

LEADING IN

DISASTER RECOVERY

A COMPANION THROUGH THE CHAOS

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 **NEW ZEALAND
RED CROSS**
RĀPEKA WHEREO AOTEAROA

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Interviewees from around the world

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Always calm in the face of chaos, our wise guide and steady hand.

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SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Supporting the Supporters, Jolie Wills
supportingthesupporters.org

Recovery Matters, New Zealand Red Cross, a training guide for psychosocial support in recovery
preparecenter.org/resources/psychosocial-recovery-training-toolkit

DOWNLOAD FROM

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster

Ehara taku toa, i te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini.

Mine is not the strength of one alone, it is the strength of many.

Recovering from a disaster is a deeply human event – it requires us to reach deep inside of ourselves and bring to others the best of who we can be. It's painful, tiring, rewarding and meaningful. The responsibility can be heavy and at times you may feel alone. This is your companion through chaos that will connect you with over 100 other people who have walked in similar shoes.

This Companion is about leadership in disaster recovery. Many, like those who contributed, will not identify as leaders – yet they undoubtedly are. Leadership takes many shapes. It takes a web of connected and supported leaders to catch the opportunities that recovery offers communities.

Manuals for recovery programming abound. This is not one. This Companion shares hard-won wisdom and practical strategies. These are the messages others wished they'd had, and tools for putting these ideas in place because in a pressured environment with many priorities, hearing the message is often not enough.

We have distilled the wisdom of more than 100 leaders in recovery who have gone before. The insights shared so generously were honest, personal and brave and have resulted in a companion to serve and support others.

Many people have died for the lessons we've learnt.
We owe it to them to do something in the streets with the
people, not just in the universities, with these lessons.

Amod Dixit, National Society for Earthquake Technology, Nepal

Whakatauki (Māori proverbs) comment on all aspects of Māori culture including history, spirituality, values, daily life and material resources such as tribal lands. Although most whakatauki reflect the thoughts and values of the past, the diverse meanings are equally relevant to present day situations.

ROAD MAP

of this book

NINE KEY MESSAGES

from leaders in disaster
recovery around the globe

Each of the nine messages
are supported with



quotes



questions for
reflection and action



tools to guide
implementation

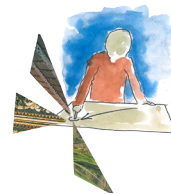
HOW IS RECOVERY LEADERSHIP DIFFERENT? page 4



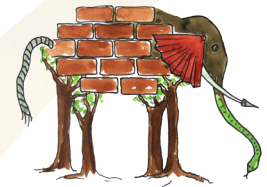
1. HAVING A NOBLE PURPOSE page 8



2. BEING ETHICAL page 10



3. BEING INTENTIONAL page 12



5. KEEPING PERSPECTIVE page 16



4. MAKING DECISIONS page 14



6. LEADING WITH EMPATHY

page 18



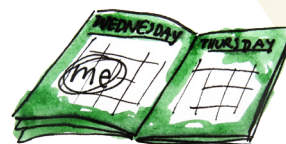
7. BEING INNOVATIVE

page 20



8. SUPPORTING THE TEAM

page 22



9. PRIORITISING SELF-CARE

page 24



TOOLS INSTRUCTIONS

page 26



REFLECTION AND ACTION CHECKLIST

page 28

TOOL BOX

page 29

- Perspective Checker Cards
- Burnout Checklist
- Self-care Plan

HOW IS RECOVERY LEADERSHIP DIFFERENT?

Leadership in recovery is different. It is chaotic, where black and white becomes many shades of grey. It will require more from you as a leader than any other role you've ever had. It's a horrible opportunity.

You will think harder and faster. You will do more, feel more, learn more than ever before. It will require all the skills you have and all the skills you don't yet have. Recovery is not business as usual. It is challenging on every level and deserves superb leadership.

UNCERTAINTY

You have to try to imagine the future when you are in an environment that is uncertain and rapidly changing. You have to make important decisions with limited evidence and do it with confidence.

The recovery environment is always changing and there are threats and surprises. Constancy and certainty are not there.

John Richardson, Australian Red Cross

SCALE

The size and complexity of what needs to be done can be overwhelming. Every aspect of life changes. You need to super-size your thinking, your energy and your vision.

It is a big gig, and I don't know anyone who did it easily.

Fiona Leadbeater, community worker and volunteer, Victoria, Australia

TIME

Constantly making decisions between competing priorities, all of which are important but cannot be done simultaneously. Trying to find creative solutions under great pressure to deliver. Budgets diminish without reductions in expectation.

Decisiveness and the ability to make good decisions quickly. Part of that is making everyone feel included in the process. It's a balancing act between those things.

Sir John Hansen, Red Cross Earthquake Commissioner, Christchurch

PSYCHOLOGY

Impacted populations work differently. Chronic stress negatively impacts relationships, problem-solving, creative thinking, ability to take on information... As people get worn down, trust, cohesion and niceties can be lost.

Some are so tired. They eventually forget how to be empathic and effective.

Kate Brady, Australian Red Cross

ENDURANCE

Demands and expectations are unrealistically high. It is difficult to maintain high velocity and high performance over many years.

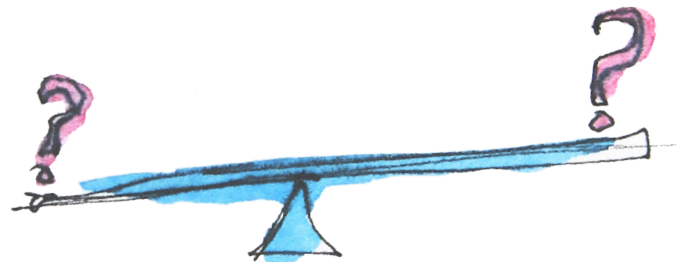
This is not a marathon, this is not a sprint, this is not a relay. It's every horrible endurance event that you can imagine all rolled into one.

Dr Sarb Johal, clinical psychologist, New Zealand



Successful recovery leadership is dependent on getting the balance ‘right’ between competing realities and priorities, as outlined in the table below. For example you may find yourself balancing the following:

THIS	AND	THAT
Decisive action		Need for consultation
Local decision-making		Centralised decision-making
Fast moving environment which is difficult to slow down		Need for reflection and constant conversation
Invest upfront to save later (e.g. risk reduction measures)		Financial constraints
Assume responsibility and take decisions		Listen and engage and be truly informed
Emotional intelligence and empathy		Technical management attributes
Engaging with interest groups		Being captured by interest groups
Achieving milestones		Ensuring self-care and health of team
Communicating hope		Communicating reality
Encouraging investment and business		Protecting the community from the desires and influence of those who promote short-sighted solutions
Needs of communities		Health and personal life of leader
Short-term political and media cycles		Long-term strategic planning
Community context		National agenda
Timely concrete actions and value for money		Building meaningfully and safely for future generations
Creativity, innovation and risk-taking		Accountability

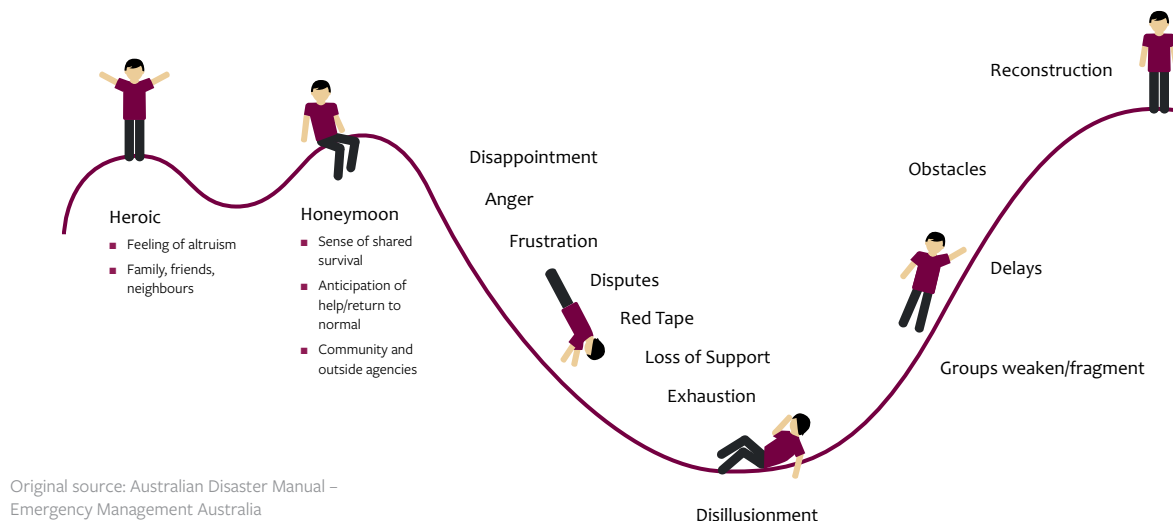


RECOVERY OVER TIME

I te kore, ki te pō,
ki te ao mārama.

From darkness through the
night into the world of light.

Recovery is constantly moving and changing. As many who have led in recovery will tell you, the disaster itself was not their biggest problem. Some patterns across time are evident. Know these challenges are likely. Plan for them ahead of time. Have strategies in place.



Everyone will experience a disaster differently. However, common patterns tend to emerge. Understanding this is vital to anticipating and responding to the challenges faced by community and those working in disaster recovery.

This illustration above tells us that the following are typical and normal:

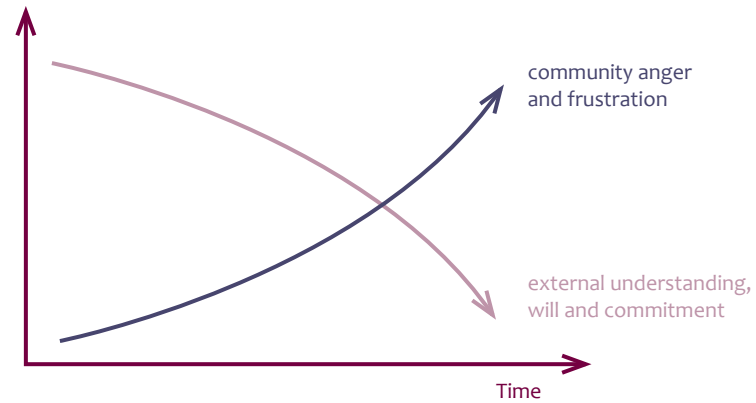
- to experience a sense of camaraderie, unity and optimism in the early stages
- for recovery to be a long, protracted journey
- for people to have a hard time along the way
- for ongoing stress to make it challenging to retain optimism, tolerance, the ability to problem solve and empathise
- for the majority of people and communities to ‘recover’ but also to grow from the experience.

Leadership and planning need to take into account the emotional landscape of recovery. In the early stages, there is a proliferation of support, energy, resources, inspirational speeches, goodwill and understanding. As time goes on these become scarce just when they are most important. Plan for these realities.

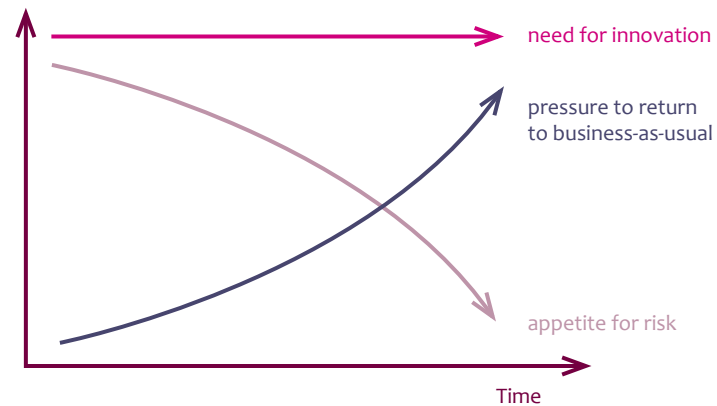
Know that commitment from others will fade over time as they have other pressures or are again expected to be doing what they were before, so rather than becoming easier as time goes on, recovery becomes harder.

Michelle Mitchell, Canterbury Earthquake
Recovery Authority, Christchurch

In the early stages after an event there is an abundance of public commitment, will and promises made by public figures. These decline over time whilst anger felt by communities increases as expectations are not met and stress and frustration take their toll.



Throughout the recovery process the need to innovate and be flexible remains high. However, over time the pressure to return to business-as-usual practices increases, along with a diminishing appetite for embracing risk and innovation.



HAVING A NOBLE PURPOSE

people are the purpose

Recovery can become a financial and political juggernaut that disregards humanitarian need and dignity.

We start early recovery from a common human place but over time may become divided. A strong and true noble purpose is the glue that will hold people together when things go wrong, personal sacrifice is high and your team is tired. A noble purpose can make the impossible achievable.

I am here because I have care and love for this place. That helps to focus me.

Magnum Tuipulotu, community development, Selwyn and Christchurch

It's not just about building structures, it's about the people who will eventually take tenancy within those structures.

Hemi te Hemi, Māori trades training, Christchurch

I want this moment in time to be reflected in the legacy we leave rather than in the memory of the disaster.

Lianne Dalziel, Mayor, Christchurch

Did I make a difference? Did I leave the city better than when I found it? If the answer is yes, then I can be satisfied. If the answer is no, that is a very sad thing to live with.

Art Agnos, Former Mayor, San Francisco

Following a disaster, outside help arrives to 'save' people. This is not what recovery is about. Recovery is about helping people affected by a disaster to regain the confidence to make decisions about their lives – to lead their own recovery.

Simon Eccleshall, Red Cross, Geneva

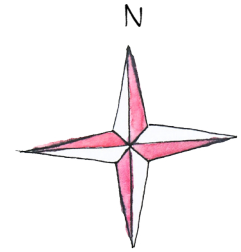
The people I admired most were maintenance staff 20 metres underground, holding power cables apart to allow a life-saving operation to be completed while the ground was still moving. Those are the people that have got real courage.

David Meates, Canterbury District Health Board, Christchurch

I want to pursue the right path but it is so difficult because the goal is not clear.

Nobuko Kamata, community support worker, Japan





Laying bricks or building a cathedral?

In recovery a clear, noble purpose is what drives a team. It is the anchor point of collaboration and sustains you when the going gets tough.

A man walking along the sidewalk comes across three workers toiling away at a construction site. He stops, and asks the first worker, “What are you doing?” The worker answers, “I’m digging a hole.” He poses the same question to the second worker, who replies, “I’m laying bricks.” Finally, he turns to the third worker, “And what are you doing?” The third worker answers, “I’m building a cathedral.”

Willie Pietersen (2010). John Wiley and Sons: *Strategic Learning: How to Be Smarter Than Your Competition and Turn Key Insights into Competitive Advantage*



Ask yourself

Who does my leadership benefit?

Is our noble purpose merely a piece of paper on the wall or lived every day? Do I and everyone in my team name it, believe it, apply it?

Do I feel proud of what I am doing?

Do I feel like I am laying bricks or building a cathedral?

What issue is compelling enough to bring diverse groups and leaders together for a common purpose?

BEING ETHICAL

it takes courage to do the right thing

Accept that, in recovery, your ethics and values will be tested. Time, funders, media, even colleagues – sometimes everything seems to be conspiring against you.

Be brave enough to act ethically. It might not get you promoted. It probably won't help you move quickly. It might make even more work or require 'creative rule-bending'.

Determine your non-negotiables, the issues where you will put your courage and energy to ensure ethical outcomes. Build a network – whether formal or informal – of people whose ethics and values you trust and who can help you when you're faced with situations where doing the right thing is difficult or unpopular.

I'm just being me. My core is alofa: love and respect. You don't need to change your style for other people.

Magnum Tuipulotu, community development, Selwyn and Christchurch

It is important to do the right thing, as opposed to blindly following the rules. As, generally speaking, the rules have been designed or created for different purposes.

David Meates, Canterbury District Health Board, Christchurch

You get out there and you walk the talk and do the doing and model the values you're after. And when you do that, people will follow because they see something in it.

Duncan Gibb, Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team

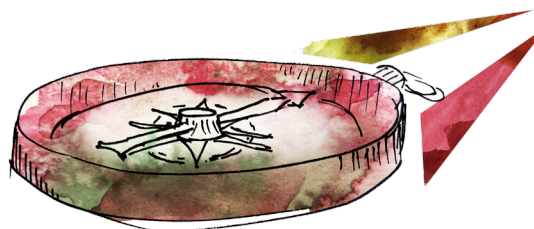
While intentions may be noble, time and political pressure, moral uncertainty and stress often conspire to push us down the path of least resistance.

Doing the 'right thing' is rarely popular or expedient. That's why it takes courage.

David Lallemant, engineer, World Bank, Haiti

We are guided by a set of values handed down by our ancestors – Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei – for us and our children after us.

Sir Mark Solomon, Kaiwhakahaere (Chair) Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu



Hold onto the integrity of who you are, because that's what will get you through and out the other side and be able to look back and be comfortable with who you are and what you did during that time.

Michelle Mitchell, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Christchurch

I respect the people who had the courage to stand up and do what they thought was right.

Sharon Torstonson, supporting community service groups, Christchurch



An ethical dilemma:

Jerry Talbot won't say this but he is a Red Cross legend with vast experience supporting disaster-affected communities around the world. Jerry recounts an ethical dilemma he faced when leading a large-scale tsunami recovery project in the Maldives. The winner of a high-stakes tender was not independent of a political party during a time of heightened political tensions. Jerry recognised that to work well with all communities and interests, he needed a politically neutral contractor to establish a foundation of trust and stability. Making this decision came with a six-month construction delay at a time when he was under great pressure to deliver. In the short term this was a difficult decision but it was one that resulted in an environment where Red Cross could work well with all parties. Doing the right thing at this stage was crucial to the long-term success of the resettlement of 4,000 displaced people.



Ask yourself

Who can help give me the courage to do the right thing?

When personal success is at odds with doing what's right, what will I do?

Have I asked someone who is not invested in the decision for their advice?

Am I taking the easy option because I am tired or time pressured?

Who benefits from this decision?



Create your own personal board of people you respect deeply. Consult them when you have ethical dilemmas. Use them as a touch stone to help you be brave and hold you to making ethical decisions.

BEING INTENTIONAL

hope is not a method

If you value something, be intentional about it because it won't happen by accident. Hope is not a method.

What is important to you? To your community? Whatever you decide, create a plan for achieving it and measure the progress.

Intentionality reaches beyond project outcomes. It encompasses leadership, team culture, capacity building, personal growth, as well as the noble purpose that guides you.

Your first followers are your secondary leaders. You need to be intentional about growing the capacity of your lower level leaders.

Duncan Gibb, Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team

They say you can never be a prophet in your own land – sometimes this is true but other times only a local voice will do. Recovery is noisy so you need to be really intentional in choosing the best messenger for the moment.

Anonymous

It would've been helpful right at the beginning to have thought about the length of time I'd be doing this so I could plan what I was going to do to look after myself. I might not be feeling so exhausted if I had planned for this.

Sue Turner, lead of well-being campaign, Christchurch

The power of intent. We had a vision statement and we made mind maps. Looking back we managed to achieve everything. Name it, be clear, it manifests.

Margaret Jefferies, community development, Lyttelton, New Zealand



Before an emergency occurs and then during response and recovery, good leaders act purposefully to maximise the opportunity to reduce risk, build back better and strengthen the resilience of communities.

Sarah Stuart-Black, Director, Ministry of Civil Defence & Emergency Management, New Zealand

Too often disaster lessons don't get learnt. Monitoring and evaluation needs to be better. Be systematic about capturing lessons and building them into institutional memory.

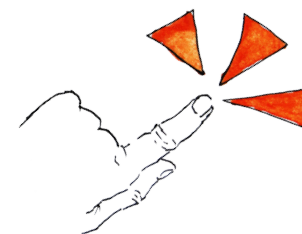
Jerry Talbot, New Zealand Red Cross

The needs are so great. You need to intentionally task one person whose job it is to develop and oversee staff support.

Diane Ryan, American Red Cross

Coordination is hard, even with the best will in the world, so you need to be intentional about it. For example, exchanging staff for a while, 'embedding' an NGO worker into a government ministry or asking an architect or a police officer to work in a local women's organisation.

Elizabeth Ferris, The Brookings Institution, USA



Don't leave success to chance:

Duncan Gibb, General Manager of the Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT) has learnt from over 30 years in the construction industry, and in life generally, that nothing happens because you hope it will happen! Success cannot be left to chance.

“Intentionality has been a key part of the success of the rebuild of earthquake-damaged infrastructure in Christchurch. A plan to drive project outcomes alone was never going to be enough. We realised that, given the mammoth nature of the task and the tight timeframes, high-energy performance of our people could not be maintained unless we planned for it to be so. The rebuild team brought together people from over 20 different organisations, who had previously worked in competition. The rapid and intentional creation of a culture and environment was necessary if we were to have common goals and objectives. Instead of a single plan, a disciplined framework of management plans was created to drive every aspect of the business, including a Peak Performance Plan for our people. This single team has delivered, and continues to deliver, the rebuild of infrastructure that gives the people of Christchurch ‘security and confidence in the future of the city’.

“Whatever venture you are involved in, don't leave your success to chance – hope is not a method!”



Ask yourself

What tools can I use to turn hope into a measurable reality?

How am I creating the culture I want?

What is my plan to develop other leaders?

Are our intentions adequately represented in planning and monitoring?

Am I hiring fast, or am I hiring well?

MAKING DECISIONS

perfect is the enemy of the good

Disaster recovery is full of uncertainty, intense time pressure, high stakes and a lack of reliable information. Making decisions can be tough and lonely. A good leader must recognise if a situation calls for a quick decision, more time to reach a consensus (noting that inaction is a decision) or a complete change of plan. People-centred decisions, made for the right reasons, are the path of least regret.

We need to be better at asking is this urgent and is this necessary? We need to do the urgent stuff and the necessary stuff, but only the urgent stuff needs to be done quickly.

Anne Leadbeater, recovery advisor, Victoria, Australia

Embrace imperfection gracefully. The community is an imperfect place. If perfection is the goal people become paralysed or disillusioned.

Dr Emi Kiyota, environment gerontologist, Japan

A lot of businesses in Christchurch have learnt to be quicker and more robust around decision-making. They are more nimble, because if they weren't, they'd fail.

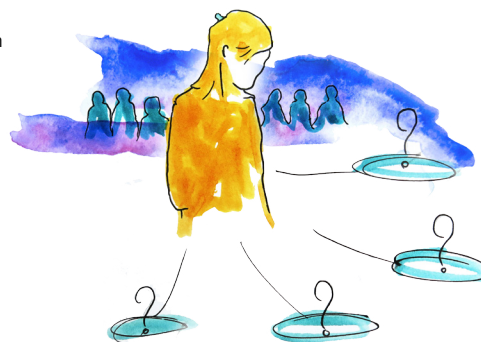
Sir John Hansen, Former High Court Judge, Red Cross Earthquake Commissioner, Christchurch

We developed an evidence base so we weren't just doing things based on where the most noise was coming from. I wanted to make sure we drew on international experience, took into account our environment and had solid data we tracked over time.

Michelle Mitchell, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Christchurch

We brought public service chief executives and senior staff together to have a good look at the whole city. They came back emotionally moved. It meant that when decisions were made it was live in their heads and decisions moved more quickly.

Hon. Gerry Brownlee, Minister for Earthquake Recovery, New Zealand



It is important to be able to make decisions and enact them. Worry about the rap across the knuckles later.

David Meates, Canterbury District Health Board, Christchurch

I am an outsider. I've never lived there. There are many things I don't know. Talk to the residents. Their wisdom is important. Our way is the city way. Respect their way.

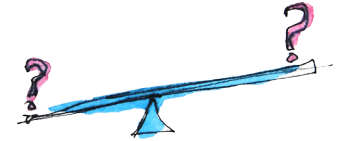
Tohru Shirakawa, aid agency and partner organisation, Tokyo

What are the predicates for decision-making? Good decision-makers understand their situation, what is achievable by others and what they themselves can do. They can make decisions even if they may seem contrary to evidence.

Roy Williams, Center for Humanitarian Cooperation, USA

Bureaucrats talked about community engagement but decisions were foregone conclusions and consultation tokenistic. It felt like being offered the option of having a lobotomy or moving to another country. Which to choose?

Anonymous, Victoria, Australia



A weighty decision:

How do you make a decision between two poor options? This was the nature of a challenge faced by David Meates, Chief Executive of Canterbury District Health Board, when hospital buildings were damaged by the earthquakes in Christchurch. “If we close this building, we’ll shut this service and we’ll actually cause harm to the community. How do we measure off this harm to the people of Christchurch versus the potential harm where a future event could result in death to staff and patients if the building failed?”

In these circumstances it is difficult to have confidence that your decision is the correct one, which can only be determined in hindsight. Instead, David aimed for confidence in the robustness of the decision-making process. “From the outset we decided we needed to bring in different people to help inform the decisions we were making. We didn’t want people making the decisions for us, but we wanted to be challenged with different perspectives.” With this approach in mind, David sought the input of ethicists and examined the challenge from every angle with their assistance. The hospital remained open with honest and transparent communication with regards to the risks.



Ask yourself

Have I sought independent wise counsel from a wide range of disciplines?

Have I actively listened to those who do not agree with me?

Is this really an ‘either-or’ decision or can I find an ‘and’?

Do I have the support needed for the decision to be accepted and implemented?

How well have I communicated the reasons for the decision? Am I communicating in a human, accessible and empathic way?

KEEPING PERSPECTIVE

seek wise counsel

Even with a clear vision, accept that you can only see a small part of the big picture. Post-disaster recovery is too big to go it alone. Seek multiple opinions from many different and unlikely places in order to see the whole.

It is normal to lose perspective at times along the way. When perspective is lost, it is difficult to listen when you most need to. Identify wise heads to guide you back on track during these times.

Allow for the fact that people can see things you cannot and allow space for things to emerge.

Anne Leadbeater, recovery advisor,
Victoria, Australia

I have half a dozen people I really trust who I can just pick up the phone and talk to, in an informal sense. I think you need those sounding boards.

Sir John Hansen, Former High Court Judge, Red Cross Earthquake Commissioner, Christchurch

Consult people before you take action. I have something like a steering committee, where I consult certain people before I go ahead.

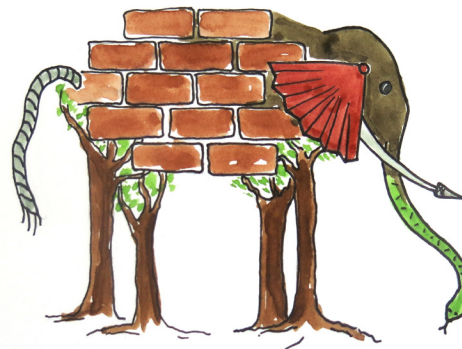
Dr Maan Alkaisi, spokesperson, families bereaved by the Christchurch earthquake

Because I was made out to be this great leader I was shy about asking for help. That turned out to be my biggest mistake.

Anonymous, USA

People with all manner of experience, no matter their position, will step forward. So we need to blast away those bureaucratic views. "I can't have someone fifth tier in my meeting." Actually, yes I can.

Margot Christeller, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Christchurch



I don't want a whole lot of people who think like me. Lots of leaders subconsciously surround themselves with mirror images of themselves. You want people who are able to think independently and you don't want people sitting there agreeing with you.

David Meates, Canterbury District Health Board, Christchurch

Get all different people, the ones you like and the ones that you are not so attracted to. Connect with them all. It's numbers and diversity that will give a good result.

Margaret Jefferies, community development, Lyttelton, New Zealand

The elders in my community, they are the calm old heads with maturity and experience. They look after me and support me but aren't afraid to have a word to me if I step out of line. I listen to and respect them.

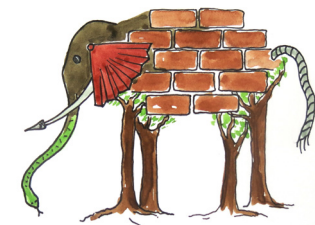
Brad Quilliam, business sector,
Victoria, Australia

Having an external person outside the area as a supporter helps. They have the long-term perspective and know what you might yet face.

Dr Tomoko Osawa, psychologist, Kobe, Japan

Accept that in the end all eyes will turn to one place and there will be criticism. You need a good team around you to work ideas off, discuss things robustly and test everything constantly.

Hon. Gerry Brownlee, Minister for Earthquake Recovery, New Zealand



How to see the recovery elephant:

Individually we are blind but collectively we can see.

The recovery elephant is based on the tale from the Indian subcontinent of six blind men who are asked to touch an elephant to learn what it is like – they then compare notes to find that they are in complete disagreement. If you ask the community they will say recovery feels like a brick wall (the stomach), if you ask a public servant they will say recovery feels like the tightrope between fiscal responsibility, setting national precedent and community needs (the tail), if you ask those who feel swindled by the recovery process they will say it is like a snake (the trunk). Post-disaster, under pressure, our focus narrows and we believe only our 'one truth'. Without listening and collaborating we fail to see the recovery elephant – the many truths and perspectives that make up recovery. This is critical to successful recovery leadership and good planning.



Ask yourself

Do I have an external 'board' of trusted wise heads – people with whom I can have safe conversations, admit challenges and whose feedback I will respect?

Am I comfortable asking for advice? Do I view seeking other opinions as a sign of strength?

Are all sectors and levels represented in my address book?



Perspective checker cards

A tool to help you listen and take on feedback when it is most needed and most difficult to hear (see the Tool Box on page 29).

LEADING WITH EMPATHY

it's about real connection

Empathy is about understanding multiple perspectives. An empathic approach allows connections to be made and opens you up to understanding complexity. Through empathy people are more likely to walk with you rather than protest, sabotage and undermine recovery efforts.

This approach is more difficult. Empathy can leave us vulnerable to compassion fatigue and burnout. It takes energy to be in someone's world for a bit. Empathy is hard to find when you are depleted.

Don't be so damned professional. If you act like a robot and sound like a robot people will think you are a robot. You have to have a beating heart, warm blood and compassion.

Mike Hoffman, builder, volunteer organisation, Staten Island

I admire the people who were able to stand up and say, "Hey, I'm finding it tough", but still lead. They gave permission for others to acknowledge that they were struggling too.

Sharon Torstonson, supporting community service groups, Christchurch

Trust comes from authenticity. People know when it's not authentic.

Lianne Dalziel, Mayor, Christchurch

If you have people dealing with an emotional problem, give a human response rather than a black and white response with no emotion. Being human is so fundamental.

Kaye Taiaroa, government organisational resilience forum, Christchurch

Authenticity is important to people. The bigger the gap between your performance self and your authentic self the harder it is to maintain.

Dr Sarb Johal, clinical psychologist, New Zealand

Understand your own grief journey. That is what will make you prepared for the grief of others. You can then understand the behaviour of others, and what sits behind their actions.

Helen Gatonyi, tenants' support and advocate, Christchurch

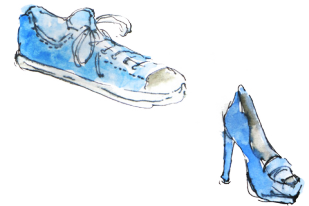
Make the hard phone calls yourself. Go and see people on their turf. Leaders have to front up and find ways to connect with communities.

Roger Sutton, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Christchurch

Providing support without empathy leaves people cold. It feels meaningless, hurtful and misdirected – the exact opposite of what's intended.

Anonymous





Engineering and empathy – a story from Haiti:

David Lallemand is an engineer who worked for the World Bank on damage assessment and reconstruction guidelines. “It’s hard to talk about the importance of empathy in recovery leadership without sounding like a stereotypical self-righteous aid worker.” Yet David believes that empathy is a uniquely powerful tool for designing better recovery programmes – a tool that guides decision-making by allowing a deep understanding of the needs, aspirations and capacities of communities. “In putting together safe reconstruction guidelines that people would actually follow, we had to understand why people constructed the way they did, why they used certain materials, certain layouts, and what their aspirations were for reconstruction after the earthquake. This process is humbling because you open yourself up to having your preconceptions challenged, and your ‘expertise’ thwarted by the simple practicalities of life in the communities you aim to assist. But this is the best way to develop effective human-centred recovery programmes.”



Ask yourself

Am I losing my capacity for empathy? Is it time for a break to refresh?

How do I ensure I hear the voice of the community? How represented are communities in my calendar compared to other stakeholders?

Am I overly focused on the minority who may take advantage rather than supporting the dignity of the majority?

Do I try to portray myself as good at and coping well with everything? Could it be a relief for others to know I am not perfect?

Is my default to trust people (the community, colleagues, other organisations)?

BEING INNOVATIVE

because you have to

A disaster has destroyed the box so you have to think outside it. The heart of recovery is about being flexible and adaptable so you can embrace extraordinary opportunity. Learning and ideas can come from unusual and unexpected places. Create a culture that embraces wildly different ideas and disciplines in order to innovate and co-create.

You just have to be spontaneous sometimes. You can't go and look in your book and see what you're supposed to do.

Dr Maan Alkaisi, spokesperson, families bereaved by the Christchurch earthquake

To keep doing the same things and expect a different result is nuts. If something is not working, you change it.

Duncan Gibb, Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team

Innovation is easier for us because after a disaster there are less obstacles. We can become a trial place for ideas and it's my hope what we've learnt can be reflected in other communities.

Takao Yamamoto, aid agency, Ishinomaki, Japan

Business-as-usual is the enemy of innovation.

David Meates, Canterbury District Health Board, Christchurch

People hide behind barriers all the time. There are barriers to everything we do and that's what makes working in recovery an art form – working out how to get around them with five cents and a piece of fishing wire.

Kate Brady, Australian Red Cross



Other cities feel finished and offer little opportunity to make our mark and express ourselves. Here after the tsunami, young people can contribute and bring their ideas. Being creative and having the ability to enact ideas translates to energy and becomes a rolling stone.

Anonymous, Japan

In recovery you have to run the 'laugh gauntlet' – running your ideas past people who think you're nuts.

Richard MacGeorge, World Bank, Washington DC

We're creating an atmosphere where various groups can come together to build a wider view of thinking for Ishinomaki – to get out of their own personal box of thinking. With the various groups collaborating we can create something bigger than is possible for any group on their own.

Mayumi Nishimura, community development, Japan

Innovation happens when people are asked to solve problems – you don't have to do everything – gaps open opportunity for others to contribute.

Anne Leadbeater, recovery advisor, Victoria, Australia



Rendering the box redundant:

Emi Kiyota, of Ibasho, has thrown out social convention. Emi finds new ways to connect the built and social landscapes.

Emi is working with disaster-impacted communities in Japan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines to re-imagine services and facilities for older people. Older people wish to contribute meaningfully and remain part of the community (not segregated in a facility). Emi has worked with older people and the wider community to change the setting, the nature of the buildings and the purpose of the facilities. Through working together, facilities are transformed so that older generations can provide a service to the community. Examples include developing a catering service in a local school, and a café where the community can learn traditional cooking methods or carpentry taught by the elders.

Physical facilities and support services become places where older people continue to contribute and be valued – a great benefit for younger generations. Through this innovative approach to the rebuild of the physical environment, Emi and the elders she works with are overturning the societal view of older people as solely vulnerable.



Ask yourself

Do I have explorers on my team? When did I last play a ‘wild card’?

Am I am hiding behind obstacles? Am I being creative with ways to say yes to good ideas?

Am I willing to risk and manage failure on the way to success?

How do I ensure my team feels safe stepping into the unknown?



Wild card (see Tool Box)



A crash course in design thinking from Stanford University:
dschool.stanford.edu/dgift/

SUPPORTING THE TEAM

people ... not human resources

The post-disaster environment is different. Teams need barriers removed and autonomy to act. Trust your team to be best placed to support their communities.

During recovery, usual methods of support for your people are not enough. More is required. Your team not only provides support to disaster-impacted people but are also likely to be impacted themselves. Understand the load they carry, how long they will carry it for and work with them to make it manageable. Even the most capable and resilient people need support.

These people are the finest you will ever meet. Looking after them is just the right thing to do.

Dr James Guy, aid worker support advisor, California

The workplace is a community and provides many other things beyond an occupation – culture, social fabric and identity.

Dr Rob Gordon, psychologist, Australia

You're working with people who are hurt and impacted and you've got to be more responsive and respectful. That drives a different approach.

Duncan Gibb, Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team

We've struggled with the matter of pride. You don't admit if you have problems. There is the idea of Samurai silence – Samurai are not meant to complain or show their emotions.

Anonymous, Japan



When we are facing chaos, being met by bewilderment in management is not helpful.

Anonymous, Australia

Trust your people to do the right thing and a funny thing will happen – they will do the right thing!

David Meates, Canterbury District Health Board, Christchurch

Self-care is just one piece. We should be asking: How can we limit the stressors people are being faced with?

Valerie Cole, American Red Cross

You need to give workers permission to say, "It is natural to feel this way and being able to say it out loud is a sign of strength."

Dr Tomoko Osawa, psychologist, Kobe, Japan



Meet John

What does it mean to be impacted and working in recovery?

Before the earthquakes John had a social service role and successfully balanced the responsibilities of job, house, family, social and community involvement. However, John is now performing the following roles:

- a full-time job with added complexity
- peacekeeper as exhaustion causes tension between colleagues
- interpreter – communicating post-disaster realities to outside personnel or agencies
- off-road driving specialist – navigating damaged roads and road closures
- teaching-assistant due to learning concerns with his children post-disaster
- project manager for home rebuild or repair
- insurance specialist fluent in ‘legalese’
- packing and removal contractor – managing multiple house shifts during home repair or rebuild
- human Richter scale – able to identify size, depth and epicentre of the many aftershocks
- counsellor to distressed friends
- parental PA supporting older parents with insurance claims, rebuild or repair.



Ask yourself

How are we allocating resourcing to support staff as part of all plans?

Are we monitoring staff well-being and engagement?

Is support of our people one of the key performance indicators for all management positions?

Do members of my team feel safe and confident to ask for support when they need it?

How am I ensuring the team feels trusted to make decisions?

PRIORITISING SELF-CARE

to be effective

Looking after yourself – easier to say than do. It may feel uncomfortable, feel laden with guilt or feel impossible. The fact is that you will be able to contribute more over the long term if you look after yourself. Role modelling this for your team is a powerful gift. Know too that failing to care for yourself will impact those around you – your team, the community you support and those in your personal life. Self-care is a demonstration of respect – for the people you serve, for your team, for the people you care about and for yourself. A stressed leader equals a stressed team.

At the end of the day, although it mightn't feel like it, someone else can do your job, but no one else can be your kids' Mum. No one else can be you in your real life. If the two are conflicting, you have to know you can back out.

Kate Brady, Australian Red Cross

Things are going to be more complex than you realise. Dive in and swim around. But don't forget to roll over and look at the sun every once in a while.

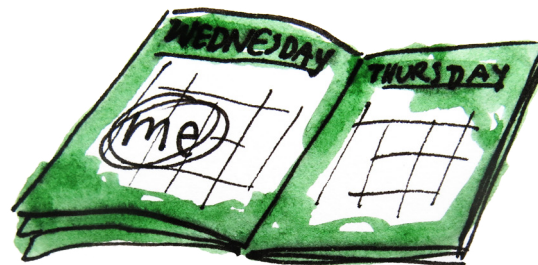
Jason Pemberton, youth-led recovery, Christchurch

You think you're alright at the time, and then you look back and go, oh I really wasn't alright.

Sharon Torstonson, supporting community service groups, Christchurch

The New Orleans recovery process has been described as 'death by a thousand cuts'. Take care of yourself, take care of the person next to you – you need to do this before you can care for and give your hearts to others.

Kay Wilkins, American Red Cross, New Orleans



I was so focused on helping others, I lost sight of my own happiness. This is not the price we should pay for caring for others.

Lisa Orloff, volunteer organisation, New York

Not being superhuman. You can take time out. For the long term, your own health and well-being, say 'no' at certain times. Learn to say 'no'.

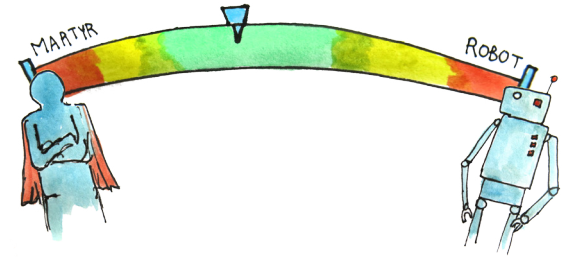
Margaret Jefferies, community development, Lyttelton, New Zealand

You can fall into the trap of thinking everything depends upon you. And if you're not there then the whole thing falls apart.

Dr Sarb Johal, clinical psychologist, New Zealand

Know your time. Plan your exit and accept that leaving is not failure. Leave while you're still passionate about it.

Margot Christeller, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, Christchurch



What are you?

Kate Brady worked with an operations manager early in her career who asked her, “Just so I know how to work with you, tell me are you a martyr or a professional? If you are a martyr you’ll give it your all but won’t last long. I will make use of your energy for the short time you’re here but won’t waste my time training or developing you. But if you’re a professional, you’ll be here longer for the people we serve and it’s well worth supporting and investing in you.” Kate was challenged to know the difference between a martyr and a professional – an invaluable message which has stuck.

Avoiding acting as the martyr is not to suggest that we shouldn’t genuinely care. At one end of a spectrum is the martyr and at the other is the robot who operates without heart. Becoming hardened or cynical and losing empathy are warning signs of burnout (as is feeling indispensable, AKA the martyr). These signs alert us to danger (for ourselves, our team and those we aim to support). The martyr-robot scale is useful as a regular and frequent self-check. Aim for the green zone somewhere in the middle.



Ask yourself

Are my close relationships being affected by my role? Am I still doing the things I used to love and find meaningful?

Do I have a buddy who will tell me when stress is having an impact, even when I might not see it?

Do I have a self-care plan that I follow and someone to keep me accountable?

How much of myself do I see in the burnout checklist?

Have I considered when and how to hand over the reins?



Self-care plan (see Tool Box)

Burnout checklist (see Tool Box)



TOOLS

to guide implementation

When demands are high, time is short and tiredness sets in, absorbing messages from others is a challenge. Actioning those messages is even more difficult. Disaster after disaster we leave a trail of lessons not learnt and missed opportunities. We have pondered, “What does it take to really hear the messages you are given in the stressful recovery environment?”

The questions and tools in the Tool Box on page 29 are your aids to ensuring the messages in this book (passed on to you from other leaders), are not lost amongst the noise of recovery.

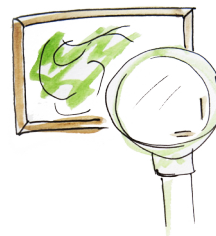
You will find the following tools in the Tool Box:

PERSPECTIVE CHECKER CARDS

In recovery it is easy to lose perspective. When you cannot see the forest for the trees, these cards will help you.

- Step 1** Identify the wise heads you trust, respect and will listen to.
- Step 2** Explain to these people their invaluable role as a perspective checker.
- Step 3** Fill in the blank card with a message important to you (optional).
- Step 4** Give the cards to your perspective checkers.
- Step 5** Ask them to return the card to you when they think you need it most.
- Step 6** As early as you can, make a deal with these people that, within all reasonable circumstances, you will act in accordance with the card provided.

See the cards in the Tool Box.



SELF-CARE PLAN

Use this self-care plan if you are serious about successful outcomes for communities impacted by disaster and about retaining the ability to support your team.

Make it achievable, protect and prioritise the activities within it, put it somewhere visible, update it regularly and get help from others to hold you accountable to it.

See Self-Care plan in the Tool Box.



BURNOUT CHECKLIST

Working in recovery involves the ongoing and continuous absorption of emotion from people in the community and within the team. Burnout is commonly faced when the needs of the community peak and happens even to the most competent of people. Becoming overwhelmed, tired, stressed and no longer able to perform is inconvenient to others. It is unlikely that your subtle hints for needing time out will be picked up.

It is important to actively create the space for your own well-being and to honestly check in with how you're faring on a personal level. Crashing and unplanned exiting is detrimental to you, the people you care about, your organisation and the community.

No one can be 'strong' all the time. Understanding our own needs and vulnerabilities is a strength. Taking a break and/or seeking support is both a sign of professionalism and a valuable example to those around you.

Schedule for yourself (and those in your team) a regular check in with the burnout checklist. Use it to reflect on how you are faring. Do you need to focus on your well-being, take a break and/or seek support – earlier rather than later is a good rule of thumb. Remember, many of the best recovery leaders benefited from a great deal of support along the way.

Please note: This burnout checklist is not a clinical or definitive tool and should be used as an indicator only. Even if the items on this checklist are not resonating with you, but you're concerned for your well-being, seek advice and support.

See checklist in the Tool Box.



WILD CARD

This is your aid to avoid 'group think' and ensure diverse perspectives are included in discussion, decision-making and within project teams.

- Step 1** Playing this card denotes to the team or your organisation a requirement to bring someone from a very different background and perspective to the table.
- Step 2** Be innovative and seek your 'wild card' person from unexpected sources.
- Step 3** Explain the role of the 'wild card' to the person chosen (see instructions on the card in the Tool Box).
- Step 4** Be prepared to be challenged, to listen, to learn and for unexpected opportunities to emerge.

See cards in the Tool Box.



REFLECTION AND ACTION CHECKLIST

HAVING A NOBLE PURPOSE

- ☐ Do I feel proud of what I am doing?
- ☐ Do I feel like I am laying bricks or building a cathedral?
- ☐ Who does my leadership benefit?

BEING ETHICAL

- ☐ Am I taking the easy option (because I am tired or time pressured)?
- ☐ Who can help give me the courage to do the right thing?
- ☐ When personal success is at odds with doing what's right, what will I do?

BEING INTENTIONAL

- ☐ How am I creating the culture I want?
- ☐ What is my plan to develop other leaders?
- ☐ What tools will you use to turn hope into a measurable reality?

MAKING DECISIONS

- ☐ Have I actively listened to those who do not agree with me?
- ☐ Is this really an 'either-or' decision or can I find an 'and'?
- ☐ Do I have the support needed for the decision to be accepted and implemented?

KEEPING PERSPECTIVE

- ☐ Do I have an informal 'board' of trusted wise heads – people with whom I can have safe conversations, admit challenges and whose feedback I will respect?
- ☐ Am I comfortable asking for advice? Do I view seeking other opinions as a sign of strength?
- ☐ Are all sectors and levels represented in my address book?

LEADING WITH EMPATHY

- ☐ Am I losing my capacity for empathy? Is it time for a break to refresh?
- ☐ How do I ensure I hear the voice of the community? How represented are communities in my calendar compared to other stakeholders?
- ☐ Is my default to trust people (the community, colleagues, other organisations)?

BEING INNOVATIVE

- ☐ Do I have explorers on my team? When did I last play a 'wild card'?
- ☐ Am I hiding behind obstacles? Am I being creative with ways to say yes to good ideas?
- ☐ How do I ensure my team feels safe stepping into the unknown?

SUPPORTING THE TEAM

- ☐ How are we allocating resourcing to support staff as part of all plans?
- ☐ Do members of my team feel safe and confident to ask for support when they need it?
- ☐ How am I ensuring the team feels trusted to make decisions?

PRIORITISING SELF-CARE

- ☐ How much of myself do I see in the burnout checklist?
- ☐ Have I considered when and how to hand over the reins?
- ☐ Do I have a buddy who will tell me when stress is having an impact, even when I might not see it?



TOOL BOX



NEW ZEALAND
RED CROSS
RŌPEKA WHERO AOTEAROA

PERSPECTIVE CHECKERS

I _____
respect your wisdom to
know when I need this card.
I commit to action based
upon the card you give me,
knowing that it might be
difficult for me to hear and
see the reality at the time.

LET THIS
ISSUE GO
and focus
ON THE BIG
PICTURE

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

take
a break

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

listen
NOW
LISTEN
WELL

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

TRY
SOMETHING
DIFFERENT
BE
CREATIVE

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

GO GET
Some sleep
AND SPEND
SOME TIME
WITH PEOPLE YOU
CARE ABOUT

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

HAVE
COURAGE
TO SPEAK
THE TRUTH
TO THOSE WHO
HOLD POWER

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

ARE YOU
DOING
THE RIGHT
THING?
OR THE MOST
convenient
OR POPULAR
THING?

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

PERMISSION
TO DO THINGS
DIFFERENTLY

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

RECONNECT
WITH THOSE
you
SERVE

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

TRUST
MORE -
GIVE
OTHERS
PERMISSION
TO DO THINGS

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

Is THIS
ROLE
(STILL) RIGHT/
GOOD FOR
you?

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

SEEK
a range
OF VOICES
AND
perspectives

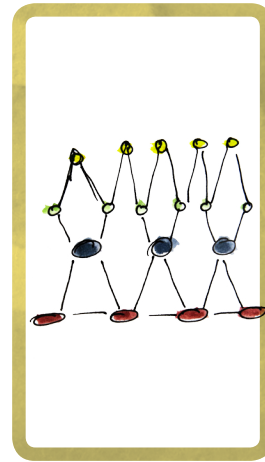
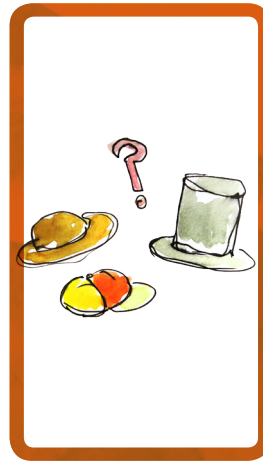
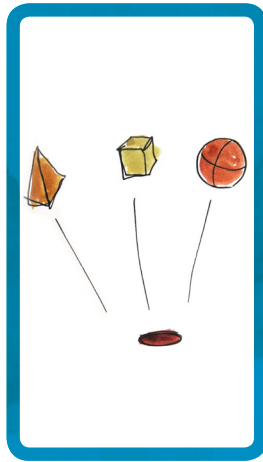
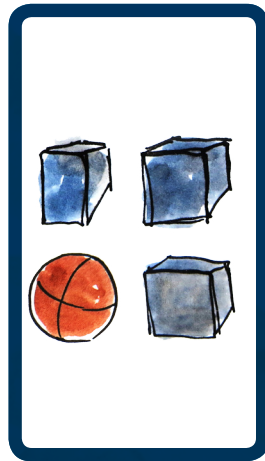
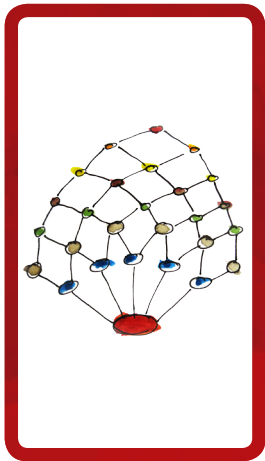
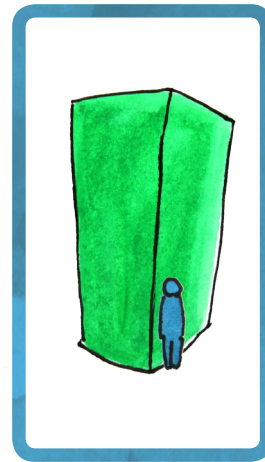
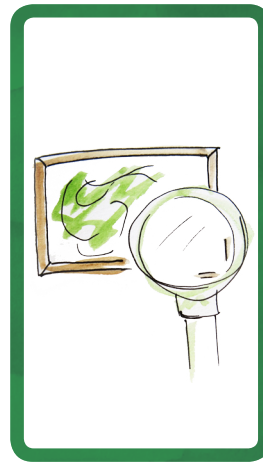
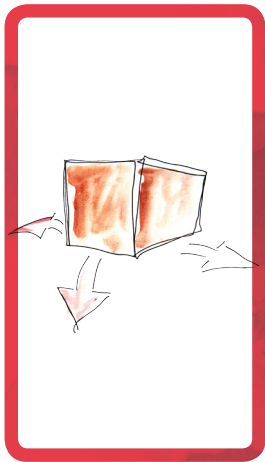
preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

DON'T
be shy
GO AND
ASK
FOR HELP
IT'S A SIGN
OF
STRENGTH

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

CREATE YOUR OWN
HERE

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery



BURNOUT CHECKLIST

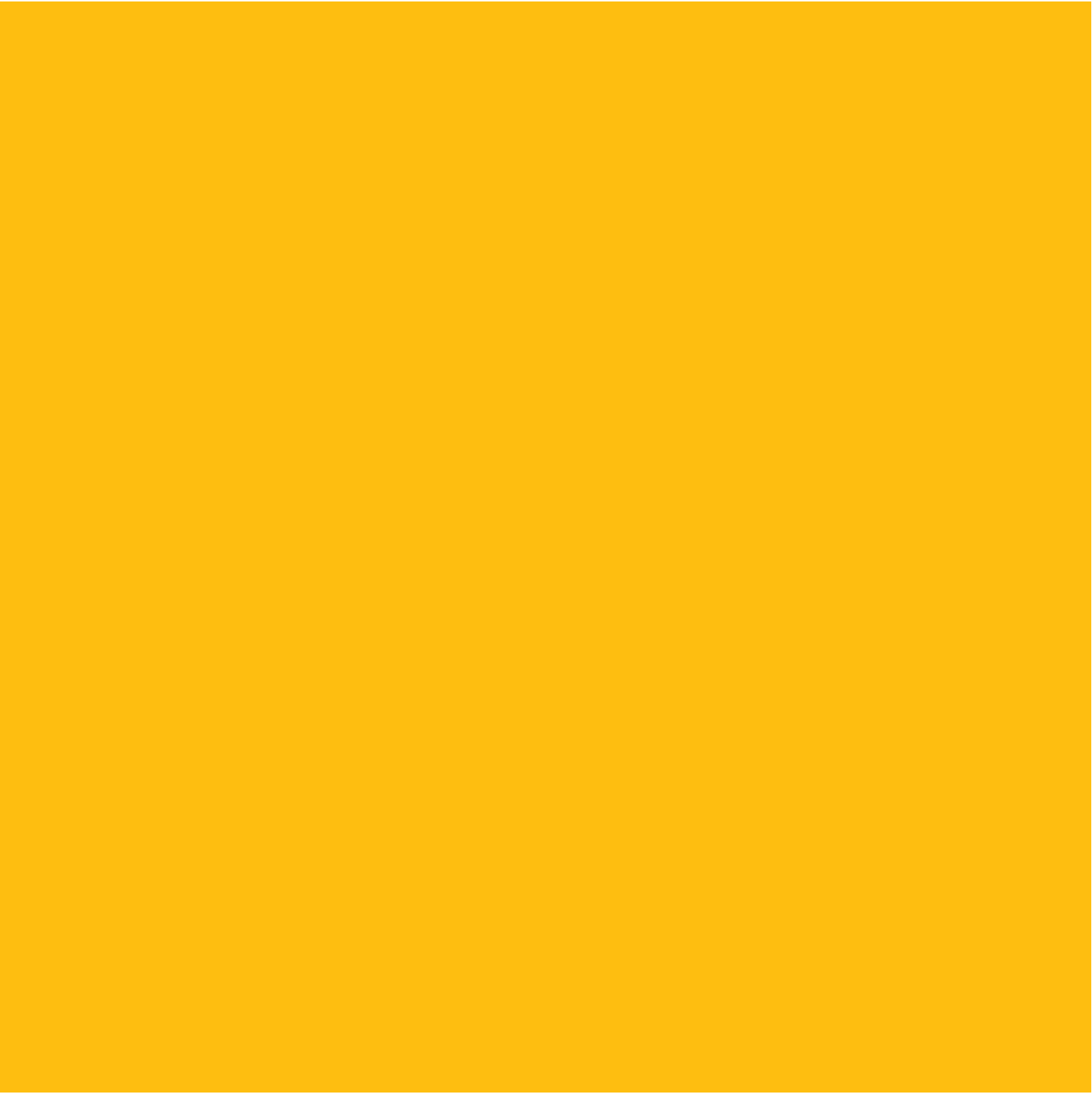
DO ANY OF THESE SOUND LIKE ME?

- ☐ Starting to resent clients or becoming overly involved and taking on their worries.
- ☐ Lacking enthusiasm, drive and energy.
- ☐ Experiencing a loss of capacity for empathy.
- ☐ Feelings of emotional withdrawal, bitterness and cynicism.
- ☐ Having a reduced sense of accomplishment.
- ☐ Developing a narrow focus and inability to see where your role fits in the ‘bigger picture’.
- ☐ Tending towards poor or uncooperative behaviour to spite ‘the system’.
- ☐ Being overwhelmed by the size of the task, and defensive about expectations.
- ☐ Feeling challenged by change; resorting to responses such as “This is how we do it!”
- ☐ Over time becoming too invested and unable to accept when your role is no longer required.
- ☐ Feeling that you are indispensable to a community or individual’s recovery.

IF SO:

- ☐ Is it time for a break?
- ☐ Is this role still right for me?
- ☐ Is it time to seek professional support?

Please note: This burnout checklist is not a clinical or definitive tool and should be used as an indicator only. Even if the items on this checklist are not resonating with you, but you’re concerned for your well-being, seek advice and support.



WILD



CARD

WILD



CARD

You have been chosen to be our 'wild card' because we need and value your different skills, knowledge and perspective.

Please join us, help us see things from a different angle, gently challenge us and be prepared for the great and the unexpected which can happen when we collaborate in wildly innovative ways.

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

You have been chosen to be our 'wild card' because we need and value your different skills, knowledge and perspective.

Please join us, help us see things from a different angle, gently challenge us and be prepared for the great and the unexpected which can happen when we collaborate in wildly innovative ways.

preparecenter.org/resources/leading-in-disaster-recovery

SELF-CARE PLAN

My stress triggers: *e.g. tiredness, being pulled in too many directions...*

How I know I am experiencing negative stress: (Thinking about this ahead of time means we are better able to recognise when we're impacted.)

My plan to counter negative stress:
What are my stress-busters? Who can I talk to?

My rule for when I will seek further support: *e.g. three consecutive nights of disrupted sleep*

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	ACCOUNTABLE TO...
EMOTIONAL				<i>e.g. catch up with a work mate or professional coaching</i>				<i>e.g. coach/colleague</i>
SOCIAL				<i>e.g. movie with a friend</i>				<i>e.g. friend's name</i>
PHYSICAL		<i>e.g. take the dog for a walk</i>						<i>e.g. the dog</i>
SPIRITUAL	<i>e.g. take time to connect with nature</i>							



