# The Urgent Need for a Public Health Approach in Communities to Build Population Mental Wellness and Resilience for the Climate Catastrophe

For the APHA Climate and Mental Health Workshop
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We must grasp that we are in the midst of a rapidly accelerating

***Climate-Ecosystem-Biodiversity "Catastrophe"***

that is *Already* and will *Increasingly* affect ***Every Aspect of Society*****!**

The climate catastrophe is a ***Public Health Crisis!***

We must ***Think*** and ***Respond Proactively*** through a ***Population-Lens***,

not merely react to individual or group problems one-at-a-time.

# Governments, Non-profits, and All Others Must Grasp the Profound Psychological, Emotional, and Behavioral Health Impacts

**"Distress"**

**"Individual Trauma"**

**"Community Trauma"**

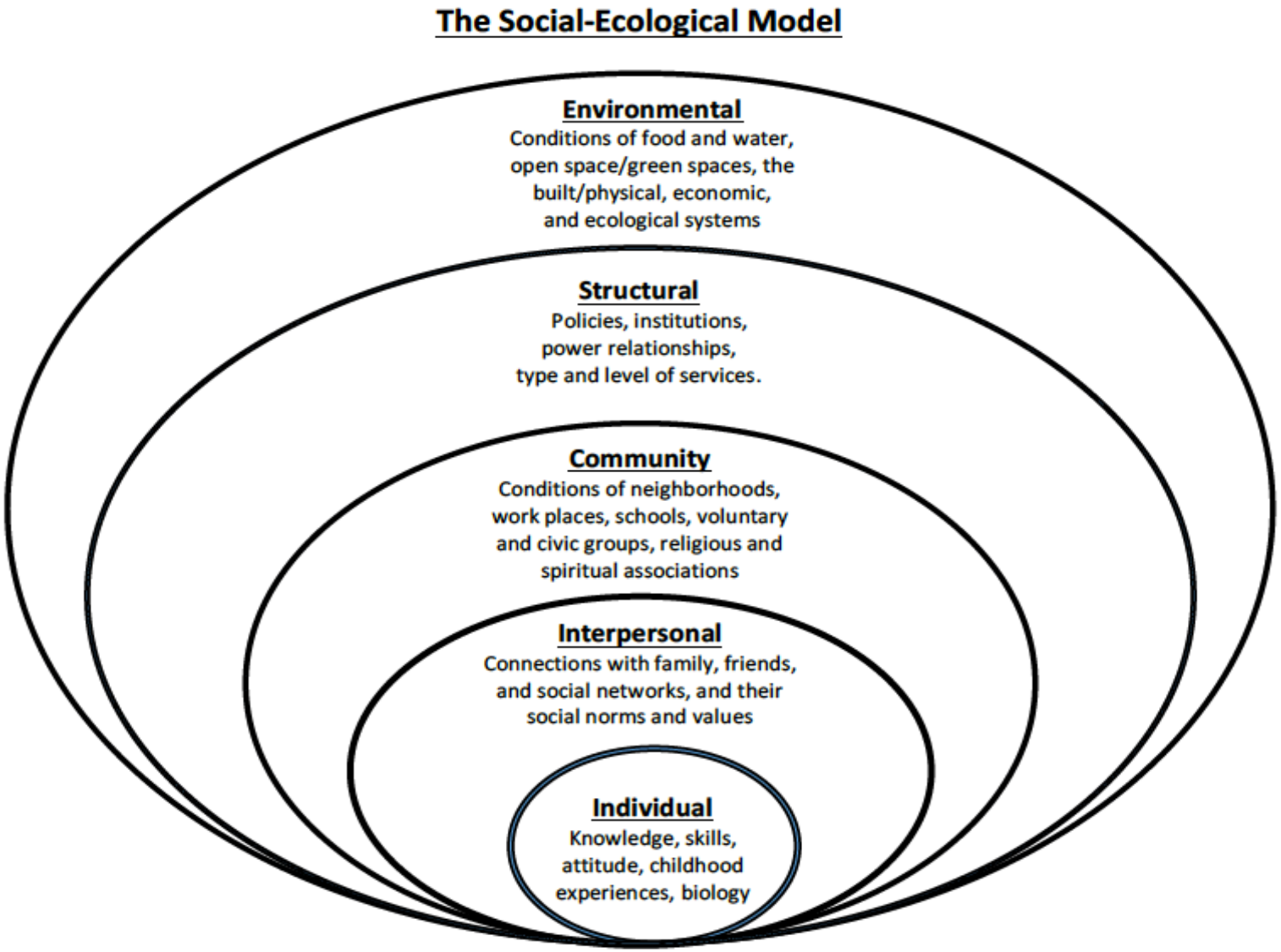
**"Societal Trauma"**

Left unaddressed, the climate catastrophe will be

**the greatest societal trauma modern society has ever experienced!**

# Widespread Traumas also *Block Climate Solutions*!

# Climate Traumas—and Most Others Today--are Generated by Interacting Individual, Family, Social, Economic, Physical/Built and Ecological Factors



## 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."

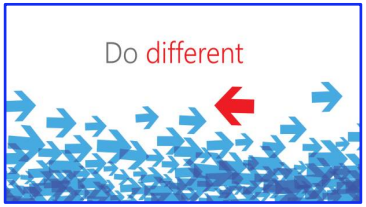
Individualized mental health services will remain important, but ***cannot address*** today's problems, and have ***NO CHANCE*** of addressing the traumas speeding our way.

Need a

# *Public Health Approach*

to

# Mental Wellness and Transformational Resilience



# A Public Health Approach to Mental Wellness & Resilience

- Takes a **population-level approach** --- not one merely focused on individuals with symptoms of pathology or high risk groups--though they are included by using "proportionate universalism" and "life-course" approaches:

Our mantra must be "***Leave No One Behind***."

- Prioritizes **preventing 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!"***

- Focuses on strengthening "**protective factors**" –social supports, resilience skills, norms, habits, resources etc. that build and sustain healthy thinking, behaviors and systems -- not just fixing deficits or treating symptoms of pathology:

Our emphasis must be on ***"Building Strengths and Resources"***

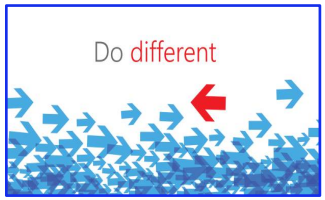
- Research shows that mental wellness and transformational resilience ***can* be enhanced**.

- Research also shows the **most effective way** to do so is to:

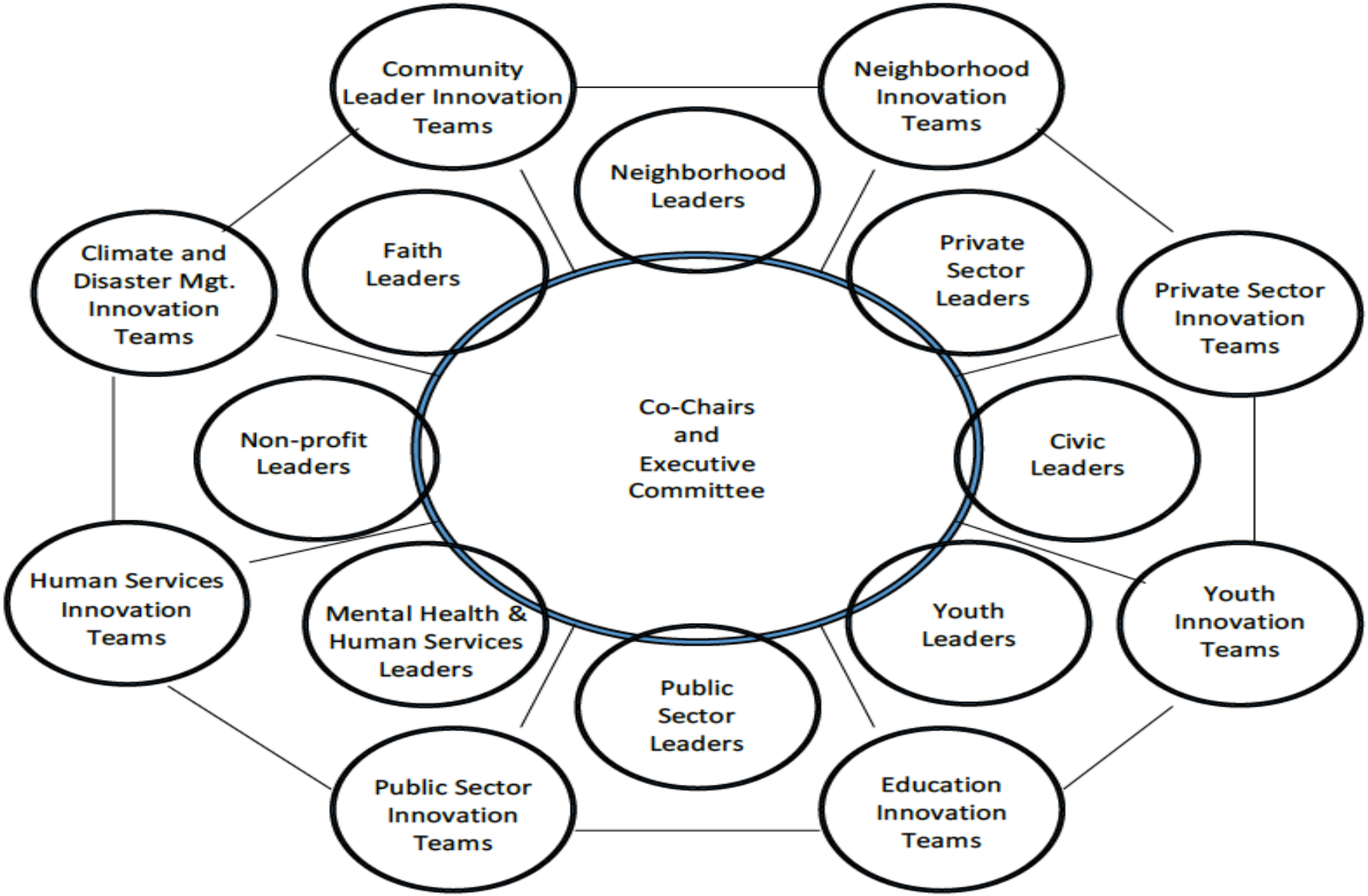
  - establish the **"social infrastructure"** in communities—often called a **Resilience Coordinating Network (RCN)**--

  - that engages a **broad and diverse array** of local grassroots and neighborhood leaders, civic groups, non-profit, private, and public organizations

  - in jointly planning and implementing **multisystemic strategies** that strengthen the capacity for mental wellness and resilience among ***all*** residents.

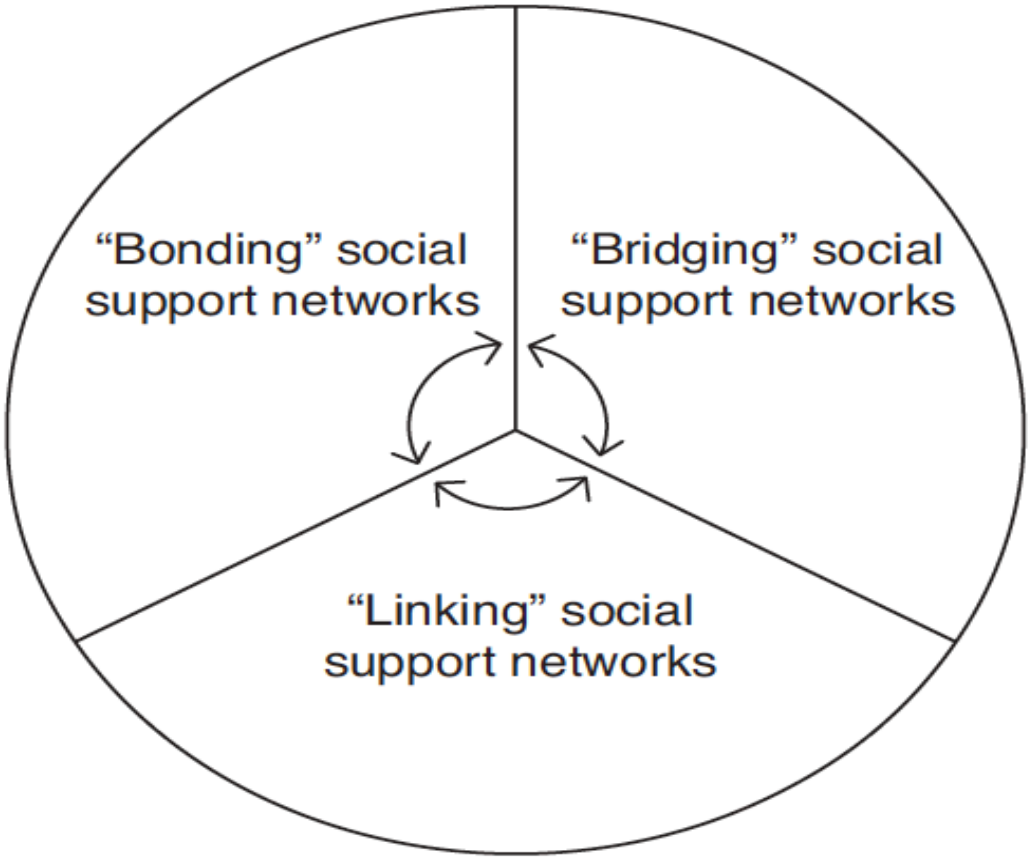


# A Sample "Ideal" Resilience Coordinating Network (RCN):
## 'Well-Coordinated Decentralization' using a 'Ring Team' or 'Hub & Spoke' approach



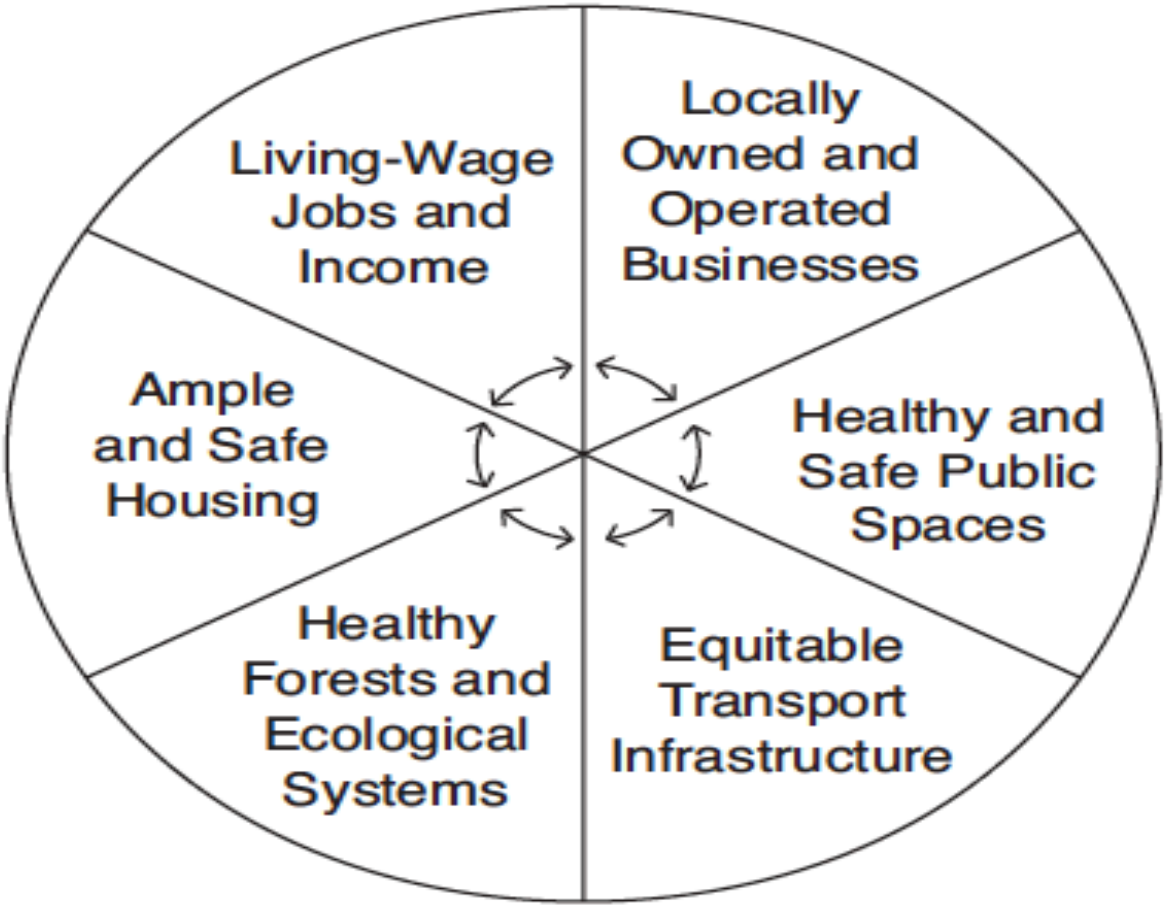
# Our Research Identified *Five Foundational Areas* Required to Build Population Capacity for Mental Wellness and Resilience for the Climate Catastrophe

## Build Social Connections Across Cultural, Economic, and Geographic Boundaries in the Community



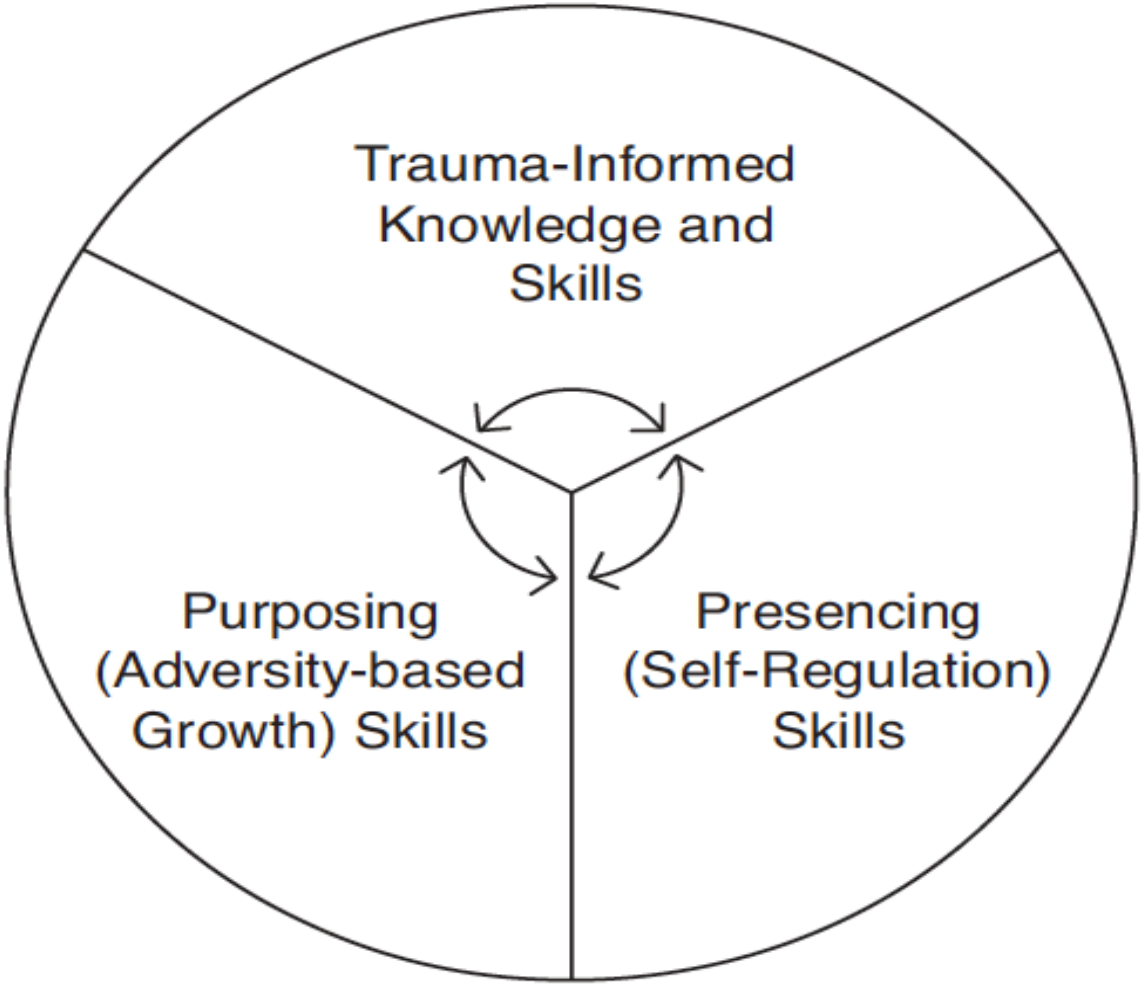
# The Five Foundational Areas Required to Build Population Capacity for Mental Wellness and Resilience for the Climate Catastrophe

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



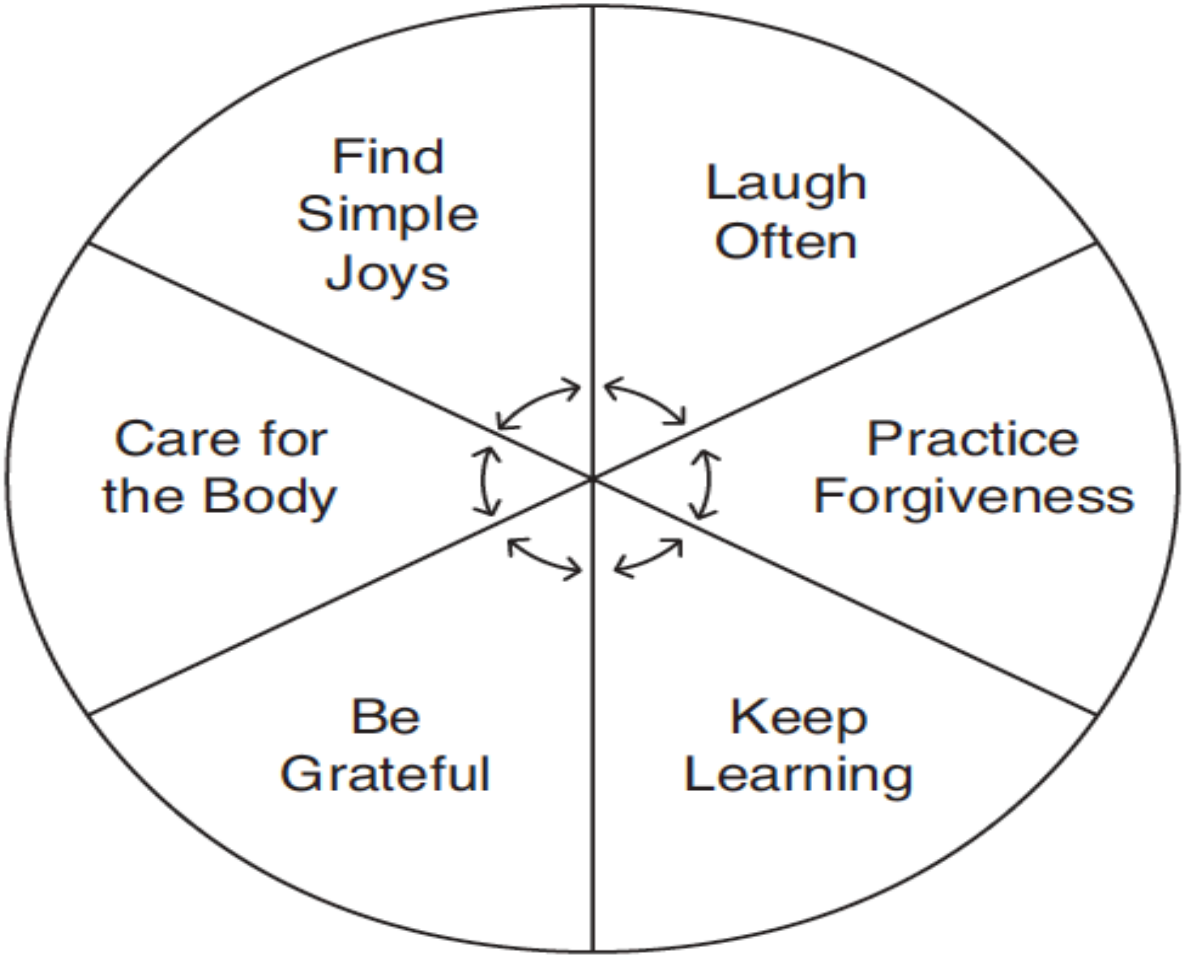
# The Five Foundational Areas Required to Build Population Capacity for Mental Wellness and Resilience for the Climate Catastrophe

## Foster Universal "Literacy" About Mental Wellness and Resilience: Help Everyone Become "Trauma and Resilience-Informed"



# The Five Foundational Areas Required to Build Population Capacity for Mental Wellness and Resilience for the Climate Catastrophe

## Help Residents Regularly Engage in Specific Practices that Enhance Individual and Collective Mental Wellness and Transformational Resilience



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

## A Few Examples of US "Resilience Coordination Networks"

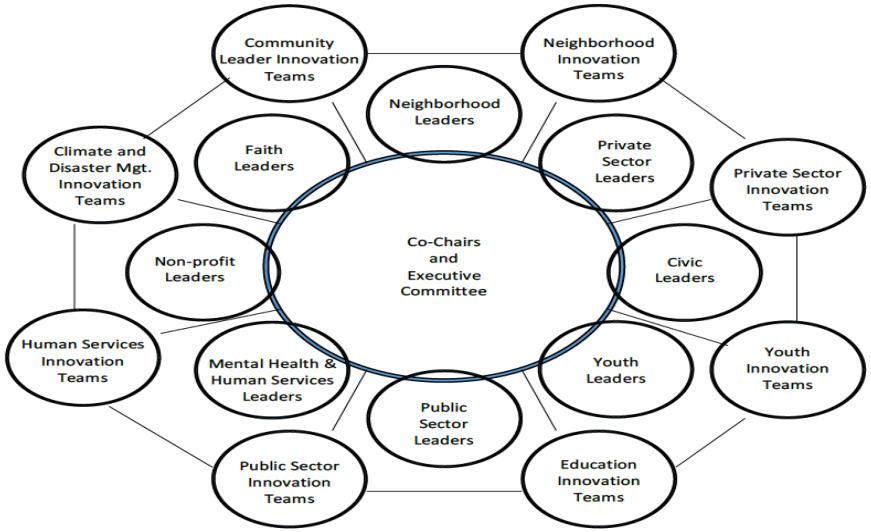
- North Carolina SmartStart Program has 40 underway focused on "4 ACEs": Adverse Child, Community, Climate, and Cultural Experiences.
- Community Resilience Initiative, Walla Walla, Washington.
- San Francisco Neighborhood Empowerment Network (the NEN)
- Peace4Tarpon in Tarpon Springs, Florida
- Putnam County Community Resilience Coalition, New York (youth focused).
- Over 200 associated with MARC: Mobilizing Action for Resilient Communities.

- **Only a few** of the existing initiatives frame their work as a **public health approach**.
- **Each is unique** and **none** address **all five** of the core foundational areas.
- **Only a few** are explicitly focused on the **climate emergency.**

But if the existing initiatives are **strengthened**,
and **thousands** of **new** community initiatives are **launched**,
we ***CAN*** build universal capacity for transformational resilience!

# How Can You Support an Existing Resilience Coordinating Network or Help Form New Ones in Your State/County/Community?

Sample RCN




## The ITRC runs a Community of Practice (CoP)

## We will start a CoP for public agency personnel in the fall:

## Contact us if interested

# New Policies are Needed to Fund and Support RCNs

The ITRC worked to develop the bi-partisan

## "Community Mental Wellness and Resilience Act of 2023"

It was introduced ***today*** in the US House by
Representatives Paul Tonko (D-NY), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Don Bacon (R-NE),
Mary Peltola (D-AK), and Kathy Castor (D-FL)

Senate companion bill will be introduced by Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA),
Jeff Merkley (D-OR), and co-sponsors.

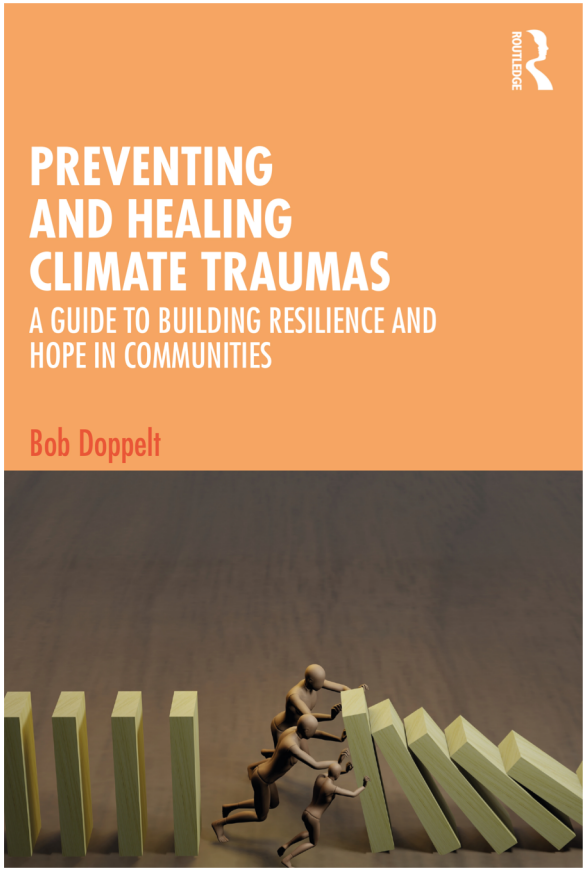
**The "CMWRA of 2023" is endorsed by a growing list of 130 national, state, and local organizations!**

**Similar Policies are Needed at the State, County, and Local Levels**

**and in**

**Other Nations!**

# My New Book Describes the Issues




**Go to Routledge.com insert name of book and code AEV23 for 20% discount**

## Some Testimonials

"The health of our planet is inherently connected to our well-being….Bob Doppelt's new book offers an essential blueprint towards building a healthier future in the places where we live."

**Antonis Kousoulis,** *director for England and Wales, Mental Health Foundation, UK*

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"This important new book from Bob Doppelt helps us mitigate the often invisible outcomes of global warming, including anxiety, depression, PTSD, and trauma… it can help us build the capacity to manage mental wellness, recover from current and forthcoming shocks, and ensure equitable outcomes."

**Daniel P. Aldrich,** *director of the Security and Resilience Studies Program at Northeastern University, and author of* Building Resilience *and* Black Wave

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"Ultimately, the responsibility for preventing and healing climate trauma falls to family, friends, and neighbours, the three supportive social units of our lives…This new book by Bob Doppelt will serve us well."

**Howard Lawrence,** *Abundant Community Edmonton coordinator, City of Edmonton, Canada*

**For more information contact the**
**International Transformational Resilience Coalition (ITRC)**

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Website: http://itrcoalition.org