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

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On Nov. 5 more than 11,000 scientists from over 150 nations officially declared a Global Climate Emergency

"The climate crisis has arrived and is accelerating faster than most scientists expected”...

"It is more severe than anticipated, threatening natural ecosystems and the fate of humanity.”

Found at: https://academic.oup.com/bioscience/advance-article/doi/10.1093/biosci/biz088/5610806
The interlinked climate-ecological-biodiversity crisis is already affecting and will increasingly destabilize Every Aspect of Society

The impacts will significantly harm Psychological and Psycho-Social-Spiritual Health!
The Climate-Ecosystem-Biodiversity Crisis is Unlike Any Modern Society Has Faced!

Even with aggressive emissions cuts and ecosystem restoration efforts:

• It will **worsen for decades** and increasingly **intermix fast-growing disasters with chronic and intense (toxic) stresses** offering less and less time for recovery.

• It will **traumatize and severely stress adults**, disrupt **social support networks** and **other protective systems**, **aggravate racism** and **other systemic oppressions**, and undermine the **social determinants of health**.

• Left unaddressed, the resulting **psychological and psycho-social-spiritual maladies** will be **as bad** as the physical impacts **and derail** emissions reductions.
How Climate Traumas Impact Mental & Physical Health, Community Wellbeing, and Climate Solutions

**Personal Mental Health Impacts of the Climate Crisis**
- Severe anxiety and depression
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Complicated grief
- Vicarious trauma
- Survival guilt
- Compassion fatigue
- Increased suicidal ideation

**Psycho-Social-Spiritual Impacts of the Climate Crisis**
- Hopelessness and helplessness
- Relationship distress/breakdown
- Drug, alcohol, tobacco abuse, overeating and obesity
- Spousal and child abuse and ACEs
- Racism, sexism, and other systemic oppressions
- We vs. Them tribalism and extremism
- Interpersonal crime and violence

**Stress-Aggravated or Induced Physical Illnesses and Diseases**

**Rising Costs to Families, Businesses and Governments**

**Fear-based Reactions That Threaten Society’s Ability to Cut Emissions and Limit the Climate Crisis**
Despite These Threats, Little Has Been Done to Prepare People for the Accelerating Traumatic Stressors to Come!
This is Very Important Because the Climate Crisis Also Offers The Opportunity for Profound Transformation!

It is a primal truth that, as painful as it can be, adversity is often our greatest impetus for learning, growth, and transformation.
Building Universal Capacity for Transformational Resilience Can:

- Prevent harmful psychological & psychosocial reactions
- Quickly alleviate those that occur
- And be a catalyst for new meaning, purpose, and hope!

Transformational Resilience

The ability to constructively cope with climate and other adversities and use them as transformational catalysts to learn, grow, and increase personal, social, and ecological wellbeing substantially above pre-crisis levels.

From Transformational Resilience, B. Doppelt (Greenleaf Publishing 2016)
Imagine the Benefits of a Global Preventative Transformational Resilience Movement That Helps:

• **All adults & youth** become **trauma-informed**, build on strengths, and enhance personal and collective **protective factors** so they can think and act in healthy ways even in **unhealthy conditions**.

• **All leaders** learn to **promote social narratives**, shift cultural norms and practices & make their groups **safe, healthy, just, and equitable resilience-enhancing entities**.

• **Everyone** learns how to use adversities as **transformational catalysts** to find new **meaning, purpose, and hope** in ways that motivates them to increase **social and ecological wellbeing** as a way to increase their **own sense of wellbeing**.
Resilience is Both an Individual *and* Group Endeavor

As Previously Discussed, at the Personal Level Resilience Involves:

- Basic sense of how traumatic stresses can *affect our mind, body, and behavior*

- Simple ways to regulate our nervous system and *calm our mind and body* when distressed

- The ability to *turn toward, learn from* and *find new meaning, purpose and hope* in adversities.
The Groups People Associate With Influence Their Capacity for Resilience

Personal resilience is more difficult when the norms that dominate the groups people associate with promote harmful thinking and behaviors.

Resilience thus also requires social narratives that foster personally, socially, and ecologically safe, healthy, and just norms and behaviors.
This is Why In an Era of Non-Stop Traumas & Toxic Stresses Organizations and Communities Must

Build a Culture of Transformational Resilience!

Prevention—not just trauma treatment—must be the focus!
Everyone Has a Role in Building a Culture of Transformational Resilience!

» K-12 and other levels of education
» Climate change professionals
» Civic leaders
» Faith-based organizations
» Mental health and other social service providers
» Health care organizations
» Senior programs
» Social justice and equity groups
» Environmental groups
» Community planning organizations
» Disaster planning and management
» Police and security officers
» Justice system
» All types of public agencies
» Private sector
» Elected officials
» Many other community and neighborhood leaders
The Three Pillars of Building a Culture of Transformational Resilience in Organizations and Communities

- Trauma-Informed and Resilience-Skilled Members
- Healthy Social Environment
- Enabling Culture
Pillar I

Trauma-Informed and Resilience-Skilled Members

• Build widespread understanding of how the trauma and toxic stress can affect the thinking, emotions, behaviors, safety, and health of individuals and groups—(help everyone become “trauma-informed”).

• Give every adult and youth the opportunity to learn and continually practice and improve “Presencing” and “Purposing” skills and tools (repetition is key).

• Help all private, non-profit, civic, and public leaders understand how groups can become trauma-organized and learn how to transition them to trauma-informed human resilience-enhancing social systems.
The 3 Pillars of Building Transformational Resilience in Organizations and Communities

**Trauma-Informed and Resilience Skilled Residents**

- Widespread knowledge of how the trauma & toxic stress can affect individuals & groups
- Every adult and youth has opportunity to learn & continually practice Presencing & Purposing skills.
- All organizational leaders know how to shift from trauma-organized to resilience-enhancing systems

**Healthy Social Environment**
Pillar II

Healthy Social Environment

- Robust working coalitions and ongoing communications among diverse civic, non-profit, public, private, and faith-based groups and organizations in the community.

- Ongoing opportunities for residents to meet neighbors, work together, and build and maintain robust social support networks.

- Regular opportunities for all residents to engage in activities that benefit the common good through neighborhood and community projects.

- Restorative Justice used as much or more than criminal justice.

- Healing Circles and other venues are available for people to share their distress and/or grieve after loss.
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- Every adult and youth has opportunity to learn & continually practice Presencing & Purposing skills and tools.
- All business & civic leaders know how to shift from trauma-organized to trauma-informed human resilience-enhancing systems.

**Healthy Social Environment**
- Robust working coalitions and ongoing communications among diverse civic, non-profit, public, and private groups and organizations in the community.
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**Enabling Culture**
Pillar III

Enabling Culture

- Community leaders jointly promote and role model social narratives emphasizing safe, healthy, equitable, just, and ecologically restorative responses to adversity.

- Willingness among local leaders to examine and alter long standing assumptions and beliefs about equity, justice, and many other issues.

- Leaders prioritize and model awareness and the elimination of ecological and climate impacts.

- Locally-designed approaches used to identify and address the root causes of problems rather than reacting to symptoms with quick or marginal fixes.

- Continued willingness to use adversities as catalysts to learn, grow, and find new meaning, direction and hope rather than doubling down on old approaches.
3 Pillars of Transformational Resilience in Organizations and Communities

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- Community prioritizes awareness of and the elimination of ecological and climate impacts.
- Locally-designed approaches used to identify & address the root causes of problems rather than quick and marginal fixes.
- Continued willingness to use adversities as catalysts to learn, grow, and find new sources of meaning, direction and hope rather than doubling down on old approaches.

**Question?** Which pillars and elements are strongest and weakest in your org/community?
The ‘Wheel of Change’ for Building a Culture of Transformational Resilience

**Organize**
small planning team, create vision, goals, strategy & slogans

**Assess**
levels of local resilience, types of resilience programs, pops. served, and social narratives

**Formalize**
establish *resilience councils* to strengthen existing & launch new resilience programs, promote new social narratives

**Embed**
Resilience education and skills training programs and social narratives in policies and SOPs

**Celebrate**
personalize, and highlight successes, involve more people, groups, and organizations

Adapted from *Leading Change to Sustainability* (Doppelt 2003) and *Self Healing Communities*, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
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Building Local Culture of Transformational Resilience

Adapted from Leading Change to Sustainability (Doppelt 2003) and Self Healing Communities, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Complete Community Resilience Inventory

Step 1: Assess Org/Community Capacity for Trans. Resilience

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

Step 2: Inventory Resilience Education & Training Programs

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

Step 3: Complete Gap Analysis

- Populations with and without access to age and demographically appropriate information and skills
Assess Existing Community Norms

The expected and acceptable behaviors of the majority of people in an organization, neighborhood, or community

Example

If most people in an organization or community do not smoke then not smoking is a “normative behavior”--an accepted or even expected behavior.
Assessing and Developing Social Narratives

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

Ask Organizational or Community Members:

• Where they get information and news
• Who’s perspective they trust the most
• What local groups do they hear from most
• What they believe is acceptable/expected & unacceptable thinking & actions

Summarize and Confirm Existing Narratives

• Write descriptions of narratives that dominate different units within the org, neighborhoods, and the community at large.
• Test them to determine if they are accurate

Develop and Continually Promote New Social Narratives

• Outline the thinking, responses, and behaviors that promote safety, health, social justice and equity, and capacity for Transformational Resilience.
• For each, develop a simple sentence to explain the thinking & action, e.g. “take a moment to calm yourself before reacting” and find a graphic to represent it
• Test the narrative with target audience before promoting it.
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**Create Urgency**
apprise diverse leaders about need, methods & benefits, of TR using multiple methods

**Building a Culture of Transformational Resilience**

Adapted from *Leading Change to Sustainability* (Doppelt 2003) and *Self Healing Communities*, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Creating Urgency for Change in the Organization or Community

Use multiple means and educational approaches focused on both the urgent need and benefits:

• Social media
• Letters to the editor
• Opinion editorials
• Media briefings
• Blog postings
• Brown bag lunches
• Workshops
• Presentations to different groups
• Meetings with senior executives or elected officials
• Many other means
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**Embed**
resilience education and skills training programs and social narratives in policies and SOPs

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The ‘Wheel of Change’ for Building a Culture of Transformational Resilience

**Self-Care**

**Organize** small planning team, create vision, goals, strategy & slogans

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**Create Urgency** apprise diverse leaders about need, methods & benefits, of TR using multiple methods

**Celebrate** personalize, and highlight successes, secure additional commitments

**Embed** resilience education and skills training programs and social narratives in policies and SOPs

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Examples

Tarpon Springs, Florida
https://www.peace4tarpon.org/

Walla Walla, WA
https://criresilient.org/

Fargo North Dakota
Article: http://feedproxy.google.com/~r/TheAtlanticCities/~3/M8Gfi7dOfoc/

More examples see ITRC Inventory of West Coast Resilience Programs:
http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/
Transformational Resilience can build capacity to constructively respond to human-caused disasters such as:

- Community or school violence
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Racism and other systemic oppressions
- Much more

Builds capacity to constructively respond to non-climate related disasters such as:

- Earthquakes, tsunamis

Helpful for people that experience any type of trauma or toxic stress:

- Parents and Children
- Educators
- Police and security officers
- Social service and mental health providers
- Disaster response practitioners
- Public health professionals
- Social equity and justice activists
- Climate and environmental professionals
Again--Imagine the Benefits of a Global Preventative Transformational Resilience Movement That Helps:

- **Everyone** becomes trauma-informed, builds on strengths & enhances protective factors so they can think & act in healthy ways even in unhealthy conditions.

- **All leaders** learn to promote social narratives, shift cultural norms and practices & make their groups safe, healthy, just, and equitable resilience-enhancing entities.

- **Everyone** learns how to use adversities as transformational catalysts to find new meaning, direction and hope in ways that motivate them to increase social and ecological wellbeing as a way of increasing their own sense of wellbeing.
1. **Get Informed**: Learn and continually practice the basic principles and skills.

2. **Connect With Like Minds**: Reach out to people in your organization, profession or community with similar interests to discuss need, methods, and benefits.

3. **Organize Local Planning Team**: Ask others in your organization, profession, or community to join you to develop vision, goals and strategies for a TR initiative.

4. **Launch Education and Training Programs**: Offer educational workshops on your own or invite other trainers to do so to begin to build widespread levels of TR.

**Join the ITRC:**
Sign up at: http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/intl-tr-coalition/
Let’s Build a Culture of Transformational Resilience in Organizations and Communities...

and Establish Trauma-Informed Human Resilience-Enhancing Societies for Climate Traumas & Toxic Stresses!
About the International Transformational Resilience Coalition (ITRC)

A global network of mental health, social service, education, climate, faith and other leaders working to raise awareness of the urgent need, methods, and benefits of proactively building universal capacity for Transformational Resilience for climate impacts.

- Led by national steering committee and regional steering committees in the PNW and CA.
- Webpage on ACEs Connection Network site and private Basecamp site for ITRC members.
- Major conferences held in different parts of the U.S. (2016, 2017, 2018)
- Private and public workshops held in the EU and throughout the U.S.
- Free quarterly webinars with participants often from nations worldwide.
- In 2018 inventoried and assessed resilience building programs across the west coast.
- In 2019 had SB 1037 introduced in Oregon leg. to make resilience education universal.
- **Recently issued Call to Action on the Climate Mental Health and Psycho-Social-Spiritual Emergency** – we ask all individuals and organizations to please endorse it!

This information and more found at: [http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/](http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/)
About the Presenter

Bob Doppelt founded and coordinates the International Transformational Resilience Coalition (ITRC). He is the director of The Resource Innovation Group. For almost a decade he directed the Climate Leadership Initiative (CLI) and taught systems thinking and global warming policy at the University of Oregon. Prior to that he ran a research institute and taught at Portland State University. His academic training is in both counseling psychology and environmental science. He is also a mindfulness teacher (Spirit Rock Meditation Center), and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Instructor (U. Mass. Medical School Center for Mindfulness). In 2015 he was named one of the world’s “50 Most Talented Social Innovators” by the World CRS Congress.

Bob is the author of a number of best-selling books on the process of systems-based individual, organizational, and community change.

His book Transformational Resilience (Greenleaf Publishing 2016) describes the need as well as “Presencing” and “Purposing” principles and skills for building personal and psycho-social-spiritual resilience for the impacts of climate change. His other books include Leading Change Toward Sustainability (2003), The Power of Sustainable Thinking (2008), From Me to We (2012), and Entering the Watershed (1993).