations to plan and organize a wide range of ongoing age and culturally accountable opportunities for residents to heal their trauma. The Innovation Teams should organize affordable, easy-to-reach healing gatherings for every population and sector of the community.
- *Organize Memorial Events and Rituals.* Memorial events that are initiated and led by residents are typically most beneficial to survivors, which is why an RCC should play a key role in organizing and supporting them.



- *Organize Somatic, Mindfulness, Art, Music, Writing, Dance/Movement, Drama, and other Therapeutic Opportunities.* RCCs should consider many types of healing opportunities that focus on somatic skills such as body scan, tracking, grounding, shaking, and dancing; mindfulness skills such as soft-belly breathing, six-second breathing, guided meditation, and mindful eating, and walking; cognitive skills such as awareness of thinking distortions, guided imagery, dialogues with symptoms, and meetings with the wiser self; and other healing techniques.
- *Engage Residents in Nature-based Healing.* Also called ecotherapy, this is an umbrella term for the practice of being in nature to promote healing. Different types of nature-based healing programs include exercising outside green spaces, wilderness therapy, animal-assisted therapy, using natural materials for arts and crafts, therapeutic farming, and therapeutic horticulture.
- *Organize Peer-to-Peer Training and Peer-Based Healing Opportunities.* Peer-to-peer healing programs will be an important way for an RCC to help residents normalize their stress reactions, reduce stigma and other barriers to engagement, and increase the social connections needed to heal the traumas they experience during the climate crisis.
- *Organize Trauma Healing Hubs.* Although most of the existing resilience hubs offer services delivered by local agencies and institutions and thus have a top-down emphasis, RCCs can establish grassroots organized "Trauma Healing Hubs" that offer residents ongoing age and culturally accountable opportunities to connect with neighbors and engage in practices that heal their suffering.

## RESILIENCE PAUSE:

**How are community events and knowledge shared across the region and through time? Are these processes robust enough to maintain during a time of crisis? How can these community rituals and memorials manifest during non-crisis-focused times?**

# CHECKLIST

*For establishing ongoing opportunities for residents to heal climate traumas*

	Yes	No	Comments
Did the RCC support the efforts of residents to self-heal their distresses and traumas?			
Did the RCC consider establishing different age types and culturally accountable healing circles?			
Did the RCC consider establishing age and culturally accountable somatic, art, writing, mindfulness, movement-based, nature-based, and other healing options?			
Did the RCC establish innovative therapeutic opportunities like therapeutic horticulture?			
Did the RCC develop a strategy to support memorial events and rituals that emerge spontaneously in the community during or after an emergency?			
Did the RCC develop a strategy to hold a regular series of memorial events and rituals to commemorate previous disasters and emergencies?			



## Continually Track Progress, Learn, Improve, and Plan for the Long-Term

As the strategies developed by an RCC are being implemented, it will be imperative to regularly evaluate progress and learn what works and what does not. The RCC should use this information to adjust the assumptions, beliefs, and thinking that shaped its logic model and continually improve its goals, strategy, and action plan.

Regular evaluation will also help local residents understand what the RCC is doing, what has been accomplished, and how the outcomes came about. This will help increase the engagement and support of community members.

In addition, after a year or two of implementing and evaluating its strategy, the RCC should begin to plan for the long term. This involves establishing methods to ensure the RCC can continue to learn, innovate, and improve its efforts to strengthen and sustain the entire population's capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience during ongoing climate adversities.

### The Importance of Ongoing Tracking and Evaluation

The purpose of tracking and evaluating an RCC's activities and progress is to improve its effectiveness and inform future planning and implementation. The process involves four overall steps:

1. The RCC develops its logic model and strategy.
2. After implementing the strategy for a year or two, information about the process and results is gathered.
3. The data is analyzed and interpreted.
4. The findings and conclusions are published in a report.

The four steps should be done collaboratively, involving RCC members, residents, groups, and organizations from across the community. When done well, the process will tell the story of the RCC's approach and strategy to everyone involved and those watching from the outside.

### The Evaluation Process

One way an RCC can evaluate the progress of its activities is to monitor changes seen in the indicators it selected as part of its logic model.

For example, one indicator of the degree to which residents have good bonding social connections might be the number of people who say they have people they can count on for emotional support during a crisis. Another might be how frequently a resident contacts their friends or neighbors face-to-face, electronically, or by phone.

RCC members can track changes in these indicators every six to twelve months to see what shifts, if any, are occurring. Or, if they can raise funds, they can hire a consultant or work with a university to complete the monitoring.

## Evaluation Plan

RCCs will often benefit from more in-depth evaluations that involve "evaluative thinking." This approach focuses more than determining if the RCC's activities performed as expected. Evaluative thinking involves constant discussion, reflection, learning, and improvement. It involves surfacing and openly discussing the underlying assumptions and beliefs coalition members hold about the nature of the community they are engaged with and its challenges.

It also involves asking thought-provoking questions about the changes that should be expected when the RCC engages in its work. The entire process should always be carried out in a culturally accountable manner to ensure the assessment process is not shaped by beliefs or assumptions that are prejudiced or in any other way, will lead to inequitable or biased conclusions.

In short, evaluative thinking involves constant learning, growth, and change. The process should become embedded within the culture of the RCC and shape all its activities.

## Developing an Evaluation Plan

There are three overall types of assessment processes. Each serves a specific function and answers different questions:

- **Process (or implementation) evaluation** seeks to determine if the RCC's strategy is being implemented as planned and according to schedule. It also assesses whether the strategy produces the intended outcomes and identifies its strengths and weaknesses. An RCC should employ this type of assessment early on in its operations to determine what if any, changes are needed in its strategy and action plan.

- Outcome (or summative) evaluation seeks to determine if the RCC's strategy achieved the desired outcomes and what made it effective or ineffective. It also determines if the approach is sustainable and replicable. An RCC should consider this type of evaluation after it completes one to two years of implementing its strategy and action plan to determine the outcomes.
- Impact evaluation determines any broad, long-term changes that might have occurred due to the RCC's activities. The impacts constitute the net effects for individuals, families, a neighborhood, a group (e.g., social network), an organization (e.g., school), and the community. This type of evaluation is likely to make the most sense three to five years after the RCC starts its work.

The next step is to determine its approach after the RCC determines the specific type or combination of assessment methods it wants to use. Four approaches can be considered:

- **Culturally responsive evaluation** recognizes that cultural beliefs, values, and context lie at the core of any evaluation process. It ensures that people who have been historically excluded are fully integrated into the assessment process's design, planning, and implementation.
- **Developmental evaluation** supports innovation. It recognizes that innovative initiatives like an RCC will continually adapt to new information and challenges. It, therefore, emphasizes continually using information to learn and innovate in the face of change.
- **Empowerment evaluation** can provide an RCC with tools and knowledge that help participants improve their efforts through constant self-reflection and evaluation. RCC members are involved in facilitated discussions, often led by the evaluators, to clarify priorities for the assessment process and determine the evidence necessary to determine success.
- **Systems-based evaluation** views the RCC's activities as part of social systems affected by the many interlocking systems in which it operates. It emphasizes boundary conditions, relationships, and feedback within and across the community systems in which the RCC operates.

After the evaluation approach is chosen, the methodology that will be used to gather information and assess progress should be determined. This can include:

- **Case studies** that assess, in-depth, one specific RCC activity or elements of an activity to generalize the findings to other programs. Cross-case studies can also compare patterns found in various case studies.
- **Experimental and quasi-experimental design** (or randomized control) studies assess the effects seen by comparing a group involved with the RCC's activities with a group that was not involved.
- **Outcome mapping** assesses how an RCC's strategy affected the individuals, groups, and organizations it was designed to influence or interact with. The outcomes can include changes in social connections, activities, behaviors, actions of individuals and groups, and other characteristics.

### **Continual Evaluation Helps Troubleshoot Problems**

By continually evaluating its work, an RCC will have a greater capacity to understand why certain things succeed as intended and others fail. Some common troubles the RCC might experience include

- Lack of suitable spaces to hold meetings and events.
- The reluctance of key groups and organizations to engage due to lack of time or insufficient outreach.
- Lack of participation by certain populations due to fears about safety, stigmatization, inequities, lack of transportation, insufficient resources, or other similar issues;
- Insufficient funding or other key resources.
- Lack of skilled staff or sufficient staff time to support all the RCCs activities.
- Insufficient number of volunteers to assist with events.
- Burnout by RCC members due to having too much on their plate.
- Tensions or conflicts over wellness and resilience-building approaches.
- Insufficient variety of age and culturally accountable resilience-building methods.
- Participants sporadically attend meetings and events or leave early.

Every new coalition faces these common troubles, and RCCs are likely to experience many of them. Continual evaluation will help an RCC spot these problems early on. It can then engage in candid discussions about what might be causing them and how they can be addressed.

**RCCs Should Become Learning Communities.** Continually posing and openly discussing issues will enable the RCC to become a true learning community. As the RCC implements its strategy and coalition members continue to engage with residents, they will likely notice shifts in how people see and define issues, who they connect with, and how they respond to adversities. This information can be used to regularly refine and improve the strategies and action plans developed by the different RCC Resilience Innovation Teams. This type of evaluation will often be as valuable as the more formal evaluations.

**RCCs Must Also Plan for the Long-Term.** RCCs will need to motivate the community to deepen their knowledge and adopt new and expanded approaches to prevent and heal the multifaceted mental health and psycho-social-spiritual problems generated during the long climate crisis. At the same time, RCCs will need to develop internal organizational plans to ensure their efforts can be sustained over the long term.

### **Embed Mental Wellness and Resilience in Local Organizational Practices and Policies**

To ensure that everyone in the community can enhance and sustain their mental wellness and transformational resilience over the long term, organizations of all types must incorporate the practices and policies into their operations. This can be accomplished by asking the organizations involved with the RCC to issue public declarations and/or sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) ([Peace4 Tarpon example](#) and [Community Resilience Initiative example](#)) describing their commitment to implement principles and practices that foster and sustain mental wellness and resilience among the people involved in their enterprise.

## **RESILIENCE PAUSE:**

**Grounding is a resilience skill to calm your body, mind, and emotions or to be present in the here and now. This pause desires to create a sense of safety or security by being “grounded” on something solid, such as standing or sitting.**

**Find a comfortable position. Notice where your body is making contact with something solid. Where is your body being supported by something solid? What is the physical sensation of being supported by that solid grounding? Just notice what’s there. Notice if the sensation is pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. If your attention is drawn to unpleasant situations, try to shift your attention to pleasant or neutral sensations connected to something solid.**

**For more information, watch [this video](#) (2:20–7:10)**



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## Develop Long-Term Strategic Plans

In addition to embedding mental wellness and resilience protocols in local organizational policies, after a few years of operation, an RCC should develop strategic plans to sustain its operations for a long time. A long-term strategic plan demonstrates that the RCC is committed to sticking around for the long haul. When members know where they want to be in three to five years, they can make better decisions about short-term actions. A long-term plan also gives members something to shoot for and a way to measure and review progress.

RCCs can develop a long-term strategic plan by following these steps:

- Complete an "environmental scan" that involves a deep and wide look around at what's going on outside and within the community, including issues such as the climate emergency and how they might affect the RCC.
- Identify opportunities the RCC might be able to capitalize on, as well as threats to its operations (including but not limited to those posed by the climate crisis).
- Examine the RCC's internal resources, strengths, and limitations (perhaps using a SWOT analysis).
- Establish the internal organizational goals the RCC wants to accomplish during the coming three to five years based on what it perceives to be occurring and its strengths and limitations (which might include issues such as funding, staffing, and program expansion).
- Identify how those goals will be reached, highlighting strategies, objectives, responsibilities, and timelines.

Completing this process will likely influence some of the RCC's core functions, such as:

- The strategies and specific activities the RCC engages in and how they are designed.
- The organizational structure used by the RCC.
- The staffing of the RCC needs to operate effectively.
- How can the RCC organize and implement fundraising efforts?
- How should the RCC respond when emergencies and disasters occur?

All these issues are important. However, I will address three in more detail here that are particularly important: devising strategic plans for transitions of RCC members and staff, developing a long-term funding plan, and preparing for disasters and emergencies.

## Develop a Long-Term Funding Plan

Establishing long-term financial sustainability can be challenging for non-profits. Creating a strategic long-term funding plan can help an RCC address the challenges. It typically involves seven steps:

1. Organize a fundraising planning team.
2. Examine existing activities and project the funding needed to engage all residents.
3. Assess past and current fundraising efforts.
4. Analyze the successes and failures of your funding strategies.
5. Examine a variety of non-profit funding strategies.
6. Craft a long-term fundraising plan.
7. Get buy-in from the RCC board/steering committee.

# CHECKLIST

*Has the RCC developed means to track progress, continually improve, and plan for the long-term?*

	Yes	No	Comments
Did the RCC develop a strategy to track and evaluate its progress in strengthening universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience?			
Did the RCC use "evaluation thinking" throughout the entire process?			
Has the RCC become a true "learning community?"			
Has the RCC developed ways to encourage local organizations to incorporate mental wellness and resilience principles and practices into their operations?			
Has the RCC developed a long-term strategic plan to address member and staff transitions?			
Has the RCC developed a long-term strategic funding plan?			
Has the RCC developed a long-term strategic plan to prepare the coalition to respond effectively during each of the six common phases of a disaster?			



## Enhance Universal Capacity for Mental Wellness and Transformational Resilience

Entire communities must be engaged in preventing and healing distress and traumas and in solutions to the climate emergency, and the best way to do this is to form a Resilience Coordinating Coalition.

The RCC will need to coordinate numerous semi-independent initiatives that continually engage their community's different populations and sectors in the five foundational areas discussed in the book. The problems generated by the climate crisis will continue for decades, so the work of the RCCs must be ongoing.

Indeed, organizing culturally accountable RCCs must become a top international priority, and this workbook has offered a framework to do so. A global movement is needed to establish these initiatives, and I will close the book with a plan of action to grow it.

### Galvanized Transformation Leadership

Transformational leadership has four primary characteristics. Transformational leaders can be found at all levels of society, and it will be vital to inspire all of them to lead efforts to respond to the climate emergency.

- First is the degree to which the leader seeks out and listens to the concerns of others and attends to their needs, not their own.
- Second is the degree to which the leader challenges long-held assumptions and beliefs and encourages people to think differently and identify new, more effective ways to respond to challenges.
- The third characteristic is the degree to which a leader articulates a coherent, inspiring, motivating vision of what is possible for others. This involves communicating optimism and providing meaning and a strong sense of purpose in the actions required to bring about positive change.
- The fourth characteristic of transformational leaders is their ability to serve as role models by exhibiting high ethical and moral standards that generate trust and respect from others.

## **Establish Transformational Leadership Learning Exchanges**

One action that will help expand the number of people who embody the characteristics of a transformational leader is to establish "learning exchanges" around the world. These in-person or online gatherings will teach participants what transformational leadership involves and how they can embody the core characteristics.

The learning exchanges can also teach participants the core principles and practices involved with preventing and healing climate-generated mental health and psycho-social-spiritual problems and how they can mobilize their fellow residents to organize community-based initiatives to address the wicked challenges that lie ahead.

People involved with learning exchanges often become actively engaged in the issues they learn about. This means that establishing Transformational Leadership Learning Exchanges worldwide will help grow a movement of people committed to leading transformative change in their community.

## **Organize Transformational Resilience Communities of Practice**

Communities of Practice (CoPs) will also be needed to help people already engaged in community-based mental wellness and transformational resilience-building initiatives enhance their understanding and skills. This requires continual learning, reflection, and improvement.

To foster this type of mindset, CoPs should be organized around the globe. A mental wellness and transformational resilience CoP will be a group of people who share the common goal of helping their community come together to continually learn, improve, and develop effective strategies to build universal capacity to prevent and heal distresses and traumas as they engage in solutions to the climate emergency.

The goal of a CoP should be to engage participants in deep-seated dialogue and reflection to examine their core assumptions and beliefs and develop new insights, knowledge, and innovative ideas to advance their work.

## Enact New Policies

New policies are also needed to grow a global movement to build universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience.

Many other new policies are needed as well. The list is too long to include here, so below are just a few examples:

- Mandate and support the swift and sustainable phase-out of fossil fuels and scale-up of clean, renewable energy, as well as the protection and regeneration of vast swaths of ecological systems and a rapid transition of the economy to a healthy, safe, just and equitable climate resilient cradle-to-cradle economic system.
- Insurance policies must be changed to require them to, among other things, cover the costs of engagement in prevention-focused wellness and resilience-building activities and pay for climate-related damages to homes and property.
- Health care policies must be changed to ensure equity in all mental health services and require that mental health and physical health services be integrated into a holistic system.
- Educational policies should be changed to require everyone to learn about climate science, mental health, and resilience literacy.

In addition to these and other national policies, many similar policies will be needed at the state/provincial and local levels.

## RESILIENCE SKILL:

**Six-Second Breathing is another self-administrable, simple resilience skill that involves breathing in deeply through your nose for four seconds, counting each second, and breathing out fully through your nose for six seconds, counting each second. Try to be mindful of your body's state, noticing what is happening within your body, thoughts, and emotions without trying to change anything.**

**For more information, watch [this video](#) (2:10-4:48)**

# CHECKLIST

*For operating community-based initiatives that enhance universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience.*

	Yes	No	Comments
Has an RCC of some type been formed to lead efforts to enhance universal capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience?			
Do the participants of the RCC represent all of the different populations, geographic areas, and sectors of the community?			
Are local residents actively involved with decisions about how the RCC functions and what it does?			
Is building robust social support networks across boundaries in the community a major focus of the RCC?			
Is ensuring a just transition by creating healthy, safe, just, and equitable climate-resilient built/physical, economic, and ecological conditions a major focus of the RCC?			
Is building universal mental wellness and resilience literacy a major focus of the RCC?			
Is engaging residents in practices that help sustain their capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience a major focus of the RCC?			
Is organizing ongoing opportunities for residents to heal the traumas they experience a major focus of the RCC?			
Does the RCC have a plan to regularly evaluate its progress, learn what works and what does not, and continually improve?			
Does the RCC have a strategy to continue its operations over the long term?			
Are RCC members involved with a Community of Practice (CoP) or other ways to continually examine their basic assumptions and beliefs, learn new things, and improve their approach?			

## Closing Thoughts

The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other health crises and escalating threats of war, continue to create despair in many parts of the world. Millions of people are also struggling with heightened racism, poverty, lack of food, water, and shelter, substance dependence and misuse, and other adversities.

These problems make it hard to think about or deal with issues such as the climate crisis. But it is essential not to let these critical challenges distract us from the greater threats posed to every individual, family, community, and civilization by the rapidly accelerating climate-ecosystem-biodiversity mega-emergency. We cannot avoid the many ever-present threats to our society and must develop complex solutions to such wicked problems.

No matter how quickly emissions are reduced, the long global climate crisis will change the course of our world's history. Life will not end. But every person alive today, located in every part of the world, and all future generations will be impacted in ways that generate significant distress and traumas. The consequences will close the door to how society functions today. Yet, we should never forget that the crisis will open the door to new pathways.

It will not be easy. But we can address these challenges. By returning the responsibility for preventing and healing traumas to neighborhoods and communities where they naturally belong, everyone can enhance their capacity for mental wellness and transformational resilience and support others in their community. In doing so, people will be inspired to create innovative solutions to the climate emergency and many other challenges.

Organizing community-based initiatives across the globe won't solve all our problems. But it is a powerful step in the right direction to mitigate many of them and spur new thinking, approaches, and policies to put humanity on a healthier and more regenerative path.





## Resources & Work Cited

- [Resilience Coordination Coalitions](#) (Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy)
- [Climate Community of Practice](#)(CTIPP)
- [9-part Advocacy Series](#) (CTIPP)
- [Resilience Coordination Coalitions](#) (CTIPP)
- [Socially Connected Communities: Action Guide for Local Government and Community Leaders](#) (Healthy Places by Design)
- [New Report: Small Businesses Big Moment](#) (The Institute for Local Self-Resilience)
- [Free feedback mapping tool](#) (VENSIM)
- [Go Deep](#)
- [Economic Regeneration Consulting Services](#) (BRING)
- [New Sources of Capital](#) (Fund Local Program)
- [Connect our Future](#)
- [Soul Fire Farm](#)
- [Chicago Rarities Orchard Project](#)
- [American Community Gardening Association](#)
- [Sustainable Ballard](#)
- [Groundswell Northwest](#)
- [Lillies Project](#)
- [Vegetation Monitoring](#) (Save the Bay)
- [Network of Oregon Watershed Councils](#)
- [Oregon's Watershed Council Program](#)
- [Global Rewilding Alliance](#)
- [Congress to Consider Bipartisan Trauma-Informed Legislation](#) (CTIPP)
- [Calls to Action: Federal Legislation Supporting Cross-Sector Community Coalitions](#) (CTIPP)
- [Sample Legislation: Federal H.R. 9201 & S. 5251](#) (CTIPP)
- [Policy Brief: Post Disaster Mental Health Response Act](#) (CTIPP)
- [Natural Disasters are Traumatic: Urge Congress to Support Three Bills to Help Communities Heal](#) (CTIPP)
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- [Forgiveness Resources](#) (The Fetzer Institute)
- [International Forgiveness Institute](#)
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- [The Science of Forgiveness](#) (John Templeton Foundation)
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- [This is How Joy Affects Your Body](#) (Murphy C.)
- [We Live in the Golden Age of Multicolored Seattle Crosswalks](#) (Curbed/Vox Media)
- [Therapeutic Benefits of Laughter in Mental Health: A Theoretical Review](#) (Yim J.)
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- [American Association for Adult and Continuing Education](#)
- [Moving to Beat Anxiety: Epidemiology and Therapeutic Issues with Physical Activity for Anxiety and Individual and combined associations between cardiorespiratory fitness and grip strength with common mental disorders: A prospective cohort study in the UK.](#) (Kandola, A. A. et al.)
- [Walksheds](#)
- [Minneapolis Paddle Share Program](#)
- [Common Threads](#)
- [Fresh Roots](#)
- [Slow Food International](#)
- [Healthy Places by Design](#)
- [Center for Advancing Healthy Communities](#)
- [America Walks](#)
- [Resilience Hubs: Shifting Power to Communities and Increasing Community Capacity.](#) Urban Sustainability Directors Network (Baja K.)
- [Remembering](#) (The National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center)
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- [Peace4Tarpon MOU in Tarpon Springs, Florida](#)
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- [Strategic Planning for Non-Profits \(National Council of Non-Profits\)](#)
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## Stories & Anecdotes

**TERI BARILA** (Story at 12:30–33:00)

Founder of the Community Resilience Initiative

*“It’s a journey, not a sprint. Just keep at it.”*

After learning about the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study, Teri wanted her community to learn and collaboratively prevent ACE in families and communities. Teri had preexisting relationships with community partners because of her work in youth development. She met with multiple agencies to help them develop a common language around resilience and ACEs, recognize how this framework impacts them regardless of role or sector, and how it could be integrated into their work. After slowly bringing multiple agencies in her community to the same table, they expanded through training, conferences, and products to educate organizations on how to build resilience skills. Though Teri’s initial relationship-building efforts were done independently, the initiative was initially funded through local foundations, such as the Sherwood Trust, eventually attracting the Gates Foundation for a planning grant to connect with organizations, community partners, and neighborhoods. The structure began through a grassroots approach with a loosely defined steering committee. This committee was inclusive and adaptive to everyone’s input.

The initiative has a more formal structure, a non-profit model, for its sustainability. Her tips for developing an RCC included:

- Relationships are the foundation of these initiatives. Persistence is key. Consider what organizations, networks, and non-profits you already know and can talk to.
- Developing a common language around the issue before people convene assures that people are already on the same page and have a shared vision to address the issue.
- Grants can accept process and outcome measures, including parents (e.g., education), schools (e.g., engagement), and neighborhoods.

**TINA PEARSON** (Story at 35:50–56:30)

Director of the New Hanover County Resiliency Task Force

The New Hanover County Resiliency Task Force, comprising eight subcommittees from different sectors, was developed in 2016 to improve 3rd grade reading outcomes. However, when its founder was exposed to the film *Resilience: Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope*, they realized their efforts should move beyond reading outcomes and develop resilience skills. The task force started with a planning grant funded by The Duke Endowment, with schools as their primary fiscal agent. Their mission is to build their community's resiliency by reducing and preventing ACE and trauma with knowledge, empathy, and compassion and by creating opportunities for meaningful connection. Their current model is education, advocacy, and connection. They have a resiliency task force that targets multiple sectors and populations, including arts and gathering data. Developed in 2019, their strategic plan offers a roadmap to resilience and trauma-informed systems, believing that if providers are trauma-informed and resilience-focused, they can better serve their communities. However, they plan to revise their strategic plan to be less linear and able to target multiple tasks at the same time. Currently, the task force tracks process measures, such as the number of people engaged and trained in the work. They have trained approximately 5,000 people on the resiliency model.

**MATT ERB** (Story at 19:44–44:50)

Owner of Embody Your Mind and Associate Clinical Director and Communications Specialist at the Center for Mind-Body Medicine (CMBM)

CMBM helps traumatized communities heal worldwide. CMBM's evidence-based mind-body medicine skills training model is rooted in amplifying awareness and a mindfulness-based model beyond mindfulness-based stress reduction.

This model uses various evidence-based skills and tools that support self-regulation, co-regulation, and self-expression. It emphasizes a small group model that supports a collectivist and community-based or population-wide model of support. It also involves an in-depth exploration of science and the biology of stress, trauma, and body-mind-environment interactions. It's not just a matter of individual mind-body interactions but how we are bathed in and influenced by our environment.

This emphasis underscores how one's agency and sense of autonomy are connected to the upstream Social Determinants of Health and the impact of systemic and structural challenges and patterns. CMBM primarily uses a train-the-trainer model, relying on the ripple effect of trained community members to convey these skills to their communities. See PowerPoint for research findings on this model. CMBM offers a model for building a community project that includes assessing community needs and engaging the community for co-creating (with humility). The model has professional training and advanced training programs that include delivery, supervision, and certification to help develop leadership and long-term sustainability in the community. A method of training, guiding, and sustaining when partnering with communities. Work is tailored to the community.

**VICHI JAGANNATHAN** (Story at 49:00-1:19:00)

Co-founder of the Rural Opportunities Institute (ROI)

ROI works with rural majority-black communities to design innovative solutions for healing and resilience. It supports youth, organizations, and communities in rural Eastern North Carolina to interrupt the generational trauma cycle and design innovative healing solutions. ROI is based in an area rich in Black history, strength, resilience, and intergenerational oppression and enslavement-related trauma that impact social determinants of health. ROI considers how and what forces impact their community's ACEs. ROI started with interviews, engaging over 300 community members, and creating feedback loop maps (places where dominant behavior was happening in cycles) that recognize how systems, communities, and factors are all connected. The conclusion was that our current systems segregate and isolate people from connections and sustain historical trauma. ROI's community leverage strategy is to educate and increase knowledge about trauma, work with public institutions to develop healing systems and keep people connected to school and work, believing that people who stay connected can heal and heal others. ROI's approach also involves being in places where individuals in the community convene and listening to their concerns.



This was initiated when individuals from the organization attended school meetings, listened to concerns being voiced, and conducted 10-minute workshops at each meeting to encourage community collaboration and learning related to trauma and healing systems.

**HOWARD LAWRENCE** (Story at 23:00–46:50)

Co-founder of the Asset-Based Neighbourhood Organizing Association

The Abundant Community Edmonton (ACE) seeks to foster social connections between neighbors at the block level. Edmonton, Canada, has delineated neighborhoods, each comprising 2,000 individuals (about 1,000 households), with volunteer leadership teams directing their neighborhoods to encourage enriched, intentional, neighbor-to-neighbor relationships. The values emphasized for these connections are inclusion (connection with those different from us), health (physical, emotional, and mental well-being), care (looking out for each other in the style of a village or family), and safety (street-level attention to crime and disaster). ACE paired with Asset Based Community Development Institute (ABCD) in Chicago to build a framework for what makes a neighborhood healthy, focusing on neighborhood and individual assets. Individuals can integrate the gifts, skills, and interests from their daily lives into their neighborly connections. Community development includes many neighborhoods (not just troubled communities) and allows neighbors to connect at the block level. Across neighborhoods, neighbors with similar interests meet as friends to do activities together, strengthening the neighborhood's social fabric (affinity groups within proximity).

**JACQUI PATTERSON** (Story at 21:00–45:10)

Founder and executive director of the Chisholm Legacy Project (CLP)

CLP is a resource hub for Black frontline climate justice leadership. It was formed on July 1, 2021, in response to Jacqui's demand through her NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice work. This project is rooted in a just transition from an extractive economy (our relationship with Earth is based on goods, manufacturing, and disposability) into a living, regenerative economy, where democratic, cooperative decision-making and ecological and social wellbeing are central. CLP's work focuses on shifting economic and general control to communities as a way of encouraging community well-being and self-determination, the democratization of wealth, and the advancement of ecological restoration. The CLP works at the intersection of Black liberation, climate change, and climate justice to establish an economy rooted in justice and centered upon deep, mutually beneficial relationships between individuals, communities, and the Earth.

CLP's mission is centered around: 1. Community building, 2. Frontline movement building, 3. Bending the arc of mainstream environmentalism toward equality and justice, and 4. Supporting Black femme wellbeing. CLP assists communities in moving from being "subjected" to socioecological harms to self-determination and power through strategizing assistance, technical assistance, education, and financial assistance, prompting the use of "radical imagination" and visioning work to help communities strategize how to attain their vision.

**VIOLET WULF-SAENA** (Story at 47:45-1:20:48)

Founder and Executive Director of Climate Resilient Communities (CRC)

CRC is a San Francisco Bay Area community-based organization. CRC supports climate change resilience, unity, justice, and sustainability by empowering underrepresented communities to implement climate solutions. They currently serve East Palo Alto, Bel Haven of Menlo Park, and unincorporated North Fair Oaks (governed by San Mateo County), which are highly vulnerable to rising sea levels and heat waves. CRC aims to help communities cope with climate change through empowerment, capacity-building, and resource-sharing with community leaders. CRC's three core programs are resilient adaptation (direct work with community leaders to prioritize adaptation strategies), resilient homes (direct work with households and homeowners who need weatherization, home repairs, and access to related federal and state environmental initiatives), and resilient education (work with community youth, leaders, and local organizations to prioritize education programs for all residents). CRC serves frontline communities, communities of color, and communities facing disparities like poverty, pollution burden, and gentrification-related housing burdens. CRC encourages language justice, cultural justice, and resource sharing through relevant, inclusive programs, which address disparities in the presence of green spaces/tree canopies, emergency preparedness, and preventative actions. CRC's Climate Change Community Teams were created to address misinformation and distrust in these cities by creating a shared space for the community, leaders, youth, other CBOs, and residents to come together.

**ELAINE MILLER-KARAS** (Story at 30:45-1:19:11)

Co-Founder and Director of Innovation of the Trauma Resource Institute (TRI)

TRI is associated with Medscape and provides an hourlong presentation, an hourlong virtual Community Resiliency Model (CRM) workshop, and a 20-minute video by TRI's leading researchers of the community resiliency model.

TRI's work after human-made and natural disasters and for community resilience skill development and prevention consists of the Disaster Relief Mobilization: Community Resiliency Model (DRM-CRM), which was started just before the COVID-19 pandemic. DRM-CRM has four goals: to provide a structure for preparation and to further strengthen resilience so communities can respond to events with a common language, strength, & and compassion (see Elaine's slides for details). CRM consists of 6 wellness skills that can be used across the lifespan, cultures, and abilities. When teaching others, it's important to talk about resilience and ask people what they think "resilience" is. Remembering our collective suffering and leaning into our collective assets and strengths for greater optimism, hope, and a solution-focus for the purposing skills. An essential aspect of CRM is "embodied well-being" since, if toxic stress is embodied, we need to focus on how we're designed for well-being. Paying attention to and recognizing distressful sensations and sensations connected to well-being is vital.

**EVERETT WORTHINGTON**, PhD (Story at 37:58-1:15:20)

Licensed clinical psychologist and Professor of Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University

Dr. Worthington became involved in forgiveness campaigns through a desire to broaden the application of forgiveness interventions outside psychological and clinical settings. Dr. Worthington studied REACH Forgiveness groups, which targeted awareness, forgiveness groups, and emotional writings, versus campus-wide interventions. REACH stands for Recall the hurt, Empathize with the offender, Altruistic, Commit to forgiveness, and Hold on when doubts occur. These campaigns have spanned from Christian communities and universities, secular universities, Monteria, Columbia, and Hong Kong communities. He observed that forgiveness is challenging when there is a sense of injustice. There are alternatives to forgiveness, including justice, tolerance, acceptance, etc. There are two types of forgiveness, decisional and emotional, which differ from reconciliation (restoring trust, which a single person can't do alone). Self-forgiveness was noted to be harder than forgiving others. People can reduce the injustice gap by combining these alternatives within their locus of control. REACH Forgiveness can be conducted in groups or individually via a DIY workgroup. When developing a more forgiving society, a community campaign can be done in a mediating community (made up of the larger community) such as churches, CBOs, etc. Forgiveness-awareness campaigns include decisional and emotional forgiveness, the benefits of forgiveness, and resources available in the community.

These campaigns worked best when there was buy-in from leaders vs activities that would engage and promote forgiveness. Stimulating forgiveness, therefore, is an important component of these campaigns. Stimulating forgiveness resulted in research indicating improvements in mental health, emotional forgiveness, and forbearance.

**REVEREND PAUL ABERNATHY** (Story at 11:32-46:18)

Founder of the Neighborhood Resilience Project

The Neighborhood Resilience Project has examined the issue of community trauma, what to do about it, and what creates trauma-informed community development. The goal of community development is community well-being. Community members connect, take collective action, and generate solutions to agreed-upon problems. There must be a process of problematizing issues—moving issues into problems that can be addressed, encouraging cohesion, shared understanding, and collective action. We must presume that collective action is taken at the grassroots level and that policy impacts are relative to different marginalized communities. Well-being often evolves from collective grassroots-level action. In addition to creating these opportunities, community development considers whether people are healthy enough to sustain these opportunities, as crises and systematic oppression disproportionately impact marginalized communities. The process assesses individual, family, and community risk factors such as transgenerational/historical trauma and how family and community protective factors can be emphasized. Historical and transgenerational trauma can affect communities by creating a shared experience of suffering and layers of trauma. Community culture is then informed by trauma and the foundation of the community's worldview. Rev. Abernathy suggests that leaders balance problematizing and empowering through local facilitators that are culturally grounded and foster ownership of the information and following discussions. Delivering information and facilitating conversations are essential.

