



# **The Urgent Need To Building Personal and Psychosocial Resilience for Climate Change**

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# Now Added the Acute Traumas & Toxic Stresses of Climate Change!

## More Frequent and Extreme...

**Windstorms**



**Flooding**



**Heat Waves**



**Droughts**



**Diseases**



**Food Shortages**



**...and many other direct and indirect traumatic and stressful adversities.**



## **What is the Problem?**

- **Left unaddressed, the harmful personal mental health and psychosocial reactions to climate impacts will be as bad or worse than the physical impacts.**
- **The maladaptive human reactions will threaten to stall or completely scuttle efforts to cut emissions, adapt, and minimize the climate crisis.**
- **Most resilience building programs focus on the direct shocks of extreme weather events and ignore the long-term toxic stresses--which is a reactive focus that emphasizes vulnerabilities and emergency planning.**
- **Proactively building personal and psychosocial resilience, which involves building on strengths, can minimize the problems, greatly increase individual and collective wellbeing, *and* motivate people to engage in climate solutions.**



## **International Transformational Resilience Coalition (ITRC)** **Was Formed To Get Out-Front of These Issues**

Over 200 mental health, trauma treatment, resilience, faith, education, and climate professionals that seek to:

- Elevate the need to address the growing climate change-enhanced personal mental health and psychosocial maladies to the national & international levels.
- Promote policies and programs to proactively build personal and psychosocial resilience.
- Launch efforts to teach simple resilience skills to individual adults and youth, organizational and community leaders worldwide.

**To Join the ITRC (No Cost) Go To:**

**<http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/intl-tr-coalition/>**

# The Human Consequences of Trauma & Toxic Stress

## Stress Reaction

- Physical Reaction:  
Higher blood pressure, pulse rate, difficult breathing, muscle tension, head and stomach aches, sleep disorders, more
- Mental Reaction:  
Mind racing, excessive worry & fear

If It Continues



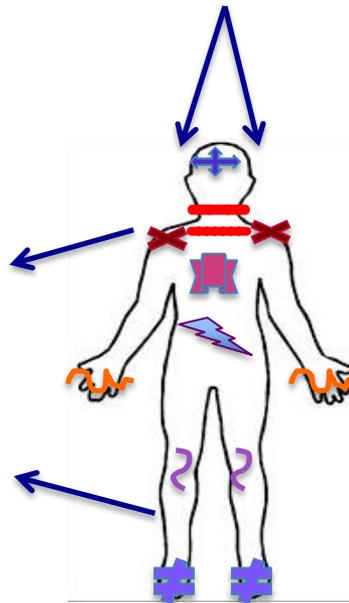
## Self-Destructive Coping Mechanisms

- Hyperactivity & over-vigilance
- Legal & illegal substance abuse
- Alcohol and tobacco abuse
- Food abuse
- Avoidance or danger seeking
- Dissociation, denial, reenactment
- Less ability to cope, problem solve, and enhance wellbeing

If It Continues



## External Stressors



## Community/Social Dysfunction (Trauma-Organized Societies)

- Despair, loneliness, meaninglessness
- Violence and crime
- Authoritarianism and political extremism
- Racism & other systemic oppressions
- Deindividuation: loss of 'self' in group
- Less ability to cope, problem solve, and enhance wellbeing

If It Continues



## Personal Breakdown

- Physical health problems (e.g. cancers)
- Psycho-emotion problems (e.g. anxiety, depression)
- Spiritual problems (e.g. hopelessness)
- Cognitive problems (e.g. memory loss)
- Behavioral problems (aggression or withdrawal)
- Less ability to cope & enhance wellbeing

# Few Climate or Public Health Programs Address These Risks!

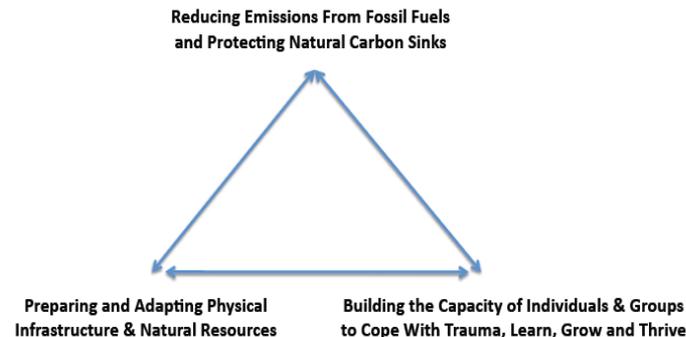
Climate programs must quickly expand beyond emission reductions & adapting physical infrastructure and natural resources to include a third major focus:

## Building Personal and Psychosocial Resilience

Mental health and public health programs must quickly expand beyond treating people during and after disasters to:

## Proactively Build Human Resilience For Trauma *and* Toxic Stress!

### The Three Necessary Interrelated Elements of An Effective Response to Climate Disruption



# **Building Human Resilience Requires Focus on *Both***

## **Internal Personal Resilience**

- **Basic grasp of the psychobiology of trauma**
- **Presencing skills**
- **Purposing skills**

## **Community-Level Psychosocial Resilience**

- **Trauma-informed citizenry**
- **Robust human relationships**
- **Supportive physical spaces**

# The Resilient Growth™ Model

## Focus: *Presencing* skills to calm your emotions and thoughts

**Ground**—and center yourself by stabilizing your nervous system.

**Remember**—your personal skills, resources, and social support network.

**Observe**—your reactions to and thoughts about the situation non-judgmentally with self-compassion.

## Focus: *Purposing* skills to find meaning, direction & hope in adversity

**Watch**—for insight and meaning in climate-enhanced and related hardships.

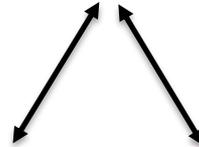
**Tap**—into your purpose & the values you want to live by in the midst of adversity.

**Harness**—hope by making choices that increase personal, collective, and environmental wellbeing.

# The Three Pillars of Community-Level Psychosocial Resilience

## Trauma-Informed Citizenry

- Widespread knowledge of the psychobiology of trauma and toxic stress.
- Every adult and youth has opportunity to learn & continually improve Presencing & Purposing skills.
- All business & civic leaders learn how to shift from trauma-organized to resilience-enhancing entities.



## Robust Human Relationships

- Rebuild, strengthen, and maintain bonding, bridging, and linking social support networks.
- Strengthen positive cultural and social norms that encourage healthy behaviors
- Strengthen links and communications among diverse organizations in the community.

## Supportive Physical Spaces

- Create safe public spaces for human interaction—parks, open space, public squares.
- Refocus transportation, communications, food and other core systems to enhance interactions.
- Reclaim and rebuild safe and healthy housing and commercial spaces to foster interaction.

## Recommendations

1. A strategic national framework is urgently needed for action to build human resilience that outlines a joint approach by clarifying the roles of all federal departments and agencies as well state and local governments, NGOs, private firms, and community/civic/faith groups.
2. Policies are needed that direct federal departments to collaborate to implement the national framework and fund programs to build human resilience nationwide.
3. “Human Resilience Councils” should be formed in every state & community to foster and support initiatives to engage local citizens in building personal and psychosocial resilience.
4. The initiatives should proactively help all adults and youth become “trauma-informed” and learn preventative internal personal as well as psychosocial resilience skills.  
Resilience education should become as common as learning to read and write!
5. Initiatives should also help all private, non-profit, and public leaders understand the risks and shift their orgs & communities to trauma-informed human resilience-enhancing entities.
6. Initiatives should prioritize strengthening and supporting the three pillars of community-level psychosocial resilience.
7. Strengthen the mental health elements of emergency response infrastructure.
8. Identify and prepare the most vulnerable populations—but proceed carefully.



**International Transformational Resilience Coalition**  
Building Human Resilience for Climate Change

## **Space Filling Fast for First-Ever International Conference on Building Personal & Psychosocial Resilience for Climate Change**

**Space is Limited for this Unique Skills-Building and Policy Conference on the Urgency, Methods & Benefits of Building Human Resilience for Climate Change**

**When:** Thursday-Friday, November 3-4, 2016

**Where:** The Capital View Conference Center, Washington DC  
Home of the American Psychological Association

**To Register Click Here or Go To This Link: <http://goo.gl/forms/I59u6CczTCzMrFf73>**

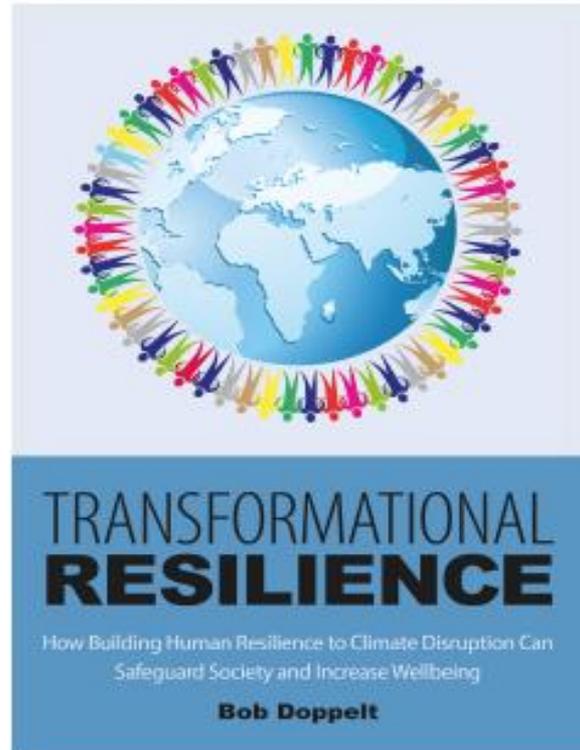
**To learn more contact the ITRC: [tr@trig-cli.org](mailto:tr@trig-cli.org)**

# NOW AVAILABLE!

## ***New Book on Transformational Resilience for Climate Change by Bob Doppelt***

Doppelt is right. Young people have been dealt a bad hand, but there is no merit in hand-wringing or blaming others. We still reside on the planet of most remarkable life and beauty. We must use the challenge of preserving this for future generations to overcome any feelings of regret or despair.

Dr. James Hansen  
Professor, Department of Earth and Environmental Science,  
Columbia University.  
Former Head of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies



The planet--and all of us who ride on it--will go through the crucible of climate change in the next decades. How we respond--as individuals and societies--will shape the world to come, as surely as the rising oceans. Here's one recipe for making that response constructive and generous.

Bill McKibben  
Author *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*

**Bob Doppelt's new book, *Transformational Resilience*, reads like a thriller. The plot line, climate change, is packed with information, anticipation, anxiety, and hope. Extreme weather events are a threat to every part of our being, including our ability to be creative problem-solvers. Doppelt frames the issues we, the entire planet, are facing and then offers us a simple and elegant method for becoming our best selves.**

Maggie Bennington-Davis, MD  
Chief Medical Officer  
HealthShare of Oregon