



Community is Medicine

**For the CBHL Member Roundtable:
Exploring the Global Climate Crisis and Community-based
Solutions to Build Mental Health, Wellness, and Resilience**

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By Bob Doppelt
Coordinator, International Transformational Resilience Coalition (ITRC)

Website: <http://itrcoalition.org>

On top of today's many other traumatic stressors we must grasp that we are in the initial stages of a rapidly accelerating

Climate-Ecosystem-Biodiversity “Catastrophe”

that is Already and will Increasingly alter Every Aspect of Society!



Left unaddressed this catastrophe will create an Epidemic of Traumas

We must Proactively build population-level “Transformational Resilience”

not just treat individuals after they are traumatized, react to the next disaster, or hope that enhancing external physical resilience is sufficient.

Left Unaddressed the Result Will be a Global *Epidemic* of Individual, Community, and Societal Distresses and Traumas

Psychological, Emotional, and Spiritual “Distress”

“Individual Trauma“

“Community Trauma”

“Societal Trauma”

Left unaddressed, the C-E-B catastrophe will be
the greatest societal trauma modern society has ever experienced!

We Must Proactively Build Population-Level Capacity For “Transformational Resilience”

When suffering is caused by previously unseen **external forces** that have **no end point**, **resolution**, or simple **cure** the priority must be to help **everyone** develop the capacity to...

- **buffer themselves** from and **push back against** the stressors and...
- find **constructive** new sources of **meaning**, **purpose**, **courage** and **hope**.



“Transformational Resilience”

Help **everyone** strengthen their capacity for:

Presencing (or self-regulation) to calm their body, mind, emotions, and behaviors in the midst of adversities...

and

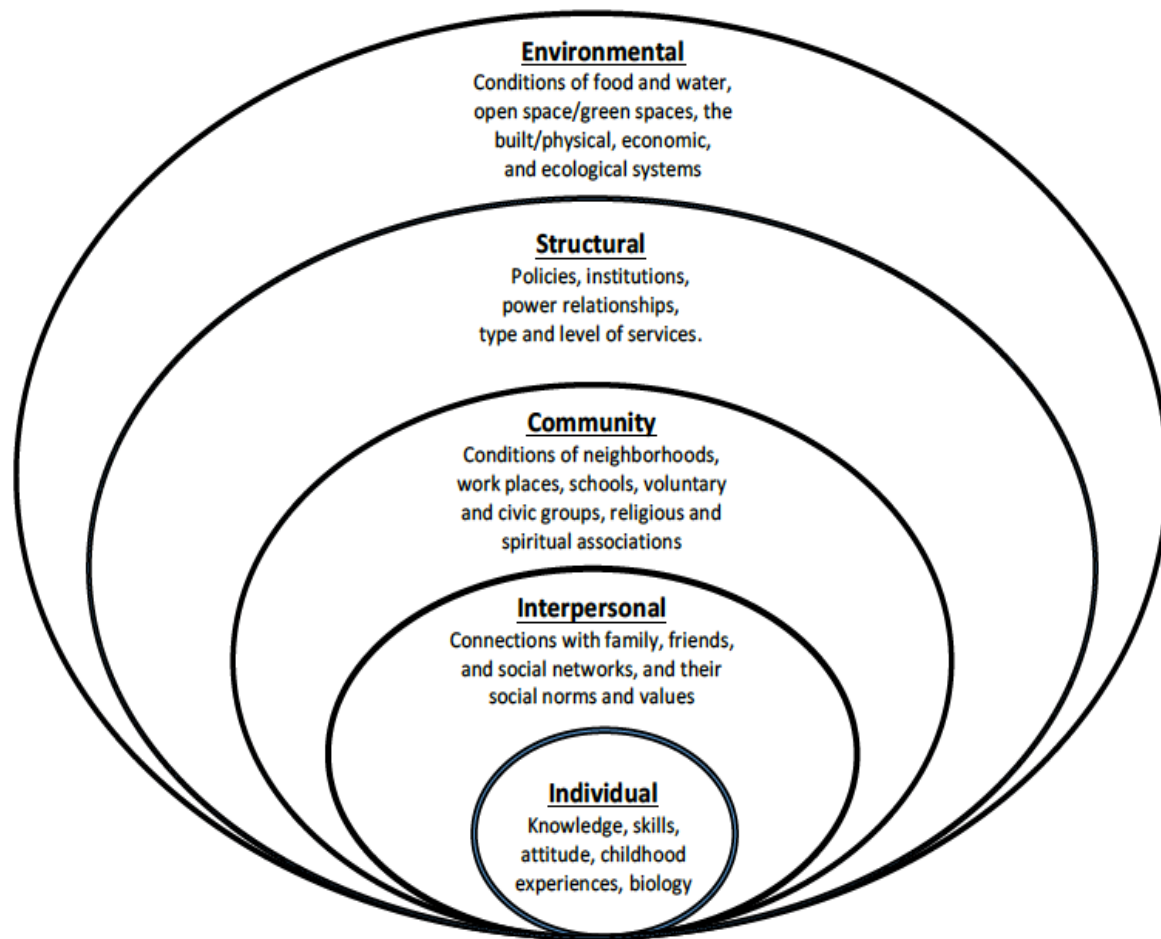
Purposing (or adversity-based growth) to find new sources of meaning, purpose, hope, and courage in life.



The combination can rebuild faith in the future!

The Capacity for Transformational Resilience Requires Addressing Interacting Individual, Family, Social, Economic, Physical/Built and Ecological Factors

The Social-Ecological Model



Addressing these multisystemic factors requires working at the

population level

by actively engaging

neighborhoods and communities

If Done Effectively We Will See How

“Community is Medicine!”



The US and other nations are experiencing an epidemic of mental health & psychosocial conditions.

The Noted Pioneer Clinical Psychologist Dr. George Albee Once Said:

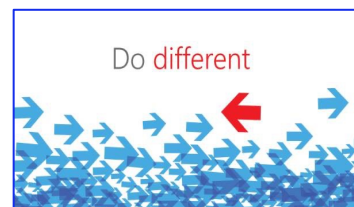
“No epidemic has ever been resolved by paying attention to the treatment of the affected individual.”

To address today's mental health epidemic—and prevent future ones due to the C-E-B catastrophe-- we must expand our nation's approach to mental health by embracing a

Public Health Approach

to

Mental Wellness and Resilience



A Public Health Approach to Mental Wellness & Resilience

- Focuses on the **Entire Population**--- not merely on individuals with symptoms of pathology or high-risk groups--though they must be included by using “proportionate universalism” and “life-course” approaches:

Our approach must “**Leave No One Behind.**”

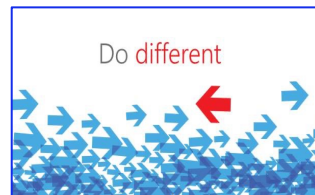
- Prioritizes **Preventing Mental Health Problems Before They Occur** --- not merely reacting to or treating them after they emerge—and integrates group and community-minded Healing methods into the prevention strategies:

We must always remember that “**Prevention is the Cure!**”

- Does so by strengthening “**Protective Factors**” –social supports, resilience skills, habits, resources etc. that build and sustain healthy thinking, behaviors and responses -- not just fixing deficits or treating symptoms of pathology:

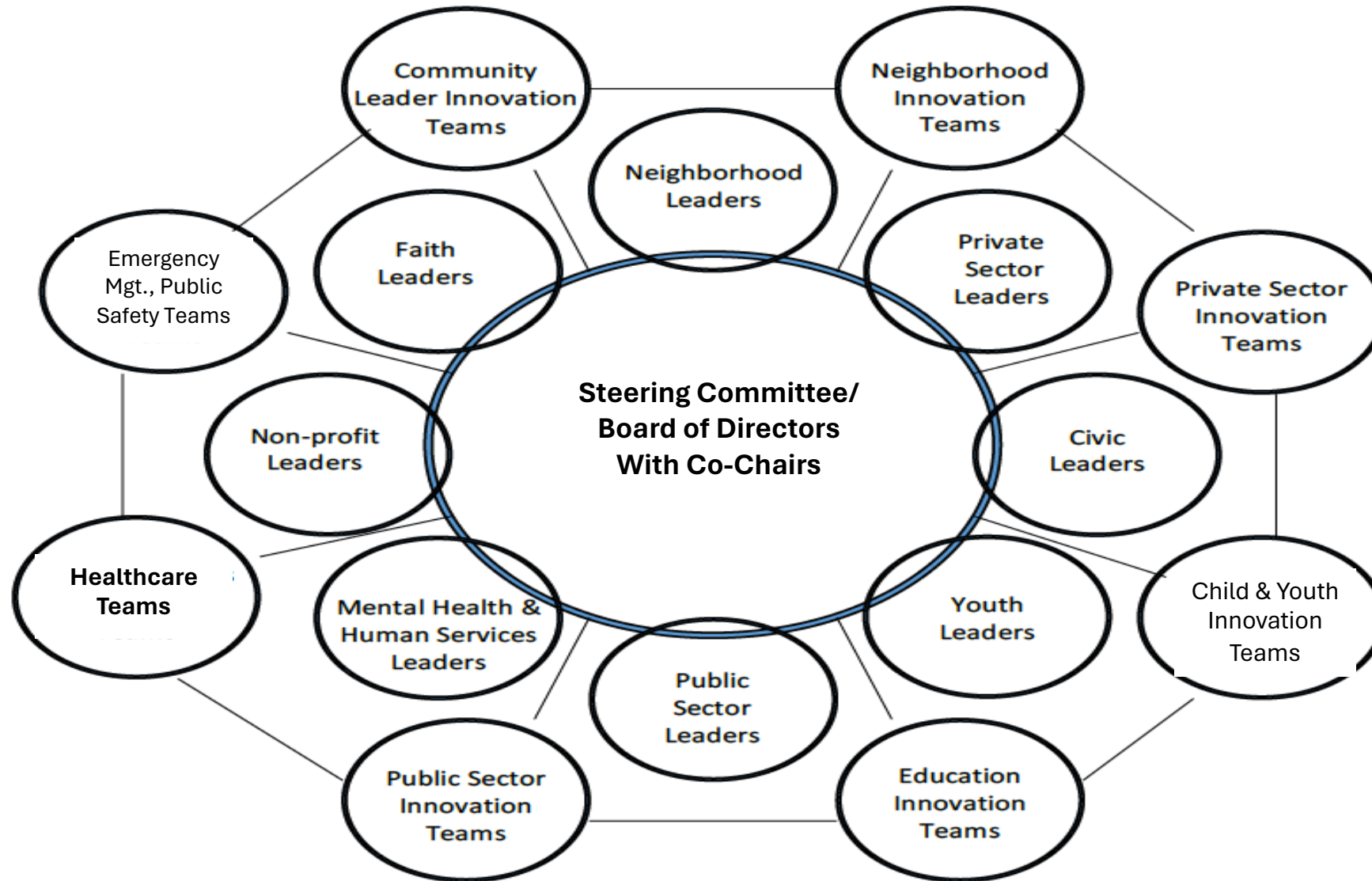
We must emphasis “**Building Social Connections, Skills, and Resources**”

- Research and ample experience shows that mental wellness and resilience **can be enhanced** and mental health problems can be **prevented & healed**.
- And that the **Most Effective Way** to do so is to:
 - establish the **“Social Infrastructure”** in communities—that can be called **Resilience Coordinating Networks (RCNs)**...
 - that engages a **broad and diverse array** of local residents, civic groups, non-profit, private, and public organizations...
 - in planning and implementing **locally chosen & tailored strategies** that strengthen the capacity of residents for mental wellness and resilience.



The Social Infrastructure Needed: A “Sample” Resilience Coordinating Network (RCN)

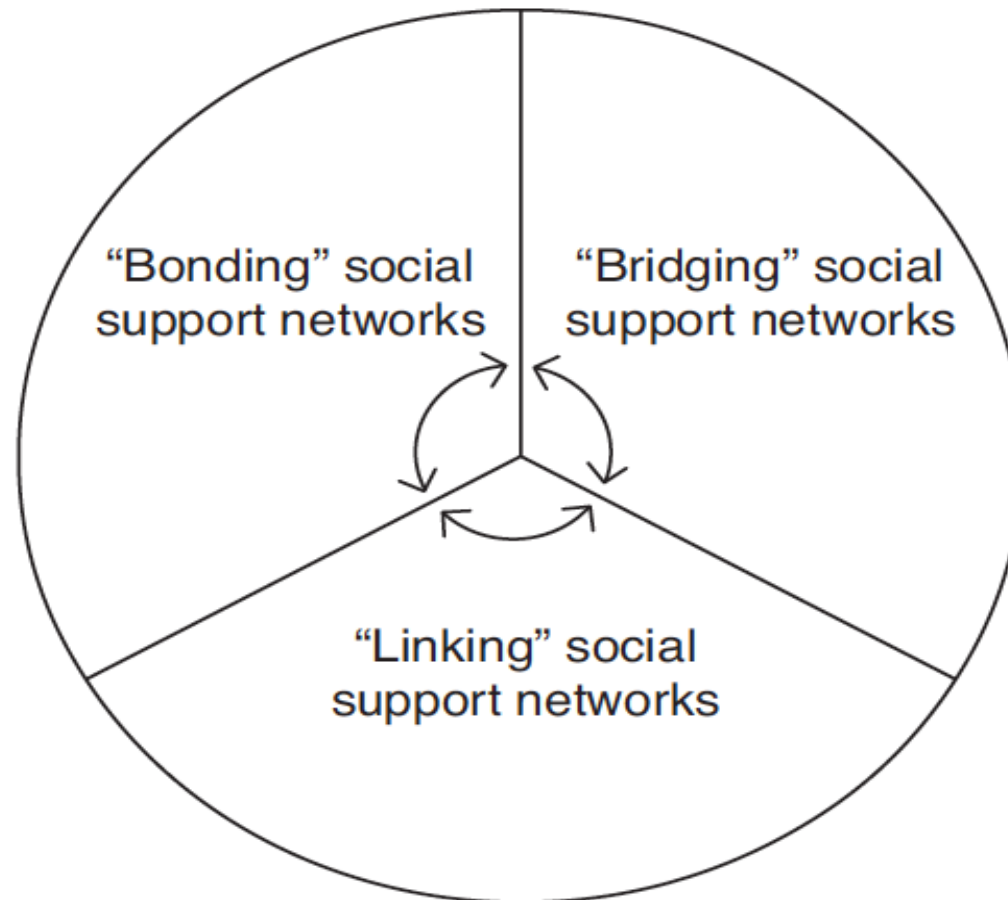
“Well-Coordinated Decentralization” using a “Ring Team” or “Hub and Spoke” Approach Gets Us Out of Our Silos to Plan and Work Together for the Common Good



Our Research Identified Five Foundational Content Areas Required to Build Population-Level Capacity for Mental Wellness and Transformational Resilience

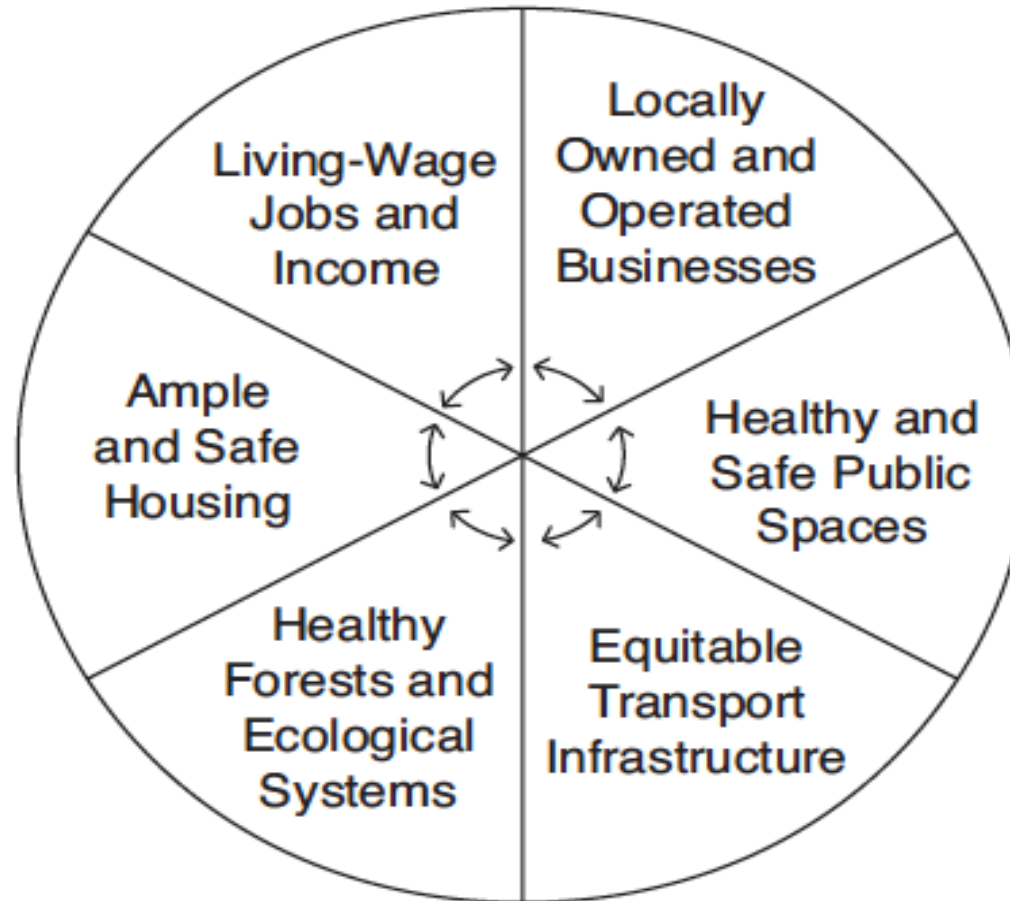
By Far the Most Important:

Build “Strong” and “Weak” Social Connections and Supports Across Cultural, Economic, and Geographic Boundaries in the



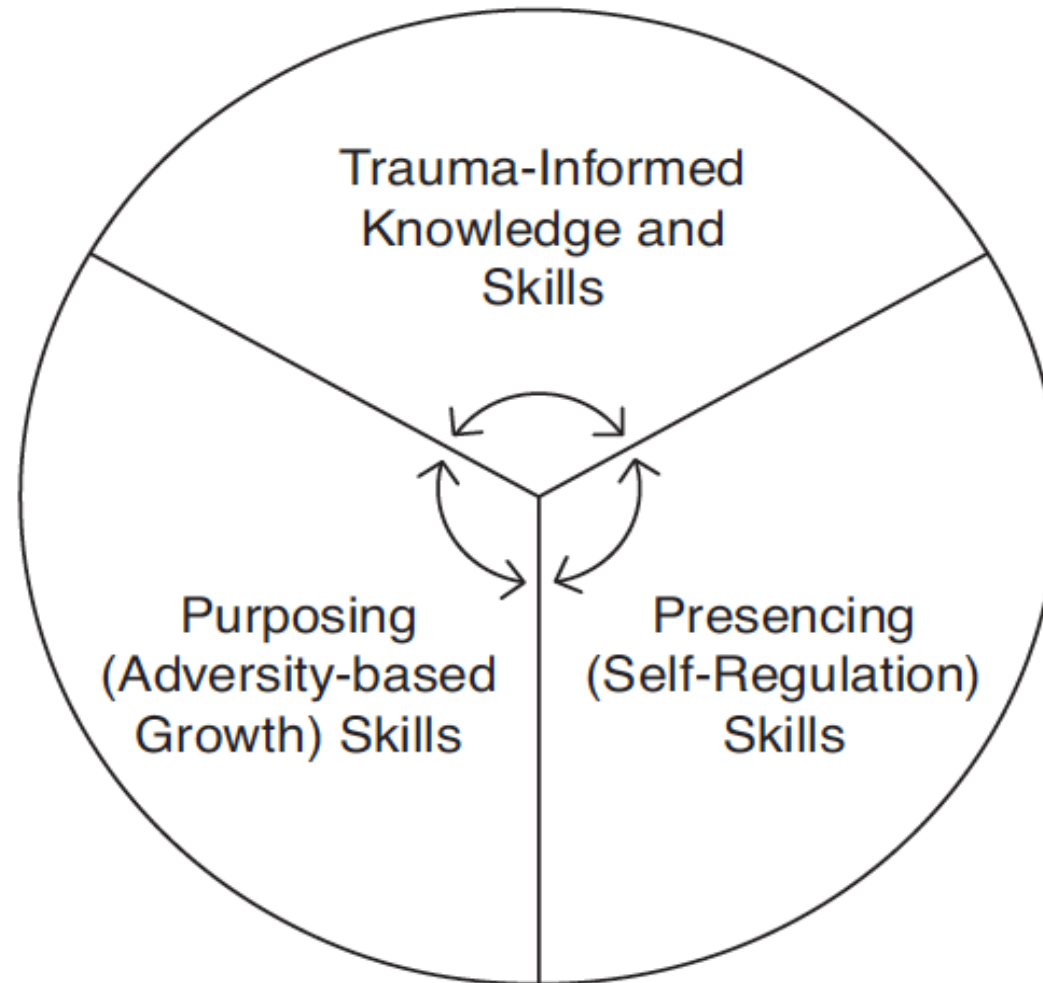
**The Five Foundational Content Areas Required to
Build Population Capacity for Mental Wellness and Transformational Resilience**

**Ensure a “Just Transition” by Engaging Residents in Creating Low-Emissions
Climate-Resilient Physical/Built, Economic, and Ecological Conditions**



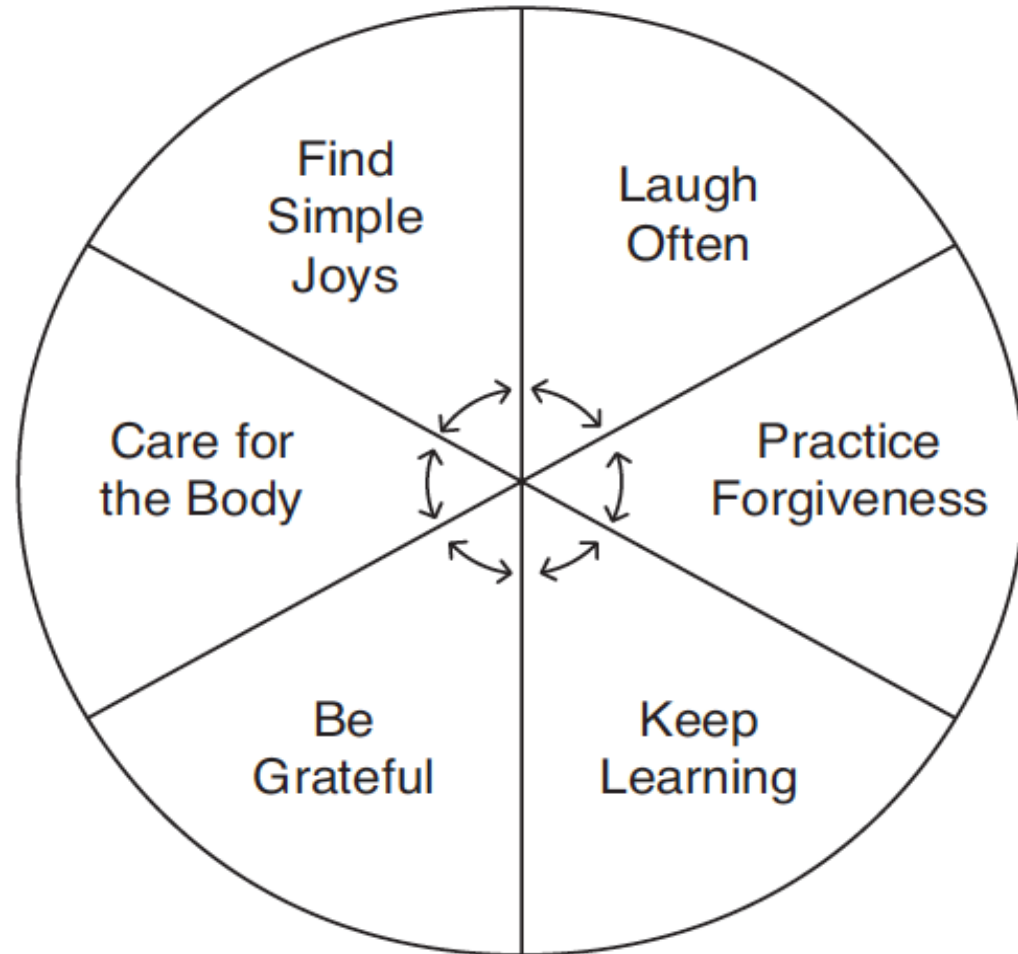
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Foster Universal “Literacy” About Mental Wellness and Resilience:
Help Everyone Become “Trauma and Resilience-Informed”



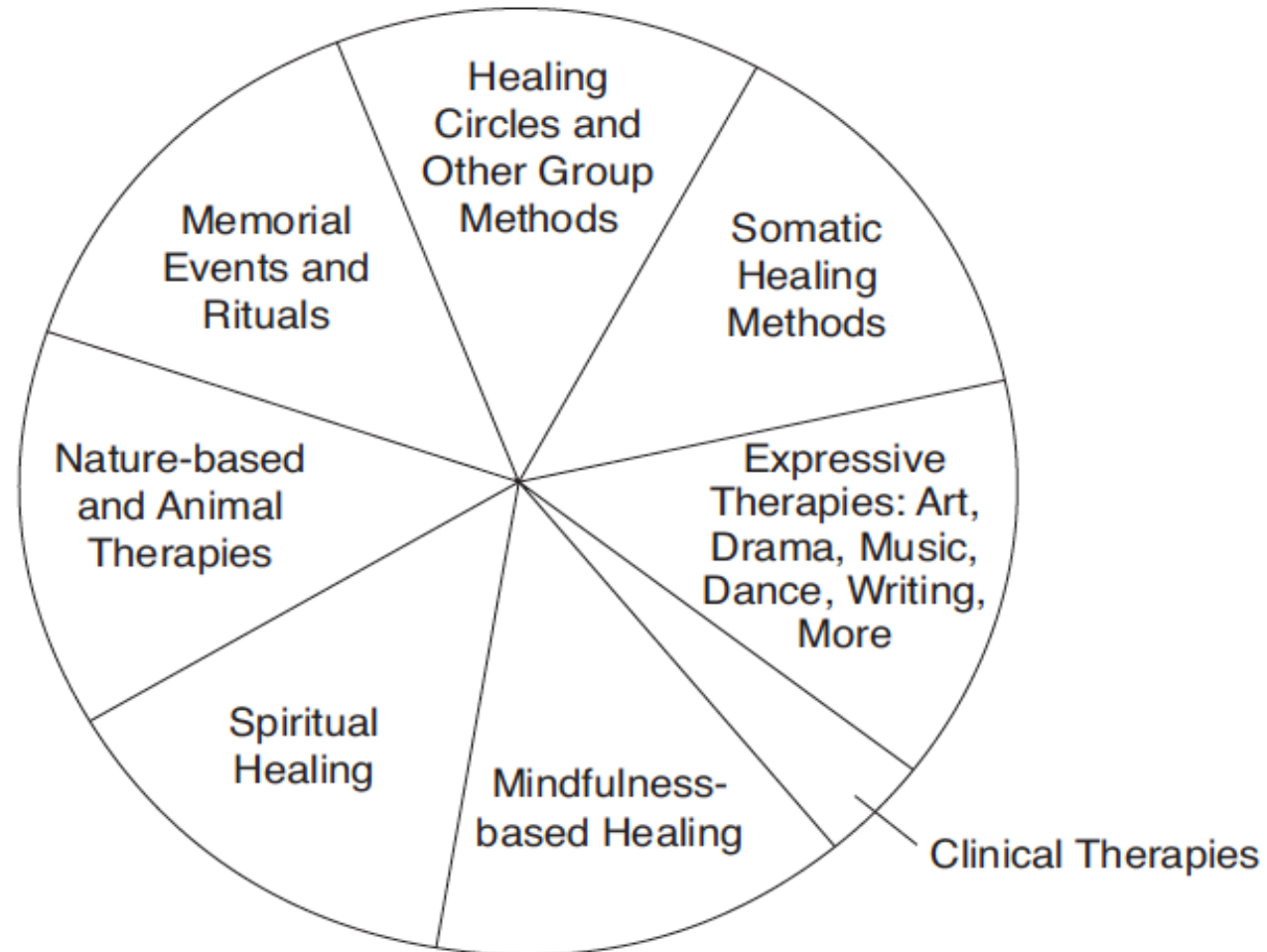
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Help Residents Regularly Engage in Specific Practices
that Enhance Mental Wellness and Resilience



**The Five Foundational Content Areas Required to
Build Population Capacity for Mental Wellness and Transformational Resilience**

**Establish Ongoing Age and Culturally-Appropriate Mostly Peer-Led
Group and Community-Minded Programs to Heal Trauma**



These interventions move us beyond merely treating mental health symptoms after they appear and reacting to the next crisis and disaster to show how

“Community is Medicine!”





COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

Community Resilience Initiative

- Nonprofit located in Walla Walla, Washington
- Becky Turner, Director of Community Engagement
- Providing nationwide training in the science of trauma and resilience

PAPER TIGERS

One high school's unlikely success story.



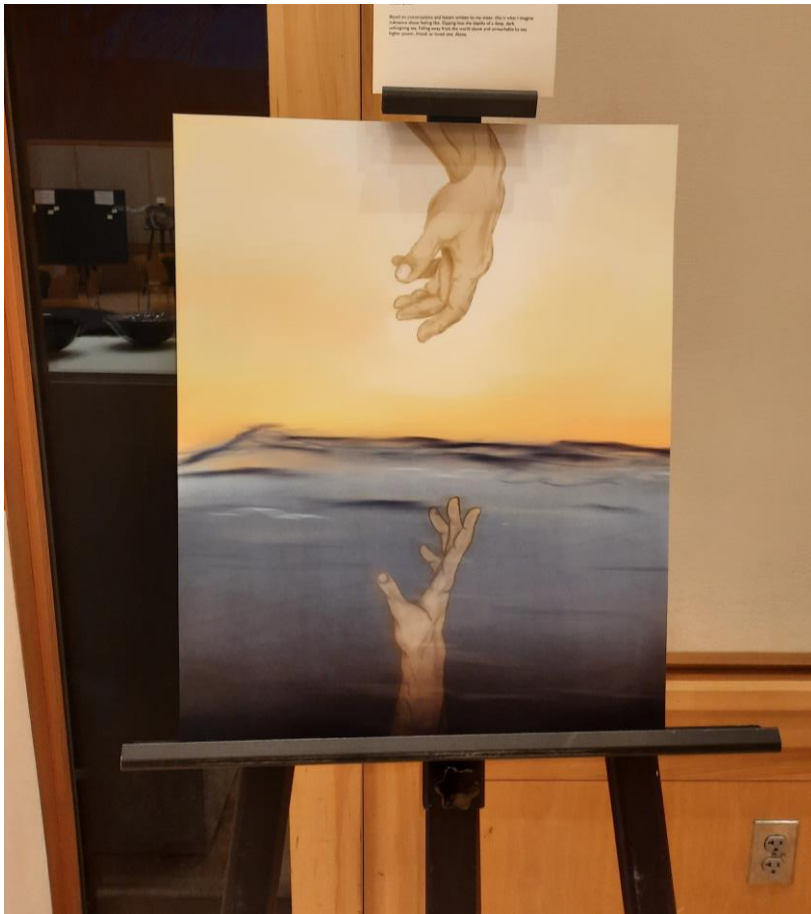
Responding to a Community Need

- Lincoln Alternative High School in Walla Walla: low graduation rates, low attendance rates, and high rates of student violence.
- Originally called the Children's Resilience Initiative, CRI founder Teri Barila worked with faculty, educational services district, juvenile courts, parents, curriculum developers, and independent researchers.
- Goal: use a multi-disciplinary trauma-informed framework to work with the students.
- Result: increased graduation and attendance rates, decreased violence.
- The results of CRI's work is highlighted in the documentary Paper Tigers.

Beyond Paper Tigers

- This framework could work for others as it had for Walla Walla.
- Children's Resilience Initiative was eventually transformed into a 501c3 nonprofit, the Community Resilience Initiative.
- Three primary pillars: training, community engagement, and products.
 - Nationwide certificated training programs in person or online.
 - Community engagement still based in Walla Walla.
 - Products include things like a deck of cards to teach children and adults about trauma and resilience.





Art shown at Together23
A Trauma-Informed Recovery Event
hosted by Whitman College

Engaging with the Community

- Ensuring **all sectors** are represented.
 - Education (public and private), education-adjacent positions (such as nutrition staff), criminal justice system, local government, nonprofits, tribes, enclaves, and the private sector (wineries and local businesses).
- Ensuring the **needs of the community** drive the work.
- Ensuring a **culturally responsive**, local response to increase engagement and buy-in.
- Welcoming everyone to the table with a regular, predictably scheduled **community of practice**.

CRI's Approach

- **Educating** about the health effects of ACEs and other adverse experiences (such as racism, pandemics, and climate change).
- **Building resilience** on an individual, community, and collective level.
- **Focusing on whole-person wellness:** psychological, emotional, physical, and behavioral.
- **Decreasing isolation** and loneliness by actively – and consistently – bringing new people and groups into to the discussion.

