

Community Change Work and Recovery in the Context of a Pandemic

Discussion Notes, Links, and
Resources



Community Change Work and Recovery in the Context of a Pandemic

A Webinar hosted by Family Life Australia

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Access the Recording Here:

The Webinar Big Ideas

- **Collective Impact** is a framework for communities to leverage how the community is working together to respond to the pandemic, to begin to think collectively about recovery and to support building resilience in community change efforts.
- During times of disruptive change, it is important to take care of yourself, put on your oxygen mask first, to ensure that you have the energy to take care of others
- Watch for the patterns and changes that are being made to respond to the pandemic and begin to highlight those which are most impactful and positive for community
- To build resilience coming out of the pandemic, we need to develop a set of '**simple rules**' or principles to communicate the best version of community possible
- Here are some of your suggestions for simple rules for community post-pandemic:
 - Allison Wainwright: Commit to community voice in decision making.
 - Jo Cavanagh: Nothing about us without us - citizen centric participation.
 - Jo Cavanagh: Voices of difference pave the path to shared benefits and change for good.

SIMPLE RULES FOR SIMPLE RULES

If you want to create your own, consider these Simple Rules for Simple Rules:

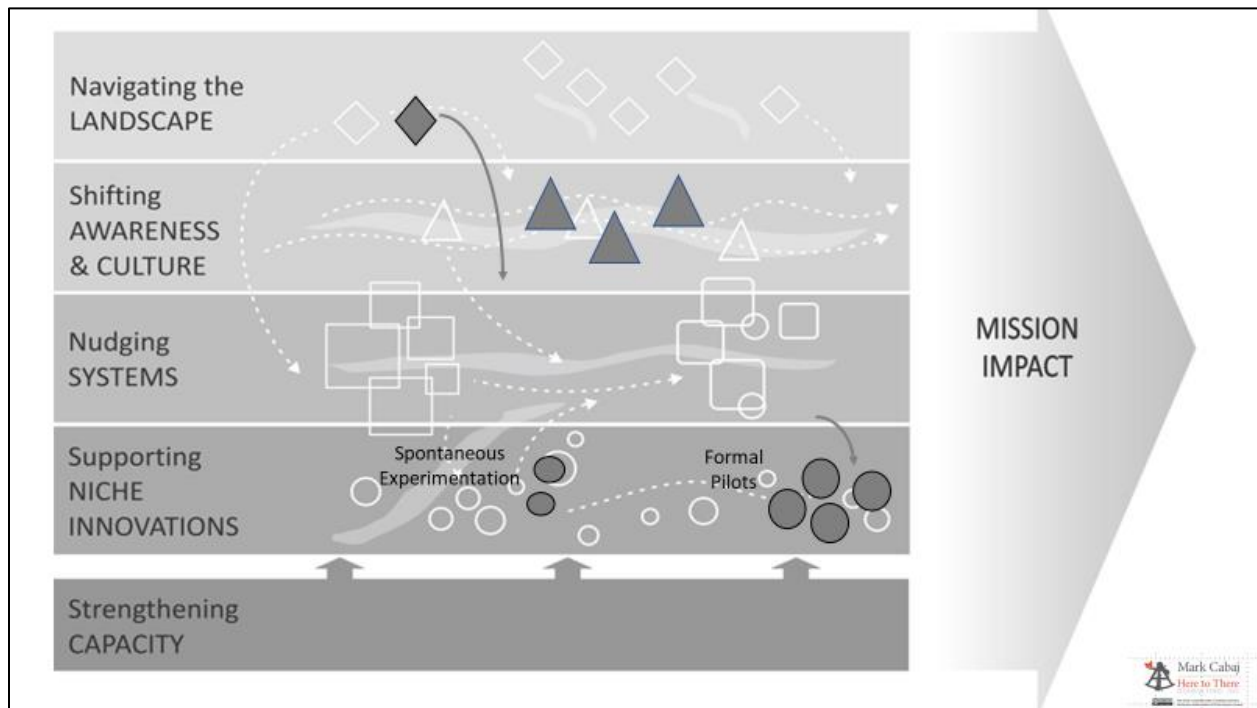
- Start with a verb. It is about what you DO, not what you think or believe.
- Make the list short. If you have more than seven, you won't remember them, and they won't be useful in the moment when you need them.
- Be sure they are positive. A negative rule prohibits, but it doesn't inform. You need actions that will positively move to create the pattern you want.
- Reflect on the rules that shape your behaviour now, even if you haven't been aware of them in the past. Anyone who lives in community already follows *simple rules*.

What are yours? Are they useful today? Will they serve the future you want to build?

Systems interventions are about changing the odds - Key Insights:

1. **Widen our gaze** - getting to mission-level impact (e.g. saving the rain forest) requires cumulative * mutually reinforcing change on (at least) four levels: landscape, awareness/culture, systems and niche innovations.

2. **Embrace disruption.** To get beyond incremental change – and get reform or even transformation – we need to disrupt systems or take advantage of externally induced disruption.
3. **Take capacity & agency building seriously** -the strengthening of stakeholders' capacity & agency is a necessary pre-condition for meaningful change – particularly for those most affected by the issue. This is an OUTCOME.
4. **Embrace conflict and cooperation** – real change depends on our willingness and ability to manage both conflict & cooperation amongst diverse actors with different values, interests and powers.
5. **Lengthen our gaze** - that sustained progress on tough issues requires relentless effort – two steps forward, one step back and sudden leap forwards – over a long period of time.



To Learn More: Papers and Resources

- Collective Impact Post-Pandemic: <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/paper-collective-impact-post-pandemic>
- Disruptive Times Require Skilled Changemakers: <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/paper-disruptive-times-require-skilled-changemakers>
- Listen to the Webinar about Collaborating with the Enemy with Adam Kahane and Mark Cabaj: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFhOCibRUYSyNbWOvv-DILKn_JuLtq_4C
- On Not Letting Another Crisis go to Waste: <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/not-letting-another-crisis-go-waste-tim-brodhead>

- Evaluating Systems Change: An Inquiry Framework:
<https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/paper-evaluating-systems-change-results-an-inquiry-framework>
- For additional resources please visit Tamarack Institute Website www.tamarackcommunity.ca and Here to There Consulting Website <http://here2there.ca/>

Your Conversation:

Blake Utomo: I think one of the biggest shifts will be the towards the use and embrace of technology and using online to connect. Whatever the new normal is, we'll be more digital than we ever have been before.. that's great but I'm concerned that there are some people being left behind

Jo Cavanagh: Agree Blake. Digital social inclusion is now essential for everyone and should not be assumed amongst any generation - old or young - or any community.

Jo Cavanagh: Liz / Mark. Can we reclaim the value of power as a positive community resource? "We the people have the power"

Susan Blackburn: What has become very obvious is that local area communication strategies are challenging when trying to engage, connect, inform people who do not have the capacity or funds to use digital tools.

Jo Cavanagh: Susan - check out www.goodthingsfoundation.org.au for digital resources and strategies for local communities

Blake Utomo: For community service organisations, I think this time is an opportunity to lean more towards advocacy for policy change. The value of our work is being displayed like never before, those that don't take up this opportunity like this again for a while.. The challenge is.. it's very noisy at the moment! Hard to get noticed

Blake Utomo: Those that don't take up the opportunity won't have another chance for a while*

Michelle Murphy: great reflection Liz. What an opportunity to shine a light on how we compensate front line workers (including cleaners!) and how we regard our older people

Mark Cabaj: As a Tamarack board member said, 'communities and grass roots change makers might be the new superpower!'

Jo Cavanagh: Agree Liz. We have to identify who controls access to resources and make it attractive for them to support our platform for change with the use of their resources. Eg Ikea needs the mum and dad customers to be onside with their products.

Mark Cabaj: I love that metaphor Jodie - I would like to get - finally - some kind of cape. It many ways,, everyone in this work has been preparing for these big moments like this: we now have to be the best we've ever been!

Janette Schimleck: In a large community of say 100K what are some ideas to get the community voice, beyond survey and committees.

Blake Utomo: We're seeing this issue with access to technology and data in Australia too. We just awarded \$1m in funding to enable community organisations to purchase tablets and data to loan out to vulnerable members of their community. I'm really excited for that program to start soon..

Jo Cavanagh: Good to give people the links to that opportunity Blake.

Blake Utomo: Good point Jo! That funding is now closed unfortunately, but it was open to the Be Connected Network, which has new grant opportunities monthly around digital inclusion. Find out more: beconnectednetwork.org.au - Or email me and we can have a chat. blake.utomo@goodthingsfoundation.org

Sarah Waters: We have heard the phrase "it's a marathon not a sprint" applied to this pandemic. This might indicate what's needed in our response and our care for self and each other. As Mark says, "lengthening our gaze".

Jo Cavanagh: The long game is for our children and grandchildren.

Monica Bensberg: Fingers crossed for a vaccine!

Sarah Waters: Whilst we need to be involved in some level of "disruption" we also need to turn our attention to where we can maintain some routines, relationships - some sort of normality....physically distant maybe - but emotionally connected.

Kaz Camp: looking forward to the new map forward that emerges from this conversation

Jo Cavanagh: Thank you to all panelists. Great input and conversation.

Blake Utomo: Thanks for the great webinar. Really took me back to my social work days! 🤗

Your Ongoing Questions:

- Any thoughts about how we include the increased unemployed struggling to survive now and post COVID, particularly young people who may feel left behind?
- and thoughts on how the new COVID normal will impact on gender and work?
- My continuing question in this work and particularly now is how do we encourage orgs and individuals to engage in collective impact work when they feel they are too stretched to do more than just survive/BAU? Ie. How do we support capacity building when there is fundamental resistance to it?
- I second Elisa – I work for a small non-profit with various government contracts and limited scope to work outside of those, as they are our main funding source. How do we incorporate this change work? Interested in your thoughts on the role that Government can play to enable the conditions or levers for change?
- How do we balance the need for long term recovery in our community change work with the demands for short term outcomes?

- How should we approach leading community change alongside citizens who have experienced multiple layers of trauma and have engaged maladaptive coping strategies (such as avoidance or withdrawal) to survive?
- Volunteer fatigue is more challenging than ever, particularly in bushfire adapted communities. How do we engage with communities from a “nothing about us without us” lens when we are exhausted?
- I see this as a great opportunity to build connections between our primary health system and our community services. But how do we encourage these two systems / groups which often operate separately to make a change to the ‘normal’ way we have worked and move into collaboration? I guess we have to be noisy and brave about bringing these groups together.
- Any thoughts on capturing patterns / experiences to build an evidence base to influence systems change / policy? Particularly in this unknown, evolving space? There is a great opportunity for participants here to share stories and identify patterns.
- Any potential and meaningful recovery post COVID-19 would likely depend largely on financial resources. There is no doubt there would be competing priorities in the supreme eyes of politicians. How could resources be strategically mobilized to close most of, if not all of the gaps created by the pandemic?