



Protecting wellbeing in times of climate change & increased disaster exposure

Professor Lisa Gibbs

Acknowledgement



Artwork by Frances Belle Parker

Presentation Outline



Climate change and
multi-disaster
exposure



Post disaster wellbeing
recovery



Tailoring to local
context



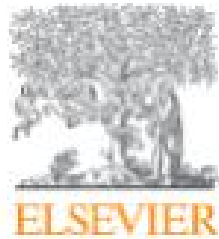
Useful resources and
training available

Climate change





More frequent, severe and overlapping disasters





Review

Long term mental health trajectories after disasters and pandemics: A multilingual systematic review of prevalence, risk and protective factors

[Elizabeth A. Newnham](#)^{a,b,c}  , [Enrique L.P. Mergelsberg](#)^{a,b}, [Yanyu Chen](#)^a, [Yoshiharu Kim](#)^d,
[Lisa Gibbs](#)^{e,f}, [Peta L. Dzidic](#)^{a,b}, [Makiko Ishida DaSilva](#)^d, [Emily Y.Y. Chan](#)^{g,h,c}, [Kanji Shimomura](#)^{d,i},
[Zui Narita](#)^d, [Zhe Huang](#)^g, [Jennifer Leaning](#)^c

Global distribution of longitudinal disaster mental health studies (k=204; 175 cohorts)

(Newnham et al., 2022)





Exposure to **multiple disasters increases risk** of poor physical and mental health

Leppold et al. Public health implications of multiple disaster exposures (2022)

Underlying principles for Psychological First Aid

(Hobfoll et al 2007)



A sense of safety



Calming



A sense of self-
and community
efficacy



Connectedness



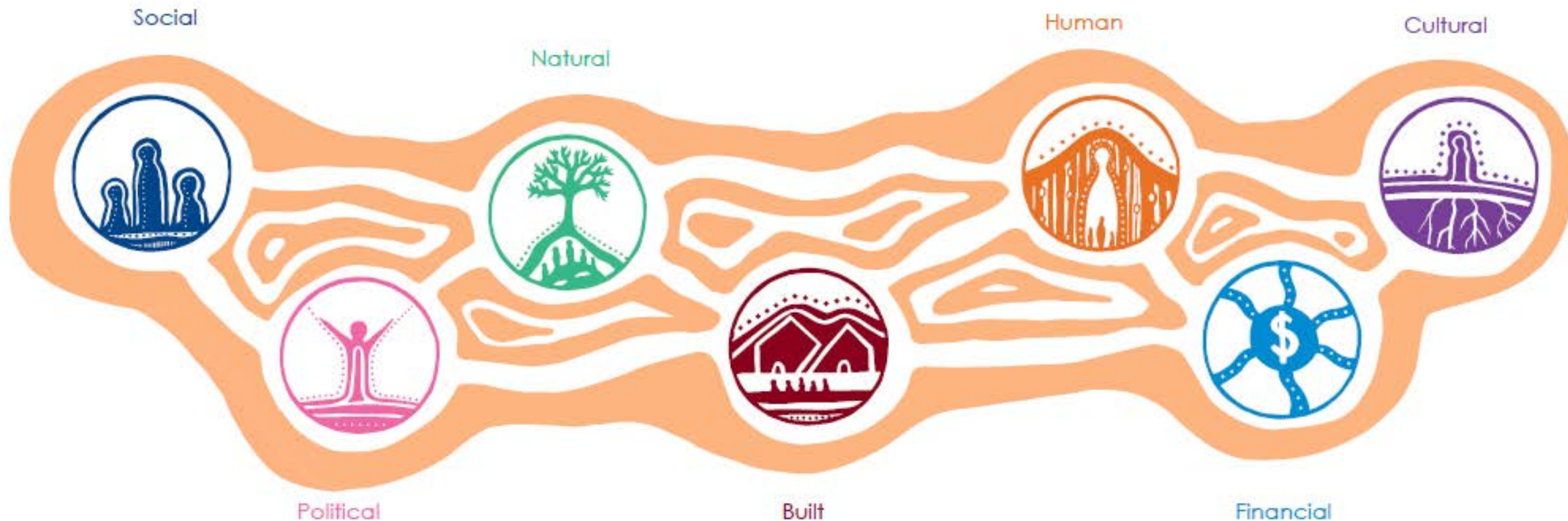
Hope



Post disaster stressors can further undermine mental health and wellbeing

Bryant et al 2021. The dynamic
course of psychological outcomes...





Interconnectedness of Disaster Recovery Capitals

Artwork by Frances Belle Parker, from the Guide to Disaster Recovery Capitals

recoverycapitals.org.au

Guide to Disaster **Recovery Capitals (ReCap)**





'**Social capital**' refers to the connections, reciprocity and trust among people and groups. There are three types of social capital: **bonding** (strong ties between similar people, e.g. family and friends), **bridging** (looser ties between a broader range of people, often cutting across race, gender and class) and **linking** (ties connecting people with those in power, such as decision-makers)²³.



Relationships and support

What we know

Social ties matter in people's recovery – they are generally helpful, but it is complex. Family, friends and neighbours are important sources of support²⁴⁻⁴⁰, and providing support to loved ones can also support resilience^{24,41}.

People with more social relationships generally have better mental health in recovery⁴². Wellbeing may be compromised if friends and family are depressed⁴², have high property loss⁴² or leave the area following a disaster^{20,42}. Where disasters cause loss of life, the mental health impacts extend beyond the family to friends and community members, with particularly deep impacts where there are multiple deaths within a community⁴³.








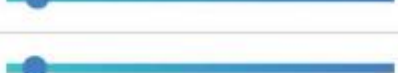



Consider

- ▶ Acknowledge the support people are providing to each other.
- ▶ Provide community information sessions about post-trauma support strategies to help people take care of themselves and others.
- ▶ If appropriate, create spaces for memorials and anniversary events in which people can reflect on community members they have lost.

Working with community recovery committees

COMMUNITY RECOVERY COMMITTEE SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL: STEP 1 – IDENTIFY THE PREFERRED MODEL

Disaster affected communities can use this tool to identify how particular elements of CRCs could be structured to best suit their community.

FORMATION AND SCOPE		
One well defined location		District level, multiple locations
Single issue focus		Whole of recovery focus
Pre-existing group		Completely new group
Self-appointed group		Formal election process
No clear objectives for the group		Clear, deliberate goals and parameters of the group
Do not manage projects		Manage all projects
Group formed / adapted very soon after the disaster event		Group formed / adapted some time after the disaster event
No financial responsibility		Complex financial responsibility
No legal status of group		Clear legal status of group

Foundations in Disaster Recovery



- Short course specifically designed for practitioners, volunteers and community members who are, or will be, working in post-disaster settings
- Combines the rigour of academic research with a focus on practical application
- Scholarship places offered
- Upcoming cohorts in July and October 2024
- Further information via QR code





Take-away messages



Climate change and multi-disaster exposure will be major influences on wellbeing



There are no checklists of strategies to protect wellbeing



There are established approaches that can be tailored to local context



Wellbeing strategies will have everyday benefits as well as being protective in crises



Useful resources and training are available to guide policy and practice



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