CO-CREATING A CONNECTED COMMUNITY RESILIENCE STRATEGY

...nurturing the conditions so that your community can collectively prepare for, respond to, recover from and bounce forward after a crisis event

EAST SCARBOROUGH STOREFRONT
A project of MakeWay

CANADIAN RED CROSS
CROIX-ROUGE CANADIENNE

CATALYSTS' Circle

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WELCOME TO THIS GUIDE...

Catalysts' Circle, the Canadian Red Cross and the East Scarborough Storefront are delighted to share our experiences and insights with you. We want this guide to be as easy to navigate as possible so that you and your community can get the most out of it. To that end here is a map of the layout:

The guide is divided into two main sections:

1. **context you might want to know**
2. **practical applications you can apply**

Section #1 - Context: This section provides you with the WHY and the WHAT of a Connected Communities Resilience strategy

We start with an overall introduction to the guide and then move onto:

- Describing just what a Connected Community Resilience strategy is and what it can look like
- Why we are specifically promoting a *Connected Communities Resilience strategy*
- The background: how the concept of a Connected Community Resilience strategy evolved, was piloted and studied

Section #2: This section is all about the HOW: *how you* might design and develop *your own* Connected Communities Resilience strategy

We start this section with an overview of the Connected Community Approach to resilience, and then take you through, step by step what it takes to adopt and adapt the process to your unique context:

Getting started:

- Honing your capacities as a Resilience Integrator
- Putting together your team
- Exploring your local context

Listening and learning

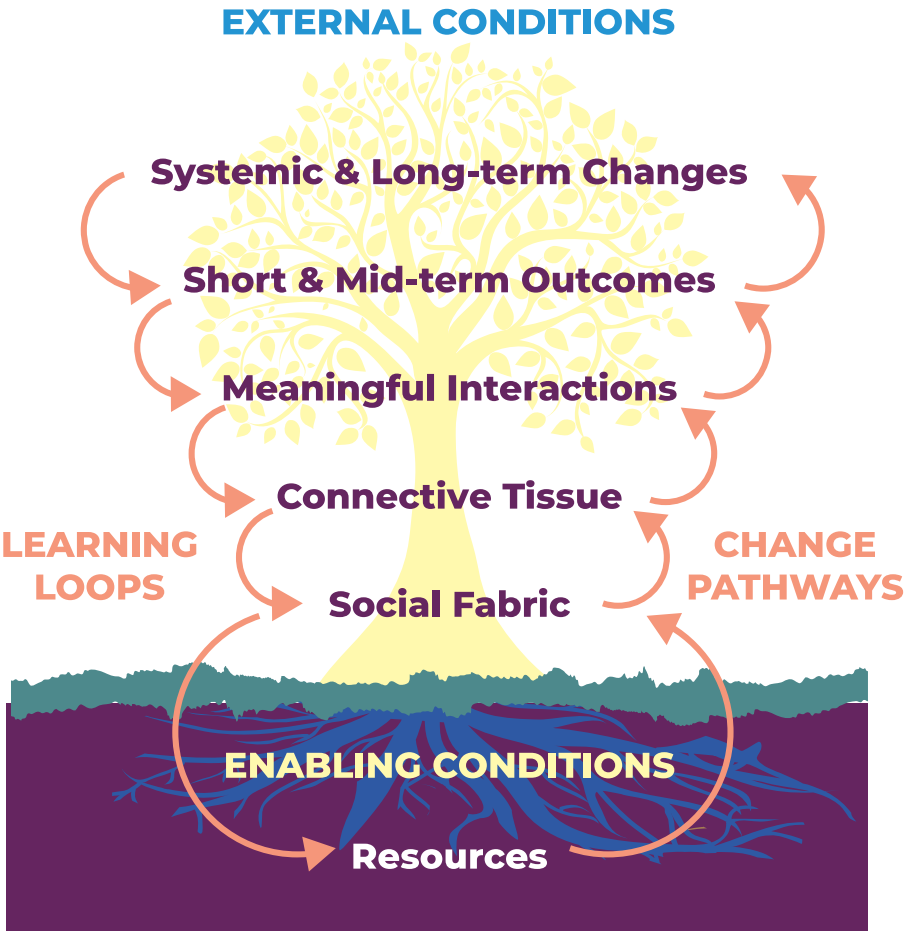
- Learning from local experiences
- Identifying who in the past has stepped up for what
- Understanding local risk
- Understanding what to expect from systems level players

What, so What, now What

- Creating your foundational plan
- Strategizing together
- Now what; planning for the future

Evaluating your Connected Community Resilience Strategy

Some final words and resources



Inspired by
Laila Martins and Jannick Kaiser: Regenerative Signal 2025

SECTION 1

YOUR INTRODUCTION TO CONNECTED COMMUNITIES RESILIENCE STRATEGIES...

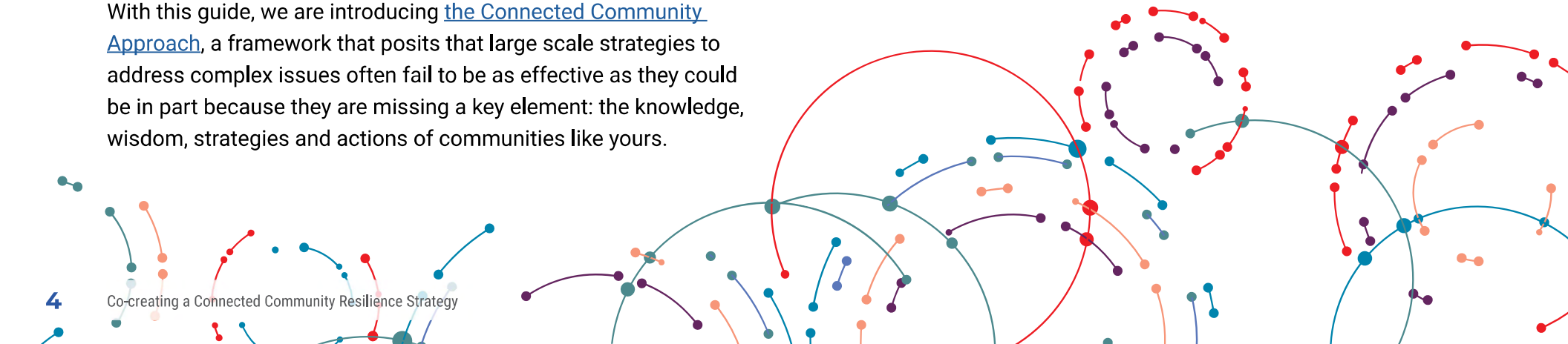
We all know that as a society, we are facing increasingly urgent and interconnected crises of a changing climate, growing polarization, isolation and mental health. As people working with and in community, you are also likely seeing how these crises play out everyday in the places where people live and work...and that the fallout from these crises is most keenly felt in communities that have been marginalized from the mainstream due to geography, race and/or economics.

Governments, institutions and researchers from across sectors are urgently seeking solutions to these crises while at the same time, there is increasing recognition that many of our current systems and methods for addressing complex issues are simply not working. Guidance for how to work differently in the face of the complexity of modern challenges is sorely needed.

With this guide, we are introducing the Connected Community Approach, a framework that posits that large scale strategies to address complex issues often fail to be as effective as they could be in part because they are missing a key element: the knowledge, wisdom, strategies and actions of communities like yours.

This guide offers tangible how-to guidance on how communities like yours can reimagine their role in the face of anticipated and unanticipated crises.

By designing and implementing a Connected Communities Resilience strategy with and in your community, you are at the forefront of a movement to disrupt siloed, transactional and short term ways of working: you are demonstrating that communities are dynamic places of action, full of wisdom and context specific knowledge that, with the right support and investment can face challenges together while at the same time building the foundation upon which a more equitable, healthy and sustainable future can be built.

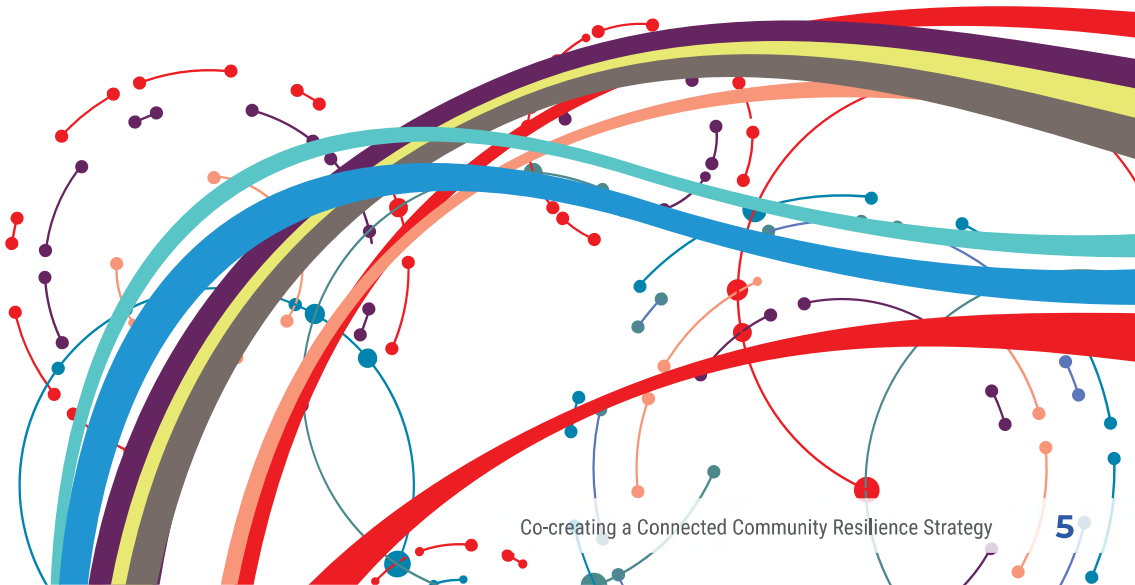


WHAT IS A CONNECTED COMMUNITY RESILIENCE STRATEGY

The term 'resilience' typically refers to adaptation to crisis events and is used in various and different ways to mean everything from emergency management, to adaptation of roads and buildings, to individual health and wellbeing. It has been used so often, it can sometimes lose all meaning. It has also been used as a tool of oppression, suggesting that people who have been oppressed should 'be resilient' and just get used to it: resilience framed as people's ability to cope with ongoing adversity rather than challenging the systems that require people to become resilient. In Connected Communities, we mean just the opposite: community resilience is about a community's power to strategize and act together, to disrupt the status quo and make the places where people live, work and play stronger, healthier and more sustainable over time.

A resilient community is one that takes intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its citizens and institutions to respond to and influence the course of social and economic change"[1]

A Connected Community Resilience strategy, therefore, is about more than acting in the face of a crisis, it is about strengthening the ongoing capacities of individuals, grassroots groups, organizations and institutions in the community to learn together, work together and support one another in good times and bad and over time.



1 Michelle Colussi, Canadian Centre for Community Renewal, 2005

Connected Community Resilience strategies are hyper-local: they work at the scale at which people, going about their day to day lives will encounter and engage with one another. Each community will need to decide on their own geographic boundaries: too small and there are not enough resources and local capacities to draw on; too big and the strategy becomes less relational and more bureaucratic. Whatever the geographic scale, your strategy will be grounded in five key concepts:

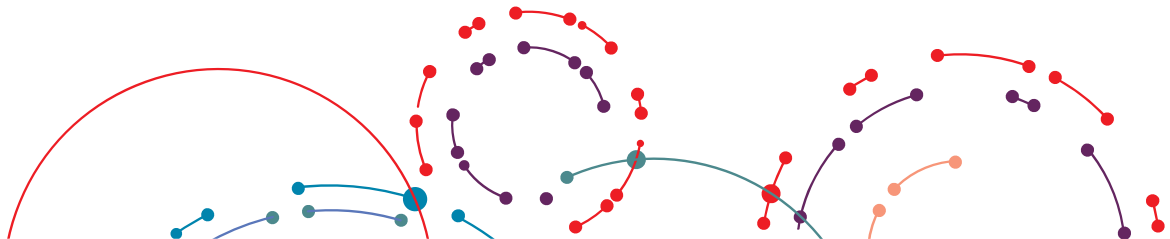
- **Context matters:** each community is unique and will design their strategies to build on their own strengths and meet their own needs and priorities
- **Resilience is not a new activity:** a connected communities resilience strategy builds on the strengths, relationships, assets, projects and capacities that already exist in the community
- **Social fabric is the foundation of an effective resilience strategy:** positive relational connections between and among people, groups, organizations and the physical environment are critical underpinnings of a successful resilience strategy
- **The responsibility for resilience does not rest just with the community:** creating connective tissue between local, municipal, institutional and regional resilience strategies enables communities to benefit from larger scale capacities and investment, and larger scale strategies benefit from a nuanced understanding of local context
- **The goal of a Connected Communities Resilience strategy is not to bounce back to a dysfunctional 'normal', but to use the learning, knowledge and relationships developed before, during and after a crisis to bounce forward to a healthier, more equitable and sustainable future.**

A Connected Community Resilience Strategy is not a one time activity; it is alive and dynamic and enacted ongoingly, before, during and after a crisis event. A Connected Community Resilience Strategy is intended to be foundational and to underpin more tactical types of emergency planning.

It is important to emphasize that Connected Community Resilience strategies do not replace municipal/regional/institutional emergency management or service coordination plans, they rely on them as critical components of community resilience. The premise is that investment in a Connected Communities Resilience strategy can and will increase the effectiveness of larger scale sustainability, mitigation and adaptation strategies because this type of investment advances strategies that work: they are context specific, relevant to local people and actionable in the moment.

The key is integration. There will, therefore, be people involved in a Connected Community resilience strategy who have specific expertise, mandates and priorities that address one or more aspect of resilience: the power of the strategy is its capacity to help people to see the connection between their work and the work of others as it relates to the community.

A Connected Community resilience strategy supports communities to leverage their unique capacities and strengths to intentionally prepare for, respond to, recover from and bounce forward after a crisis event.



This guide will help you to get started by co-creating a strategic foundation. The 2026 KGO Bouncing Forward plan is an example of what that foundation can look like.

A strategic foundation (like the Bouncing Forward plan) is the critical underpinning to a long term and evolving Connected Communities Resilience strategy which can include a number of elements:

- **Household / organizational preparedness:** the capacity for people to understand local risk and be prepared to act during a crisis
- **Service continuity/coordination:** the ability for service organizations to continue to meet local needs in the event of a crisis
- **Municipal emergency preparedness:** the capacity of municipalities to keep people safe and deploy people, equipment and resources to ameliorate the effects of a crisis event
- **Resilient physical infrastructure:** enhancing buildings, electrical grid, communications systems, etc to withstand a crisis event and making contingency plans in case of failure

...as well as strategies for influencing larger systems:

- **Ecological Resilience:** capacities to help nature and local ecologies fourish
- **Economic resilience:** capacities to ensure that local people have the ongoing wherewithal to thrive
- **Disaster/Crisis mitigation efforts:** contributions to addressing the underlying causes that create crises in the first place
- **Long term sustainability:** envisioning and moving towards a more sustainable future

Each Connected Community Resilience strategy will evolve differently, focusing on the things that the specific community cares about and the risks they face.

WHY A CONNECTED COMMUNITY RESILIENCE STRATEGY

Every community has experienced crises, from floods, fires or ice storms to acts of violence - and, of course, we have all experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. Equally, during these crises, local people and organizations have stepped up. We have seen, over and over again, that , often by default, local people become de facto first responders. In the immediacy of a crisis, local people (individuals, groups and organizations) act to support their neighbours and communities before formal responses are mobilized, fill gaps not covered by more official responders and reach out to local people to respond to context specific issues in ways that only those with local knowledge can. People do step up. They are often lauded as heroes. They do what they can for their communities and they often do so at great cost to themselves. When people step up they are often left to do so without resources, little support and in isolation from formal strategies, plans and actions dealing with the crisis.



The very act of co-creating a Connected Communities Resilience strategy with and in community can, in and of itself, be a way to strengthen social fabric and build local resilience.

How institutions and governments act in communities before, during and after a crisis is often frustrating for community groups and organizations. Community-led work is essential to a healthy, equitable and sustainable society, and yet is typically undervalued and marginalized from the solutions generated at scale and associated investments. When government and institutions design resilience strategies, they typically see communities, and especially marginalized communities, in one of three ways:

- a geographic space in which a disparate collection of individuals happen to live,
- places where 'vulnerable' people await social service interventions, or
- places that offer opportunities to study the effects of poverty, racialization and other inequities

Seeing communities in these ways often lead to well intentioned strategies that, when they involve communities at all, consult individuals, design social service interventions and/or research projects about resilience. While these can be worthwhile, and are often critical components of systems level resilience strategies, plans and actions, these lenses on community make it difficult for systems level players and communities to work together productively as partners. The capacity for community and people who work in larger institutions and governments to work together before, during and after a crisis is what we call 'connective tissue'.

Communities that are organized, that have strong relationships (social fabric) and have the capacities, knowledge and connections to (investment from and influence on) municipal, institutional and regional actors (connective tissue) are able to support the people who step up, leverage expertise and knowledge and act collectively, strategically and in mutually supportive ways.

As someone who works in a community organization, nurturing this kind of collective capacity towards community, resilience and sustainability is likely something you work towards, aspire to, or maybe just dream about in the midst of navigating fragmented systems. It is also likely that your capacity to design and implement whole-of-community strategies and work collaboratively across sectors and scales has been limited by a one organization, one program, short-term funding and expectations. There is, however, a growing call for funders, researchers, institutions and municipalities to think about communities as key actors in addressing complex issues. As that call grows louder it becomes clearer that communities, the places where people live and work are the places where the intersection of multiple crises is most keenly felt, and, therefore, need to be a focal point for investment in sustainability, mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Using this guide will help you strengthen the capacity of your community for collective action at the local level, and open meaningful pathways to build relationships and connect strategies with broader system actors.

Connected Community Resilience strategies are about creating ways of working that are fundamentally different from the norm. They seek to (re)establish mutually reinforcing systems and reciprocity: *people, organizations, institutions and governments informing and strengthening each other's efforts before, during and after a crisis event.*



The ideas and inspiration for this guide builds on the work of the East Scarborough Storefront (The Storefront).

The Storefront is the birthplace of the Connected Community Approach upon which this guide is based.

BACKGROUND

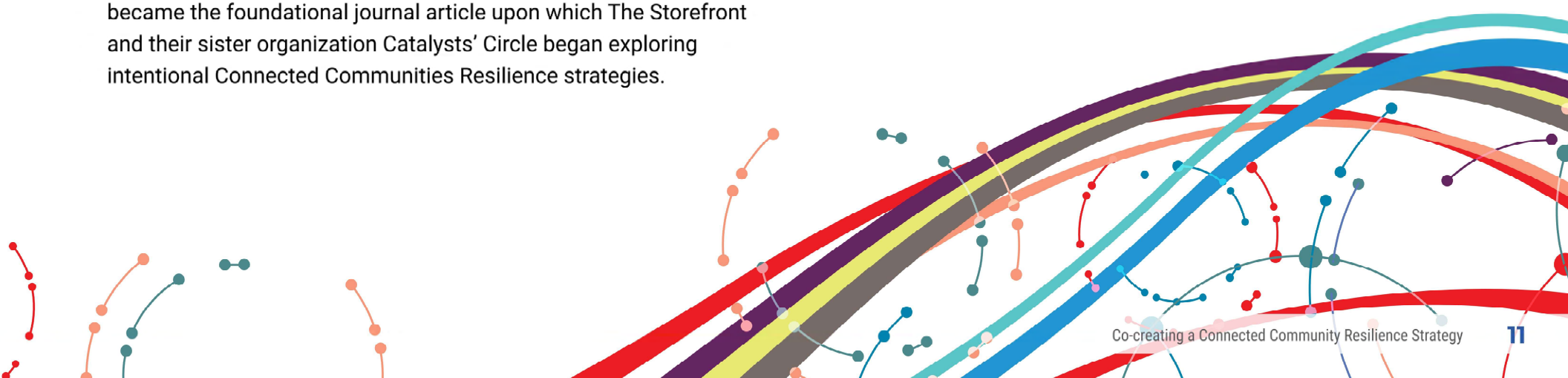
The Storefront began to focus explicitly on resilience in 2012 when their local community was traumatised by a mass shooting in which 22 young people were shot, and two were killed. Although there was no formal plan in place, The Storefront was able to facilitate a whole-of-community response because, as a local integrator (aka community backbone organization) they had a long history of designing and facilitating collective action in the community. The Storefront was created by the community for the community to help grassroots groups, organizations and institutions to co-create a one-stop-shop service hub. Once the service hub was up, running and thriving, the community turned to The Storefront to facilitate other whole-of-community strategies including community-led design of places (transforming and old police station, parking lot and the site of an old water tower for community use), collective processes (networked tables and communication systems) and events (markets, sporting events, arts, theatre and cultural celebration).

Thus, in 2012, they were able to use their capacities, honed over time, to ensure that dozens of organizations and groups could contribute to a response that centred resident needs, ideas and strengths. The Storefront's role throughout was to co-ordinate the contribution of organizations, institutions, the municipality and grassroots groups in ways that made sense to local people and in the local context. The details of the community efforts to respond, recover and bounce forward in the wake of the 2012 tragedy is described in this blog.

The events of 2012 provided the impetus for a deeper dive into the potential of the Connected Community Approach as a framework for resilience both in the local East Scarborough community and in addressing efforts to build resilience across the country. Professor Blake Poland at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, with a number of research partners (including the Storefront), set out to explore what the evidence says about our societal capacities to foster resilience in a changing world and whether, and in what ways the Connected Community Approach contributed to those capacities. A Connected Community Approach: Citizens and formal institutions working together towards community-centred resilience became the foundational journal article upon which The Storefront and their sister organization Catalysts' Circle began exploring intentional Connected Communities Resilience strategies.

Over the next decade The Storefront honed their skills as a community integrator. It was an exciting decade full of momentum for a diversity of facilitated whole-of-community strategies; but it was also a decade in which The Storefront was again called to use its integration capacities to enhance resilience during and bounce forward after other crises including an ice storm, and, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time they also codified the Connected Community Approach for use by others and spun off their sister organization, Catalysts' Circle to assist in making the framework as useful as possible to others, as issues related to isolation, polarization, climate change, inequities, health and wellbeing continued to grow.

In 2025, when it became increasingly apparent that adapting to climate crises would become essential to their community work, The Storefront sought out investment partners, most notably the Gore Foundation, ARUP and the Canadian Red Cross to help think through what an intentional, resourced, documented, facilitated and long term Connected Communities resilience strategy might look like. Their early work and the resulting Bouncing Forward plan forms the foundation of this guide.



AN OVERVIEW OF THE APPROACH

Before you get started it's worth taking a moment to reflect on your community as an ecosystem. What we're asking you to do is to simultaneously work with individuals in the community in a deeply relational way, facilitate connections between and among people in a strategic way and support the dynamic interplay of people, processes, places and events in an ongoing way. We're asking you to use ecosystem thinking:

Ecosystem thinking takes a holistic approach to community building, collective problem-solving and creation of local value in ways that recognize the deep interconnections and interdependence among people, organizations, institutions, businesses and the environment within a defined geographic area.

Ecosystem thinking makes community wide resilience planning inclusive, dynamic and meaningful to a range of players in your community. It also makes planning a complex process. The Connected Community Approach (CCA) can help you navigate those complexities: the following is a brief synopsis of what using CCA might mean for you as you delve into the next section and get started on your Connected Communities Resilience strategy.

For a deeper dive into the Connected Community Approach and how it can help you foster the social fabric and connective tissue essential for resilience in your local context, you might consider hosting a Connected Community Approach workshop or embarking on a Connected Communities learning journey with your team. More information about what is available to you can be found at the Catalysts' Circle website.



The key	What it means for your process
Letting Values lead	Make sure everyone involved has a clear understanding of the purpose of the strategy, the design process and the principles that will guide it
Building on everyone's strengths	Identify what you know/need to know about the community, what local community building projects already exist and who is rolling up their sleeves to make the community a better place to live and work
Facilitate collaborative processes	Choose the right method for the right group; start with where people are already gathering; go to their events, ask for invitations to their meetings. Make participating easy, enjoyable and inspiring through process design.
Prioritizing power sharing and equity	Use trauma informed practice as you explore difficult topics related to local crisis events; be explicit and intentional about understanding resilience from the perspective of Black, Indigenous, newcomer and otherwise marginalized groups within the community
Making Community Building Visible	Design communications that are accessible and meaningful to local people: wherever possible use stories, and illustrations to get key messages across
Embracing the messiness	Use perspective empathy to try and understand crises from multiple points of view; use ecosystem thinking to hold tensions between multiple, seemingly contradictory points of view
Work at multiple scales	Make sure your process involves local institutions as well as people at the grassroots; identify what is the community's to do and where advocacy and/or collaboration with systems level players is what is needed to advance local resilience
Learning together	Use the opportunity to learn more about your community and share that learning broadly; explore the ways you will keep your foundational plan active and alive as new learning, new people and new realities come into play
Build creative infrastructure	Be concrete about what infrastructure (spaces, resources, knowledge) exist, how people know about/use them and what doesn't exist and needs to be created as part of the plan
Connected Communities from the inside out	Pay attention to the people doing the work and how they are being supported: the facilitators of the plan will also need to prioritize their own wellbeing and relationships in order to be as effective as possible.

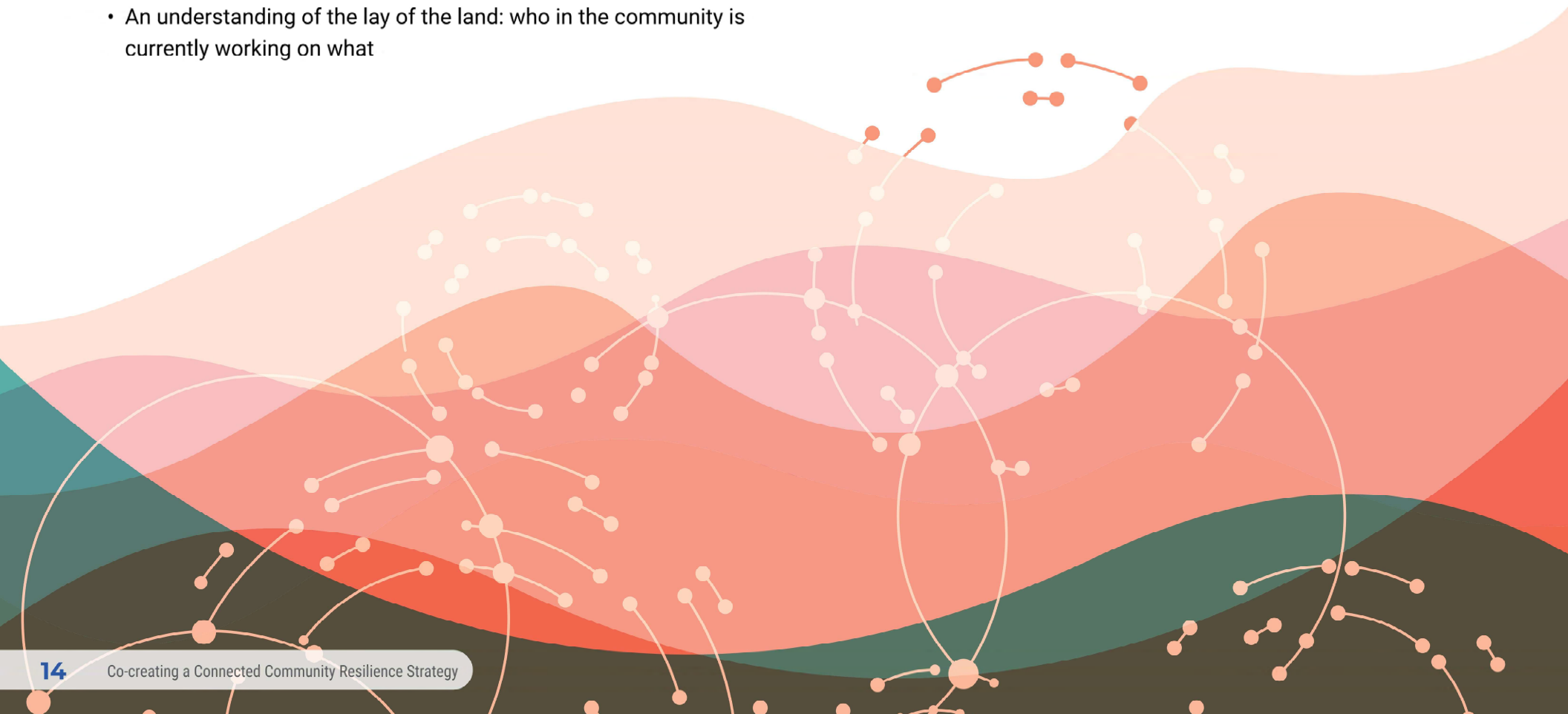
SECTION 2

GETTING STARTED

This and subsequent sections of the guide are written in steps to make it easier to navigate. However, the process of facilitating community resilience is far from linear. In this section we talk about the three things you will need to get started; you can engage with them in the order suggested, in a different order or simultaneously:

- Skills and capacities to take on a resilience integrator role
- A team to help guide and facilitate connections
- An understanding of the lay of the land: who in the community is currently working on what

If you are already deeply embedded in the community and facilitate networks or collaborative projects as your core work, you may need to spend relatively less time on this section. However, if you are newer to this kind of work, it will be important to make sure you dig deeply into this section as it will stand you in good stead as a foundation for what's to come.



Step 1: Understanding and honing your capacities as a local Resilience Integrator

This guide is predicated on the idea that you, and your group/organization is ready, willing and able to act as a resilience integrator within your community context. We recognize that the role of integrator is rarely explicitly funded (though we're working on that!), however, we also recognize that your group or organization likely tries to play this role in whatever ways you can given the opportunities and constraints in your particular context. When we talk about the role of a resilience integrator, we are talking about a group or organization deeply embedded within a community, with the following capacities:

1. Is able to see the community from multiple perspectives and worldviews
2. Facilitates, engages or otherwise connects with a variety of networks or groups focused on various issues or projects
3. Plays an active role in facilitating communication between groups/organizations and across the ecosystem
4. Understands and builds on local context and history
5. Creates social infrastructure to support community building activities
6. Prioritizes the development of relationships with a broad diversity of community builders
7. Values and actively supports the community building efforts of people who are typically most marginalized, on their own terms
8. Takes an interest and is curious to learn more about what others are doing to enhance resilience locally and at scale
9. Convenes and provides leadership and support to enhance and advance projects community members care about
10. Strategically weaves multiple viewpoints, mandates, strengths and aspirations together into collective strategic action

In the context of designing and implementing a local resilience strategy, a resilience integrator uses the above capacities to:

1. Strengthen the community's capacity for collective planning, coordination, knowledge sharing, and resource mobilization
2. Increase knowledge within the community about potential risks and opportunities for mitigation
3. Facilitate intentional development and implementation of community-specific strategies, plans and actions
4. Develop and nurture relationships with and influence on key systems level players

The skills required to design, develop, implement and iterate Connected Communities Resilience strategies are quite different from those needed for organization or program management. If you are reading this guide, you are likely already leaning towards this kind of ecosystem thinking and have been honing your integration skills through other processes. Communities need people like you. You will also know that it takes practice, conceptual framing and a network of support to do this work well. If you are looking for a supportive group of practitioners, learning journeys, reading materials or other resources to help you to develop your skills as a community resilience integrator, please reach out to Catalysts' Circle.

Step 2: Putting together your team

Communities are complex, so when designing a Connected Community Resilience strategy, it is important to have multiple points of entry to the planning process. It may seem like a lot of upfront work to include people in ways that are meaningful and relational in the early phases, however, it is this upfront work that will make all the difference in the capacity of the community to act together before, during and after a crisis event. Be careful to balance your role as a resilience integrator with holding space for others to shine: it takes people from across the ecosystem, each bringing their unique capacities, to create a whole-of-community strategy.

Co-design, co-creation and co-ordinated plans and strategies require an investment of time: in the long term it is worth the investment. Remember that the very act of convening is, in essence, fostering community resilience.



While ultimately, you will want to consult individual residents about their personal experiences, the people you will want to co-design, co-create and co-ordinate with are likely people who are already actively involved in community building efforts. We define community building here quite broadly to mean people (whether they are involved in informal grassroots groups or more structured organizations and institutions) who *roll up their sleeves* to make their community a better place to live, work and play (more on understanding who these people might be in your community in the next section: understanding your local context). A Connected Community Resilience strategy will work best if it is integrated into existing projects, programs, groups and organizations. To that end, getting started means identifying who will be co-creating the foundational plan and how they might engage in the planning process.

One of the key things you will find as a Resilience Integrator is that the more key people are engaged in the process, the more momentum builds around the project. The trick is balancing people's desire to be along for the journey with the realities that people have: their own priorities and pressures that may dictate how much they can actually be involved. Some groups and organizations will prefer to be told what the plan is once it's developed, others will want to provide feedback on the plan at crucial stages, but your core design team will want to influence the plan's design from the outset.

A useful lens to take on who and how people are involved is a CCA tool: heavy, medium light. Using this tool will mean defining the specific criteria for each group to reflect your own context, however, in a Connected Community Resilience strategy the categories loosely mean:

Heavy: Your core team: the people you will work with you to co-create and facilitate the processes for designing and implementing your strategy

Medium: Your broader network: the people who will help ensure that the strategy reflects local realities and is as inclusive as possible

Light: The wider community: the people who will provide insights and perspectives from their own vantage points

The best way to identify who plays what role within the community is for them to self select. In order for them to do that, you will need to be able to communicate a clear purpose for their involvement. The following is a generic description that you can use/adapt to be relevant and meaningful in your local context:

We are convening people to create a Connected Community Resilience strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to help us to ensure that we can work together as a community and have what we need in place so that we can prepare for, respond to, recover, learn and heal from a crisis together.

We believe that resilience comes from a strong community. So much is already happening here and we want to foster local resilience by building on the projects that already exist and learning from the experience and the wisdom of local people.



The heavy group (referred to from here on as your core team): If at all possible, you will want to co-design your Connected Communities Resilience strategy with a core team of (6-8) people who represent different constituent groups within the community. You may want to call this group a steering committee, an organizing team or other language that best reflects the role they are playing. You can think about diversity in this sense as including:

- Organization type: informal/grassroots groups, organizations, businesses, institutions
- Generations: youth, adults and elders
- Cultural traditions and ethnic backgrounds
- History and perspective: longtime residents and relative newcomers
- Geography: people from the different areas/neighbourhoods of the community

Try and balance the diversity of the group with its size and their ability to commit. Your core team should be people you can rely on to think about the *process* of designing the strategy, how to implement it, and keep it dynamic, current and alive in the community.



Your core team can act in an advisory capacity, or as a decision making body - you will know what makes sense in your local context. Some questions you can ask to figure out what role your core team might play relative to your role as a resilience integrator are:

- How much capacity/commitment does the group have to do the work it takes to collectively design a resilience strategy?
- Are the people eager to engage in that work or would they rather reflect on and add insights to your efforts?
- What are people willing and able to do between meetings?

The role of a Resilience Integrator requires transparency, capacity to share power and flexibility. Remember that the effectiveness of your strategy will largely depend on trust. Before you get started on designing your strategy, it will be important to discuss and document who is playing what role in the design. Clarity about who is doing what and why will make the design process easier.

Key questions you might ask include:

- What is the purpose of the team? What are the principles that will guide your work (Here are some examples of principles that might help you get started)?
- Who makes what kind of decision when? What is decided by you as a local resilience integrator and what should be held by your core team?
- If you, as a resilience integrator have received funds for this work, how are those funds to be used?

- What is the core group's role in the project activities - ideas and options include:
  - Taking ownership for specific parts of the design process
  - Promoting the idea of contributing to a whole-of-community strategy in spaces they are in
  - Using their own networks and contacts to share information about the strategy as it evolves
  - Hosting community learning events, sending out surveys across their organization and contacts (outreach),
  - Hosting personal, household, organizational or business crisis preparedness workshops (i.e. bringing in people with expertise that will be useful to the community and/or hosting brainstorming sessions)
  - Acting as a connector between local, institutional and municipal resilience strategies
  - Participating in writing, designing and/or disseminating community resilience plans

However your core group is framed and organized, the important thing is to have a clear purpose, frank conversations about who is doing what and why, and having a shared understanding of the principles that will guide everyone's work. These foundational pieces, along with the logistics including meeting frequency and resource allocation will help ground your core team to be as effective as possible in co-creating a whole-of-community resilience strategy. This terms of reference is an example of how you might document these decisions.

Note, Catalysts' Circle offers inspirational workshops to help get your core team off on a good footing. Please reach out if you would like to explore how a context specific workshop might start your team off in a good way.

Medium group: Your medium group will be the people who are keenly interested in the community's resilience, but do not have the capacity or time to engage heavily in your process. This group is much less formal than your core group - they are the people you will rely on after the next few phases of strategy creation to tell you whether you got it right and to do a deep dive with you on what the strategy might look like for their group, organization or institution and how they might be involved. You might consider your medium group your resilience network: you will activate them in various ways during the next few phases of the process.

Light group: This group can include anyone and everyone in the community ecosystem, whether or not they are involved in community building activities. Your light group brings lived expertise to your strategy. They don't need to commit to co-designing the strategy, and you don't actually have to convene them as a group. The insights this group provides should form your strategy's foundation. Remember, the key to the success of your strategy is the degree to which it is relevant and meaningful to the diversity of people who live, work and play in your community.

Don't confuse 'light' with unimportant. You can think of it this way: if your core group is concerned with why and how the strategy is created, and your broader resilience network is concerned with where and with whom the strategy will work, the people engaging in a lighter way are concerned with what goes into the strategy. You will activate your light group(s) primarily in the next section: Listening and Learning and again in Socializing the Plan.



Step 3: Understanding the local context

As mentioned above, the process of getting started is not linear. You may, in fact, want to/need to understand your local context before you can start thinking about who to involve in your process. There is no reason why you can't engage in understanding the local context prior to or at the same time as putting together your team.

Connected Communities Resilience strategies are place based. You will need to decide up front what the 'place' is you are designing for. In Connected Communities strategies generally, we don't define an ideal size or geographic area, but rather think about communities as the geographic spaces in which people, living their day to day lives, might reasonably interact. This will look completely different in a rural, small town and urban context. Some of the questions you might ask yourself to figure out the geographic parameters for your resilience strategy are:

- Could people run into each other at the grocery store? The library? The community centre?
- Do most local children go to the same schools? Play in the same parks?
- Do people engaged in community building efforts use specific geographic boundaries, either politically or practically?
- Are there natural boundaries that shape your community
- Do you, as a Resilient Integrator, typically work within a specific geographic area?

Whatever the geographic boundaries make sense in your context, the first question you and/or your team might ask themselves is: how well do we know our community?

Given that successful Connected Communities resilience strategies build on what is already happening in the community, before you start thinking about what your strategy will look like, you will want to know:

- Who the active players and local agents of change are (i.e. who is rolling up their sleeves to make their community a better place to live, work or play)
- What local organizations/projects people are involved in
- What are the issues and aspirations that local projects seek to address

If you are deeply embedded in your community, you may know the answers to these questions. If, however, you are looking for a way to get grounded in local context, this Surfacing Momentum Guide can help you get started.

Geographic boundaries are important for place based strategies, however, if treated rigidly, can also be detrimental to local resilience.

In the example above, the shooting that injured 22 people and killed two technically took place outside of the KGO community: it was across the street.

The community looked at their boundaries as porous - across the street or not, this happened in their community. The City saw the boundaries as firm and, therefore, did not see the KGO community organizing efforts as relevant. As a result, the City and the community were acting at odds to one another in response and recovery efforts.

The East Scarborough Storefront as an integrator was able to leverage pre-existing relationships with the City (connective tissue) to rectify the disconnect and ultimately develop a shared understanding about who would do what to support the traumatized community.

LISTENING AND LEARNING:
WHAT RISK AND RESILIENCE LOOKS LIKE IN YOUR CONTEXT

This is the phase of your strategy design where you will engage more broadly. Once you have embraced your role of Resilience Integrator, put together your team and begun to explore and document who is doing what in your community, you can begin thinking about the risks the community may face and what local resilience looks like. Your own perspective of risk and resilience is just one of many. The task in this section is to pull together different experiences, interpretations and views on what risk and resilience looks like so that as many people, organizations and institutions in your community see themselves reflected. To do this, we focus on four areas of learning:

1. **Learn from individual residents how they behave in a crisis:** who do they rely on, what information do they trust, how do they keep themselves safe?
2. **Explore what formal and informal groups, organizations and institutions do in the event of a crisis:** what do they see as their role, what spaces, resources and capacities can they use for the overall wellbeing of the community before, during and after a crisis?
3. **Research what risks the community is likely to face.** Many resilience strategies will be put in place as a result of a changing climate. If this is the impetus for your resilience strategy, you will want to leverage climate expertise to understand the risks specific to your local context.
4. **Learn about what you can expect from systems level players (municipalities, regions or institutions like the Canadian Red Cross):** what can the community count on before, during and after a crisis? How does the community tap into resources and capacities outside of the community?

Resilience planning is iterative. As you embark on your learning agenda, it will be important to start with a manageable amount of information and build on it over time.

Once again, we have laid these out in steps, but there is no need to isolate these activities: they are all about listening and learning and can be undertaken in whatever order works for you.

Step 1: Learning from individual experience

In order to create a solid foundation for your resilience strategy, you will need to learn about local experiences, culture and norms and strengths alongside of the risks your community faces.

As suggested above, one of the key things you can do to ensure your strategy is context specific is to tap into people's experiences with past crisis events. This resilience conversation toolkit (itself co-created with community groups), offers some great activities to help you surface past experiences.

Whether you use the toolkit or design your own approach, creating intentional space to share experiences, and learn together is a critical step that does more than glean information. If done well, these types of conversations are in and of themselves an approach to bouncing forward: learning from the past to plan for a better future. Reflecting on what happened in the past can support local relationships (social fabric) that underpin community resilience and enable people to see themselves in the strategy when it is ultimately created. The degree to which you facilitate dialogue and the degree to which you use tools such as surveys will be up to you and your core team. One approach is to facilitate dialogue in spaces where people are already convening and follow up with surveys.

If you decide to use surveys, here is an example to get you started: Survey for individual residents

> People forge bonds in places that have healthy social infrastructure – not because they set out to build community but because when people engage in sustained, recurring interactions, particularly while doing things they enjoy, relationships inevitably grow.
>
> - Eric Klinenberg - *Palaces for the People*

Step 2: Exploring who steps up to do what in a crisis situation

During a crisis, people, groups, organizations and institutions step up in ways they themselves might find surprising. The ways that they step up can be many and varied including, but by no means limited to:

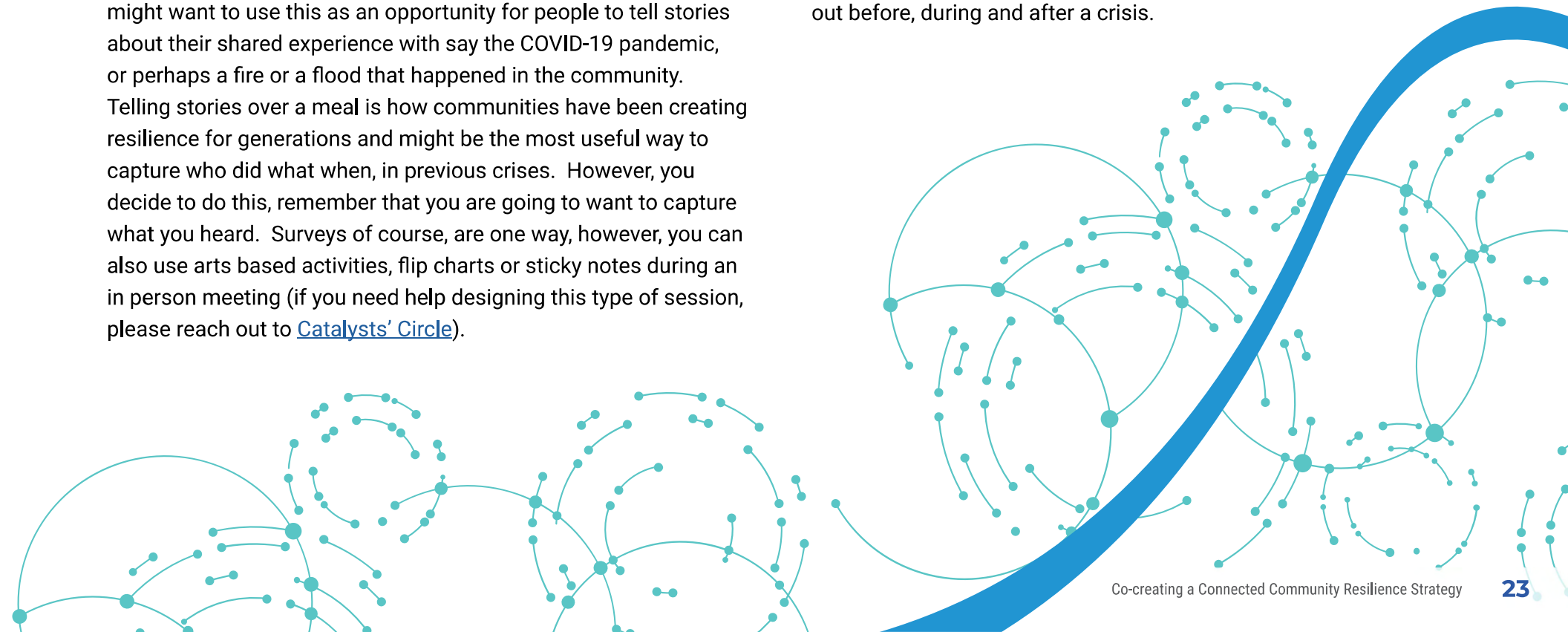
- Being a source of trusted information
- Opening up their spaces for people to shelter in or as a goods distribution centre
- Cooking and distributing food
- Raising funds
- Offering a listening ear or more formal emotional support/ counselling
- Connecting people to resources and services
- Sandbagging or building temporary shelters/structures
- Using vehicles for evacuation or transporting goods

Ultimately, your Connected Communities Resilience strategy will be about connecting the dots and co-ordinating these various and different activities so, understanding what has happened in the past is a good starting place to plan for the future. Like with asking about individual experiences (above), the very act of convening people (your resilience network or 'medium group' described above) to reflect on what they did during a past event, can be a way to get people thinking about what a whole-of-community strategy might look like. Therefore, if you have the capacity and opportunity, convening sessions in which you ask people to reflect together can be really useful. If convening seems daunting, one approach is to get yourselves invited to a pre-existing meeting to begin the conversation and follow up with a survey like this one to get the specifics. Or, if you are looking for an opportunity to bring people together in ways that continue to strengthen local social fabric, you might want to use this as an opportunity for people to tell stories about their shared experience with say the COVID-19 pandemic, or perhaps a fire or a flood that happened in the community. Telling stories over a meal is how communities have been creating resilience for generations and might be the most useful way to capture who did what when, in previous crises. However, you decide to do this, remember that you are going to want to capture what you heard. Surveys of course, are one way, however, you can also use arts based activities, flip charts or sticky notes during an in person meeting (if you need help designing this type of session, please reach out to Catalysts' Circle).

Refer back to the 'understanding your context' section to figure out who it is you will want to hear from. Try to think as broadly as possible and include:

- Informal grassroots groups
- Clubs (sports, crafts etc)
- Faith communities
- Businesses
- Health organizations (hospitals, clinics etc)
- Nonprofit organizations
- Educational institutions

Each of these groups has specific strengths and assets and, perhaps most importantly, the trust of specific people in the community and the means to convene, communicate and reach out before, during and after a crisis.



Step 3: Understanding local risk

In the same way that convening to better understand how people have responded and adapted to local crises can help foster social fabric in your community, the act of learning about local risk can help you to build connective tissue between your local community and the people who analyze climate and other forms of risk across your municipality or region.

Who you partner with to help get a better picture of local risk will depend in part on your local context. However, here are some ideas on who may be able to help you to access locally specific information:

Canadian Red Cross: The Canadian Red Cross is (at the time of writing) building out an urban resilience strategy as part of their work in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Canadian Red Cross has knowledge and connections that will be useful to you throughout the development and implementation of your strategy. They offer downsized climate trends reports for specific regions, for example this 2026 report for Southwest Newfoundland. Forming a partnership with them early on will help provide you with the data you need and the connective tissue that you need to navigate and mitigate risk before, during and after a crisis.

Municipal or regional governments: local governments will have all kinds of data about your community. Most Canadian cities, and some regions have neighbourhood strategies. These strategies often identify marginalized or 'at risk' neighbourhoods based on vulnerabilities. The vulnerabilities in neighbourhood strategies are usually identified through population level data related to ongoing stresses (poverty, health, ability etc); the people who work on these neighbourhood strategies should also be able to introduce you to people who identify structural, climate or other types of risk you are trying to assess. In smaller or more rural contexts, the Emergency Management department, or one that focuses on the specific risk you are trying to understand (eg climate risk) might be the best place to start given your context and prior relationships.

Colleges and universities: Assessing local risk from available data is the subject of much academic research. The specificity of community/neighbourhood level data can be hard to come by, but the right academic partner may be able to (either themselves or by supporting students) delve deeply into what's available and analyse it for geographic relevance. For example this 2022 report from the Daniels School of Architecture at University of Toronto maps the intersection heat risk and racial/social inequities across Toronto neighbourhoods

Consulting firms/nonprofits: When the East Scarborough Storefront created the prototype for this 'how to' guide, they were able to partner with the engineering firm ARUP who provided a local risk analysis on a pro bono basis. While these kinds of pro bono offerings are not universal, building relationships with a larger firm like ARUP, or a smaller nonprofit like Spout can deepen your understanding of broader contexts and strengthen the connective tissue between your local work and how systems level actors are thinking about resilience in a changing environment.

Whomever you connect with to support a deeper understanding of local risk, it's a good idea to have several conversations about what you want to know before you reach out: it will be important to have the right amount of data/information at the right time for the right purpose to avoid getting overwhelmed with reams of information that may or may not be actionable. This example of a community focused climate risk assessment might help you get an idea of what is possible.

Step 4: Understand what to expect from systems level players

Over the years, Catalysts' Circle has spoken to many people in many communities about their experience of risk and resilience. Overwhelmingly, people express their frustration about the disconnect between what is happening locally and the larger scale strategies, plans and actions designed to either foster resilience or be of assistance before, during or after a crisis. One of the key roles a resilience integrator can play is to create connective tissue between local and systems level players. The starting place is deceptively simple: help local people understand what to expect from systems level players (in the next section we talk more about your role in helping systems level players to understand what to expect locally). For many systems level players this in and of itself may be a tall order: systems level institutions were not designed to work effectively with communities. As referenced above, there are growing calls to change that and disrupt institution-centric ways of working and replace them with community-centred and relational ways of working. Your efforts using this guide are part of that change.

Ideally, systems level players are already convening resilience integrators to share information. If, however, that is not happening in your context, the actions above (step 3: understanding risk) can be a starting place to build the relationships you will need to co-ordinate with larger systems. In this phase, you can use that relationship to better understand:

- What is available to help your community prepare for a crisis event?
- What kinds of crisis events trigger what kind of response?
- Who will help with what types of recovery efforts?
- Who is willing to roll up their sleeves and work ongoingly with your community to advance the resilience strategy, keep it alive and help local people to continually bounce forward to a more equitable, resilient and sustainable community?

Continuing to nurture relationships with systems level players will be critical both to introducing community-centred ways of working to the institutions in your context and to keeping your strategy alive and actionable over time and before/between crisis events.



WHAT, SO WHAT, WHAT NOW

At this point, you will want to collate your data in ways that paint a picture of your current state. The way you put together and share the data will impact the degree to which people can start from a place of shared understanding of your community ecosystem. You can use charts, photographs or illustrations to lay out what you've learned from the data. What you have heard will form the foundation for your Connected Communities Resilience strategy: a foundation upon which future action will be built.

You will want to make sure that you got it right, that the foundational plan is meaningful, relevant and actionable. The what, so what now what framing of this section refers to:

What: Checking back with people to make sure you got it right

So What: Given that we now know our current state, how can we use that information to plan for the future

Now What: What are our next steps? Where should we focus our energy? What will make it possible for us as a community to prepare for, respond to, recover from and bounce forward after the next crisis event



Step 1: What: Finalizing your foundational plan

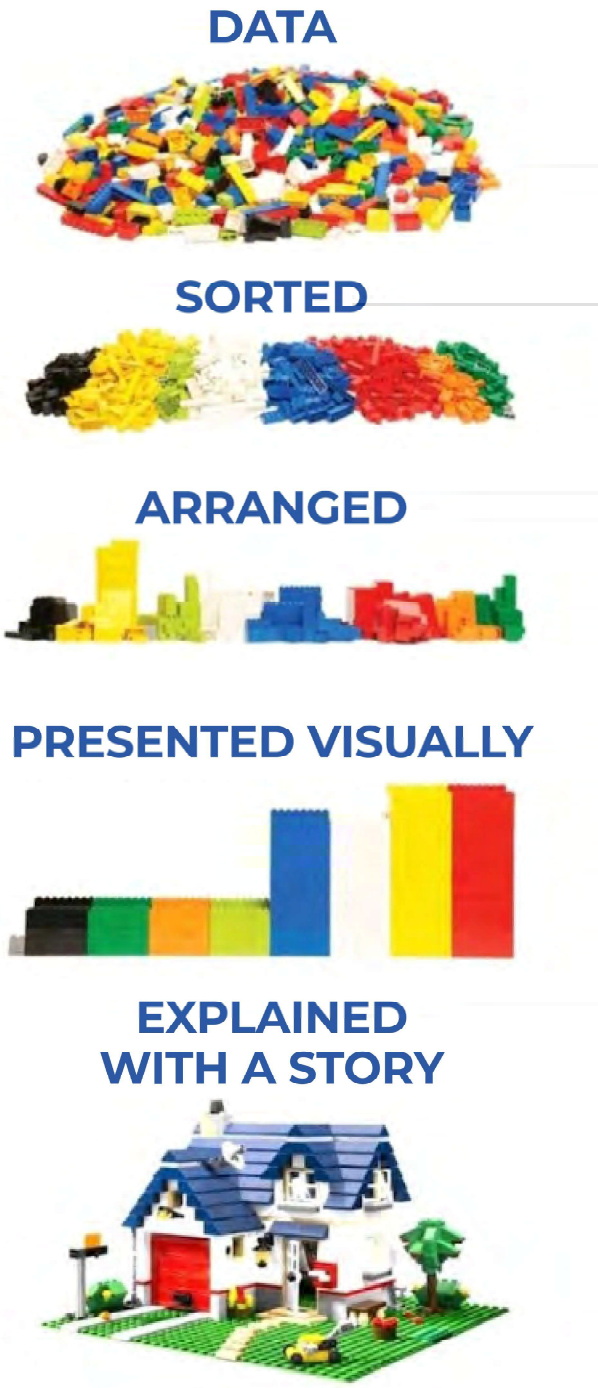
From the previous stages, you now have a ton of data. You know how people reacted in previous crises, and who stepped up to do what. You have begun to develop an understanding of what risks your community may face in the future and who at a systems level might be there to do what when. Your task now is to put it all together in a way that can lay the foundation for future action.

As a resilience integrator, you will likely want to put together the first draft yourself: too many authors can make the process cumbersome. However, there will be several iterations of the plan before it is finalized. At minimum, you will want to ground-truth it with your resilience network (see below), but you also may want to go through one or two iterations with your core group before you get to that point.

As with most storytelling, your foundational plan will be unique to your particular context. The good people in East Scarborough chose to create two foundation plans: a comprehensive plan that holds a great deal of detail to be used primarily by the core team and systems level players, and a community facing version to be used by local residents and organizations.

Your foundational plan should be as accessible and engaging as possible. Using storytelling and illustrations to describe your current state will make your foundational plan more actionable in the long run: this is in essence the story of how your community has reacted, stepped up and supported neighbours in a crisis.





However you decide to design your foundational plan, the content should include:

- How individuals respond in a crisis
  - Who turned to whom for what in previous crises?
  - What kinds of support did people receive to get through a crisis and recover after it?
  - Who do people trust to have their backs in the event of a crisis?
  - What were the challenges people faced in getting support?
  - Whose experiences do we know about through this process? Who was left out?
- What local grassroots groups, organizations/institutions see as their role before, during and after a crisis
  - Who played what role in the community during previous crises?
  - What spaces were used? How did communication flow?
  - What support did they need/get to be able to play these roles?
  - What support were they looking for but did not get?
- What risks your community might face
  - What kinds of crises might communities be facing in the coming months/years?
  - What do we know about those risks?
  - What is the community already doing to adapt to or mitigate those risks?
  - Where could more preparation make a difference?
- What organizations/institutions the community may be able to count on for what
  - What organizations/institutions showed up in past events to support the community? In what ways?
  - How do organizations/institutions communicate/co-ordinate with one another?
  - How does the community know who will do what in future crises?
  - What responses were community members disappointed in?

Once you have a draft of your foundational plan, it will be important to 'ground truth' it. Ground truthing is the act of going back to the people who provided the data for the plan to check if you have accurately reflected people's stories and the risks and vulnerabilities faced by your community. This is a great time to convene your resilience network (medium group outlined above). Once again, if you can convene them in person (or if necessary online), you are engaging in bouncing forward activities: enabling people to learn from each other and build connections that will be required to ultimately enact the strategy. If convening just isn't possible, you can also ground truth via survey. Your ground truthing should ask:

- Does how we describe what happens in a crisis ring true? What did we miss? Whose experiences are missing?
- Did we capture and share the information in ways that are actionable? What would you change?
- In what ways do you think you might use the information shared here in your own strategies, plans and projects?



Step 2: So What: Strategizing together

Socializing the foundational plan

The 'so what' phase of this work is where you really start planning for the future. It will begin with socializing your foundational plan. Socializing the plan will mean finding ways to make sure that it gets into the hands of people across the diversity of your community ecosystem; it will also mean finding ways to keep it top of mind, talked about, referred to and utilized as foundational to the development of strategic plans, projects and programs across the community. It is important to note that while you want the foundational plan to ground strategic action, it should be just a starting place, not used as a rigid instruction manual for how to deal with a crisis. The best plans, while important for so many reasons, are never a substitute for the kind of emergent strategy and improvisation that crisis demands or makes possible. Resilience plans should be held lightly, valued for what they enable, and should support, not replace organic organizing efforts.

Communication is foundational to any Connected Community Resilience strategy. Some of the processes that you use to socialize your foundational plan may also be useful processes to be leveraged in crisis situations. Here are some initial ideas on how to socialize your plan.

We encourage you to be creative and innovative in socializing your plan in ways that will resonate in your context:

- Use a multi-media approach to dissemination: formats can include podcasts, slideshows, dramatizations, art installations etc
- Bring hard copies of the plans to community meetings: refer to them often
- Link digital versions of the plan to newsletters, invitations, updates etc that go out to the community
- Encourage your medium team to introduce and reference the plan in their own projects and strategy development

As with all communication, relevance and repetition are key.

Exploring what the foundational plan means for the future:

Ideally, at this stage, your resilience network (both your medium and your core teams) are excited about the potential of moving forward together: using the foundational plan as a means to strategize together for the future. You might want to use this momentum as impetus for convening regular and ongoing conversations about risk and resilience in your local context.



The following offers some guidance on how to structure those conversations:

Keeping the concepts of social fabric and connective tissue as core tenets of your resilience strategy will help you to keep the conversation going. Before you get into specific work plans, an exploration of ways you can **prepare** by strengthening social fabric and connective tissue will enable a whole-of-community response no matter what type of crisis you face. Core to this type of preparation is a collective understanding of what will happen when a crisis hits:

- How communication will flow
- How organizations will coordinate their actions
- Where residents will go to seek shelter, food and information
- If evacuation is required, where will people most likely go? How will they get there? Who is their contact person?
- How external resources will be leveraged to ensure that immediate needs can be met

Strong social fabric: the connections and ties that bind us together as a society: social fabric creates the foundation for healthier, more proactive, coordinated and therefore resilient communities.

Connective tissue: the connections and communications that link local and systems level strategies, plans and actions. Connective tissue enables communities to build relationships with broader systems planning and understand what will happen before, during and after a crisis, which systems actors they should connect with, why and how.

This advanced preparation will allow for effective **response to** urgent needs: Agreed upon roles and responsibilities will help you work together in nimble and coordinated ways to keep trusted channels of communication open, keep people safe and support service continuity where possible during a crisis event.

- Who will communicate with municipal emergency management teams?
- How will nonprofit capacities (counselling, food banks etc) be leveraged quickly and effectively?
- What role will grassroots leaders play in reaching the community's most vulnerable? How will they be supported?
- How will the community enable municipal, institutional and/or other systems level resources to be distributed efficiently and effectively to those who need it?

Facilitate **recovery** efforts: Creating intentional space to care for one another, ensure people have access to the services, supports and networks they need to reflect, heal and mend what was broken.

- How will the community come together to heal, reflect on trauma suffered during the event and document their experiences?
- What services are needed to deal with physical loss and emotional trauma, and who might provide them?
- Who will broker services and recovery resources to meet residents' diverse needs?

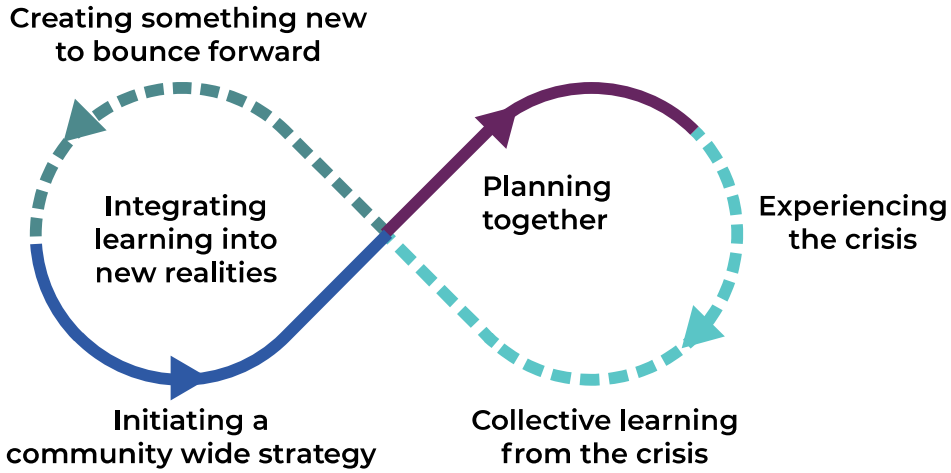
Charting the path ahead and bouncing forward to advance a healthier, more equitable and resilient future.

Bouncing forward is a critical concept to Connected Community Resilience strategies: what it means is, instead of bouncing back to the less than perfect pre-crisis realities, communities and society can use the disruption of a crisis to reimagine how we might collectively bounce forward to a better, more sustainable future.

You will be the best judge of when to convene a bouncing forward conversation. People will not want to have this conversation in the immediate aftermath of a crisis. They will need time to grieve and heal from what they have lost. It is important to respect that time and to notice the moments when people are ready willing and able to think about what they've learned and what they want to roll up their sleeves to change for the future.

The processes you used to design your foundational plan can be used again and enhanced to ensure that together, as a community, you can use a crisis to bounce forward:

- Who will convene, reflect on what was lost, what was broken and what cracks opened up to allow for new things to grow?
- Where can resources be leveraged to support bouncing forward projects and strategy renewal?
- How will this crisis inform your overall resilience strategy? What processes can you take from this guide to help you design a bouncing forward process?
- How can a bouncing forward plan help mitigate the potential of future crises and/or help your community to be better prepared for it when it comes?



Bouncing forward can mean different things to different people, there is room for differing perspectives. At its best, it is more than 'building back better' which tends to assume that the pre-crisis state was the ideal one. When you think about bouncing forward, it might be useful to start with imagining what a more sustainable future might look like for your community. This was the ethos of the Visionary Communities project: understanding local momentum, envisioning what the community would look like in 25 years if the goals of that momentum were realized and then asking the question: what can we do now to make that future state a reality. Whether you use a process like this or a different one, we encourage you to think about bouncing forward in as transformational ways as possible. This is a moment to hospice the things that are harming us and act as midwife to a society that benefits us and the environment that sustains us.

"For all of us, becoming Indigenous to a place means living as if our children's future mattered, to take care of the land as if our lives depended on it… Can a nation of immigrants once again follow (Sky Woman's) example to become native, to make a home?"

- Robin Wall Kimmerer - *Braiding Sweetgrass*

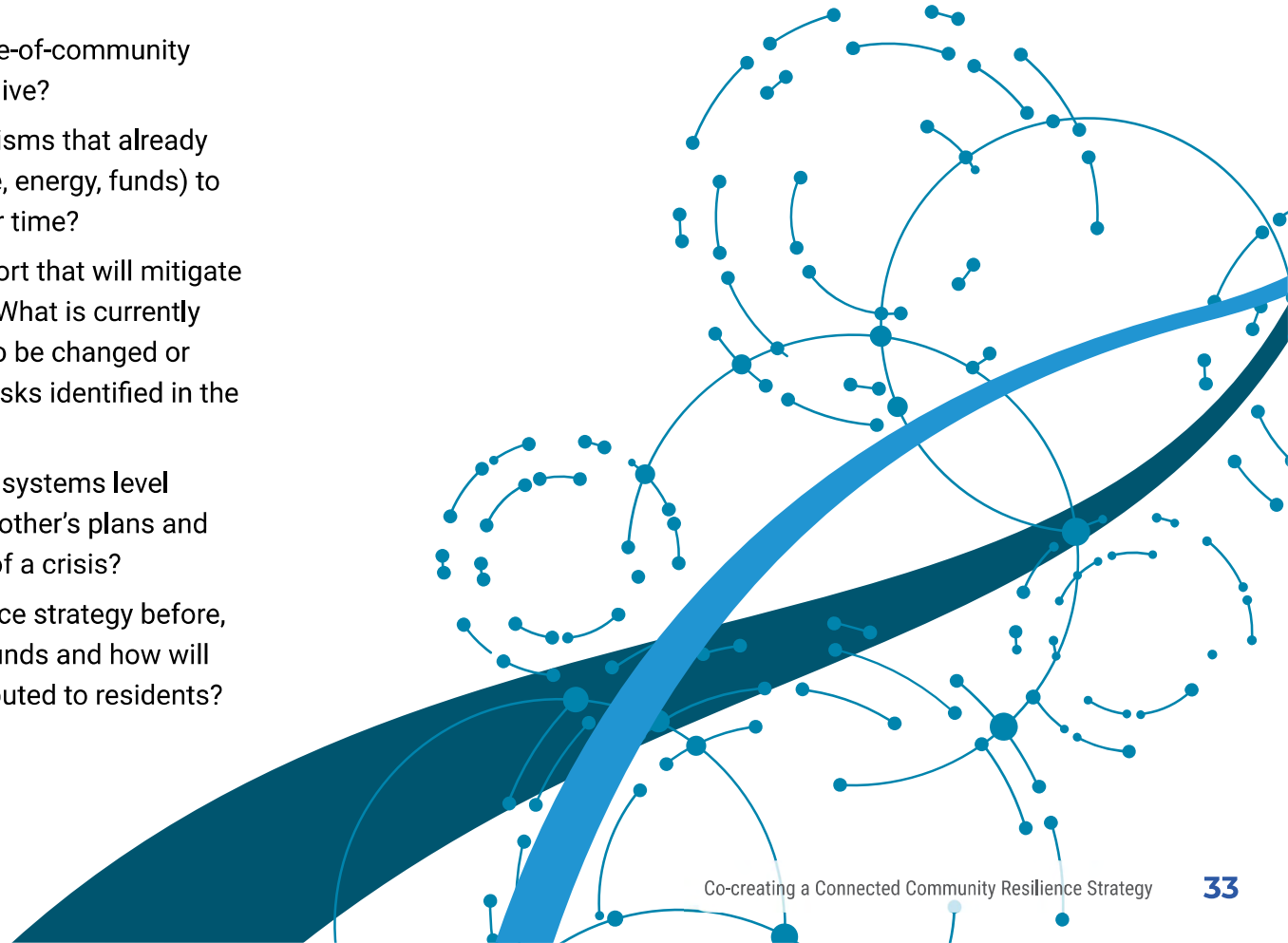
Step 3: Now What

Developing the next phase of your Connected Community Resilience strategy

This is the phase in which you strengthen your foundational plan, keep it alive and dynamic and take the next steps to make it actionable. The number of things identified in the what and so what phases may seem a bit daunting. The Now What phase can help you to prioritize what you plan to do in the upcoming year(s). Your Now What plan should have these component parts:

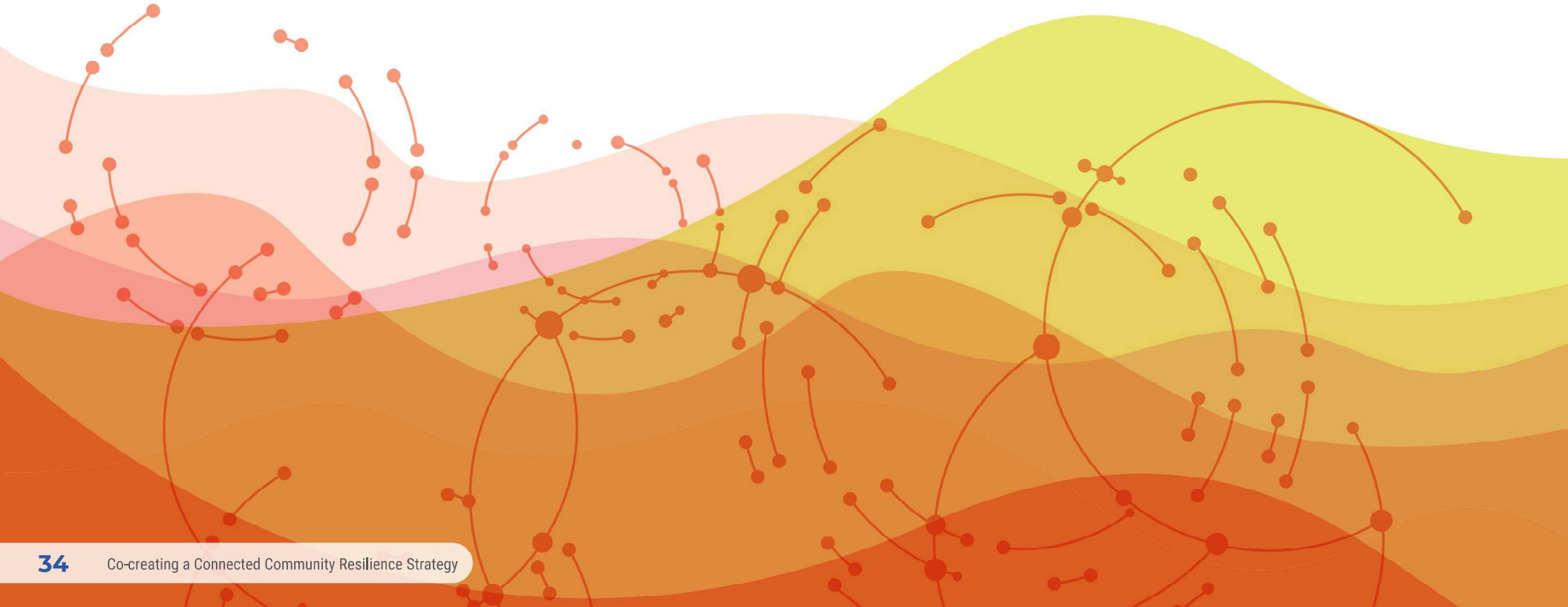
- Who will form the core team in this next phase?
- How will we make sure we continue to learn about people's experiences, strengths and needs during crises? Whose voices and experiences weren't included in the foundational plan? How do we include them now?
- How are you going to keep the idea of a whole-of-community connected communities resilience strategy alive?
- What projects, processes or support mechanisms that already exist in the community will you invest in (time, energy, funds) to ensure local social fabric grows stronger over time?
- What projects are you going to develop/support that will mitigate the risks identified in the foundational plan? What is currently happening in the community that may need to be changed or stopped all together in order to mitigate the risks identified in the foundational plan?
- What relationships will you nurture with what systems level players to ensure that you understand one another's plans and strategies and who will do what in the event of a crisis?
- How will you drive investment to your resilience strategy before, during and after a crisis? Who will hold the funds and how will they be shared among partners and/or distributed to residents?

These can be difficult conversations to have and are most effective if they are well facilitated, informed by your foundational plan and engaged in well before you are in the midst of a crisis.



EVALUATING YOUR CONNECTED COMMUNITY RESILIENCE STRATEGY

Your Connected Community Resilience strategy is ongoing. This guide has offered some ideas on how to get started by creating your foundational plan and how to move forward from this initial phase. You will revisit your strategy and associated plans each time there is a crisis. Revisiting your strategy is key to bouncing forward: using the learnings, relationships and discoveries from a crisis to mitigate the possibility of it happening again and to be better prepared if it does. Evaluating your efforts and how your strategy plays out in real time will help you with these bouncing forward efforts. The following offer you some ideas on the evaluative questions you can ask in each of the four phases of resilience: preparing, responding, recovering and bouncing forward:



Pre-crisis strategy evaluation:
PREPARATION

Is your Connected Community Resilience strategy evolving in a positive direction?

Social Fabric

1. Are your efforts supporting more co-ordinated action? In what ways?
2. Do you see indicators that there is increased trust among and between residents, grassroots groups, community organizations, and institutions? What are those indicators?
3. Are equity-seeking groups meaningfully included? Who is left out?
4. Are grassroots groups/leaders being intentionally supported in their involvement? In what ways?
5. Are organizations, institutions, faith communities and businesses from across the community contributing to the strategy? Who is not contributing? Why not? Are there ways you could be supporting them to engage?
6. Have new projects/partnerships been sparked as a result of this process? What do those projects/partnerships add to the community?

Connective Tissue

1. Has your work enabled communities to understand what happens in a crisis, who to connect with, why, and how?
2. Have roles and responsibilities been clearly defined and communicated?
3. Are mechanisms for timely information-sharing functioning?
4. Are communication tools well known and accessible?
5. How connected are local plans to broader system-level emergency strategies?
6. Are systems level players engaged with you on your resilience efforts? In what ways?

Immediate post-crisis evaluation: RESPONSE

Social Fabric

1. Who mobilized to do what during the crisis?
2. How did communication flow during the crisis?
3. Where, when and how residents and grassroot leaders feel trusted and supported in their actions?
4. Did people know who to turn to for immediate help?
5. How did trust hold up under pressure?
6. Where were the gaps? What kinds of supports were residents unable to access?

Connective Tissue

1. What systems level organizations supported your community during the crisis? Did you know what they were coming to do?
2. Did systems level players co-ordinate with those responding at the community level? Were roles and responsibilities clear?
3. How well did community and system-level efforts align? What breakdowns occurred?

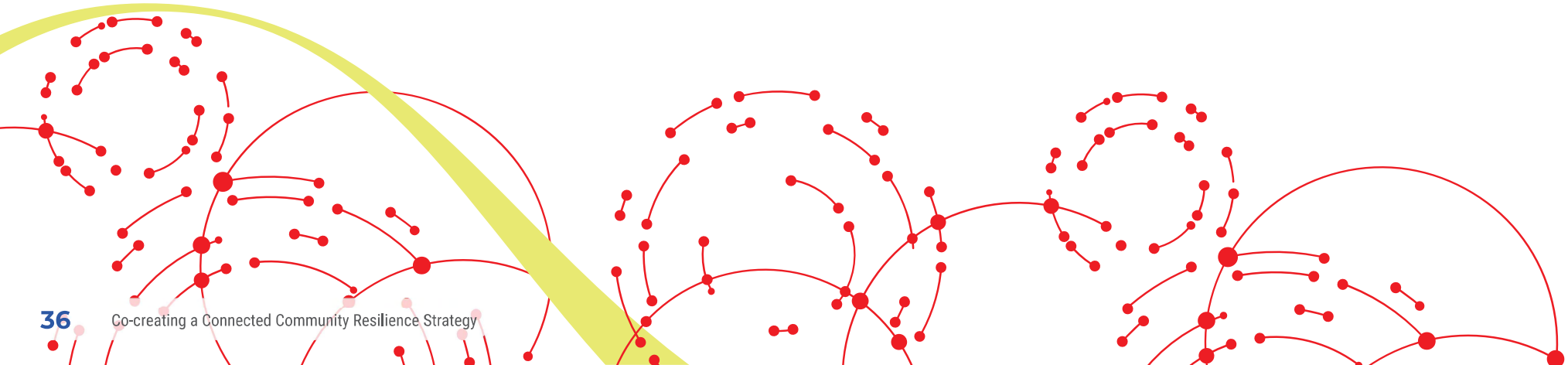
Post crisis evaluation: RECOVERY

Social Fabric

1. What were the tangible and intangible things people needed to recover from the crisis?
2. Who helped people in the community with the longer term impacts of the crisis?
3. Did affected groups feel they had equitable access to the knowledge, connections and resources they needed to recover?

Connective Tissue

1. What kinds of supports were you able to bring into the community during recovery?
2. Were the right kinds of supports available? Where were the gaps
3. Were you able to coordinate systems level recovery efforts with local ones? Why? Why not?
4. Were feedback mechanisms responsive?
5. Did communication networks remain open?
6. Did system actors adapt based on feedback?



Post-crisis evaluation:
BOUNCING FORWARD

Social Fabric

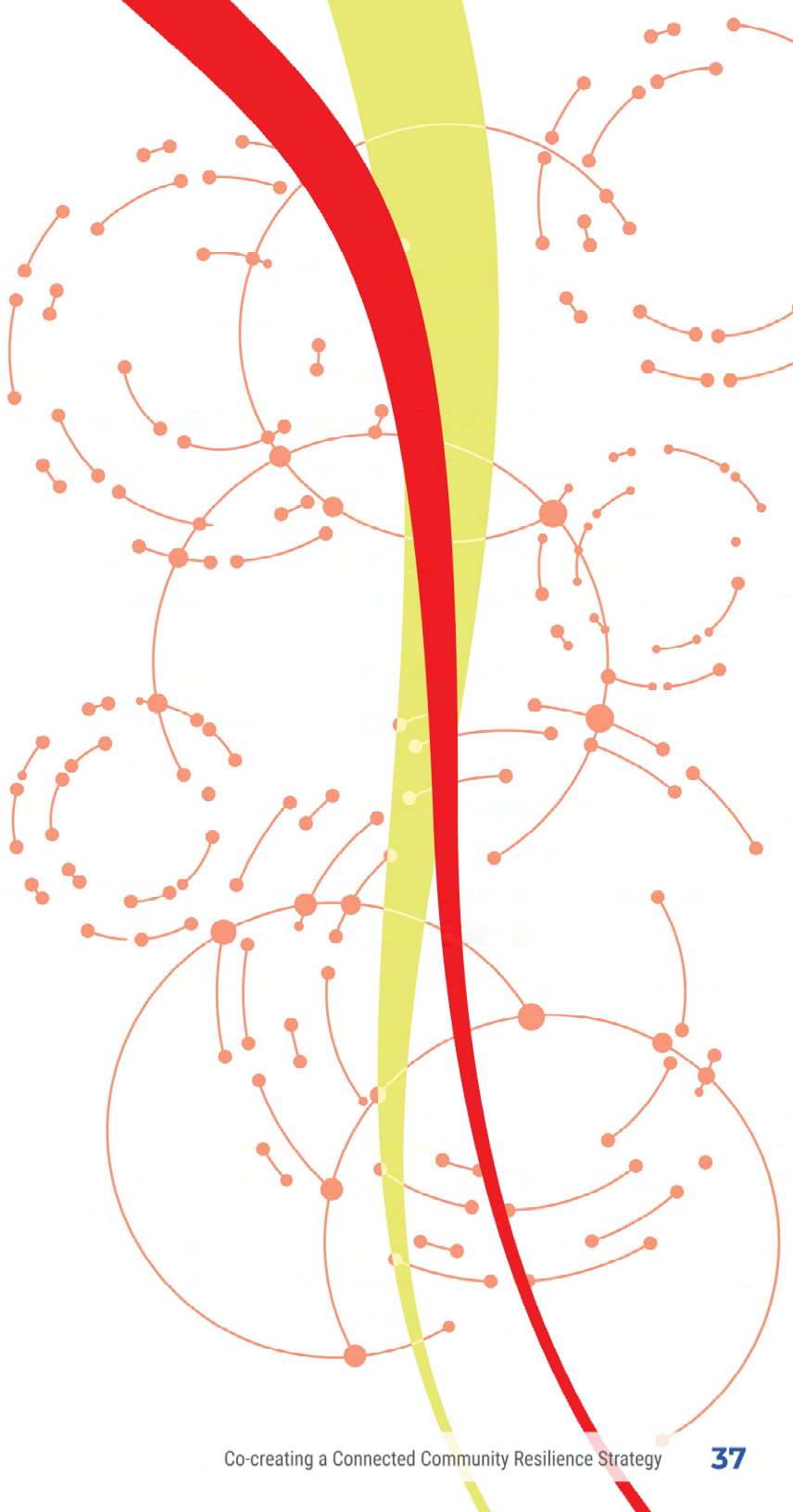
1. Did learning deepen trust, belonging, and agency?
2. Did new leaders or partnerships emerge?
3. Are residents more confident in influencing change?
4. Are relationships being maintained between crises?
5. What collective plans, projects or processes are people undertaking to mitigate the potential of this kind of crisis happening again or soften its impact?

Connective Tissue

1. Were lessons learned integrated into local and systems level strategies?
2. Are mechanisms for continuous learning established?
3. Did new (formal or informal working) partnerships with systems level players emerge? Are those partnerships supporting mitigation efforts as well as planning for the next crisis?
4. Did new tools, policies or networks emerge?
5. Are evaluation processes ongoing and accessible?

"By using systems led approaches, we cannot only build resilience or robustness, but we can also create anti-fragility in the face of profound contextual disruptions (such as pandemics, wars, civil unrest, economic shocks and ecological calamities). It is a way to learn from natural systems about to thrive in volatility"

- James Stauch



SOME FINAL WORDS

In Western colonial societies, we have, in many ways, lost the ancient art of working together as a community, caring for each other and cultivating collective resilience. Our societies have become so complex that the interplay between actors (local and at a systems level) has become oblique, blurred and often misunderstood. Connected Communities strategies are intended to be an antidote to this crisis of our modern world. Connected Communities strategies seek to shine a light on ancient wisdom: they see community development practice as foundational to a new way of being and working together. As a result, they may be disruptive to the status quo way of being that champions the individual, the professional, the impersonal, and the transactional. Connected Communities resilience strategies are collective, they seek to integrate the professional with the relational and they are always, always about people.

As old systems unravel, there is an opportunity for Connected Communities to catalyze more relational, context specific, anti-racist and decolonizing ways of being and engaging with and in communities. We're so glad that you are taking up the challenge. Although this guide is written as a 'how to' we are offering it as support to you and to the deep knowledge that already rests within your community. Please use it in ways that feel relevant and meaningful to you.

You and those in your community are at the forefront of a new era - because the world needs more connected communities.

Appendix A:

RESOURCES

The roles different types of organizations play in community resilience

10 keys: weaving social fabric for community centred resilience

Bouncing Forward: Cultivating Connection, Belonging and Collective Resilience | Canada's Placemaking Community

Infiltration Manual - The Infiltration Manual aims to demystify municipal governance structures and provide you with practical knowledge and tools on how to take climate action at the local level.

The 55 Minutes



EAST SCARBOROUGH STOREFRONT
A project of MakeWay

The East Scarborough Storefront is an award-winning community hub and catalyst for change in East Scarborough, Ontario.

Find out more at thestorefront.org

CANADIAN RED CROSS
CROIX-ROUGE CANADIENNE

The Canadian Red Cross helps people and communities in Canada and around the world in times of need and support them in strengthening their resilience.

Find out more at redcross.ca

CATALYSTS' Circle

Catalysts' Circle supports collaborative, inspirational, actionable strategies for community wellbeing, equity, and resilience.

Find out more at catalystscircle.ca