



Chemshúun Pe'ícháachuqeli (When our Hearts are Happy)

A Tribal Psychosocial Climate Resilience Framework

Pala Band of Mission Indians

June 2019

Prepared by:



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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Pala staff that contributed to this report and to the Pala Band of Mission Indians Executive Committee for their continued leadership and stewardship of Pala’s valued assets and resources. We also thank our key advisor, Dr. Douglas Walker (Mercy Family Center), for contributing his time and expertise. Finally, we acknowledge and thank the National Indian Health Board for the financial support that made this report possible.

Lead Authors

Please contact for further inquiry.

Dr. Shasta Gaughen
Pala Band of Mission Indians
sgaughen@palatribe.com

Angie Hacker
Prosper Sustainably
ahacker@prospersustainably

A CRITICAL AND EMERGING ELEMENT OF CLIMATE ADAPTATION

Tribes are keenly aware of the interconnection between health, nature, and personal wellbeing. Leading experts in climate change and wellbeing are increasingly encouraging communities to be proactive about *protecting and building psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual wellbeing*. Often overlooked in adaptation planning, wellbeing interventions can be a critical element of adapting to the growing stressors and trauma associated with climate change. Climate changes are expected to present unpredictable, severe, long-term, and recurring adversities for communities across the U.S. and can induce biological stress responses, especially in the absence of personal coping skills and trusted social relationships. New climate stressors compound historical traumas that tribes have encountered over generations of ecological and political change, such as the eviction of the Cupeño people from their ancestral homeland in 1903. The need for trauma- and culture-informed interventions is greater and more urgent than ever.

Chemshúun Pe'icháachuqeli, Pala's Tribal Psychosocial Climate Resilience Framework, is designed to help Pala and other communities consider how to safeguard mental and emotional wellbeing when preparing for the impacts of climate change. This report is part of Pala's National Indian Health Board (NIHB) funded Climate Change Adaptation Plan, which incorporates health and wellbeing strategies.



In the native Cupeño language, "Chemshúun Pe'icháachuqeli" means "when our hearts are happy." Many of the Pala Indians trace their heritage back to the Cupeño people. Today, more than a century after having been expelled from their native homeland, the Cupeño call Pala home and live as one with the Pala Luiseño.

To support this effort, Pala was fortunate to receive expert advice on psychosocial resilience from Dr. Douglas Walker, a psychologist who leads research and evidence-informed psychosocial community programs for Mercy Family Center based in New Orleans. He points to research¹ that indicates that 80% of disaster or trauma survivors will recover naturally, while others will struggle to cope and may develop mental disorders. Dr. Walker explains that the goal of psychosocial recovery and resilience is to achieve greater independence and wellbeing before, during, and after trauma, without the need for formal mental health treatment. Often based on emerging evidence from the emergency and disaster fields, psychosocial resilience includes teaching coping strategies, problem solving, individual self-care, and community care. Dr. Walker points to the World Health Organization's Pyramid for an Optimal Mix of Services for Mental Health (Figure 1),¹ which prioritizes "informal community care," including actions like reaching out, sharing stories, and traditional healing.

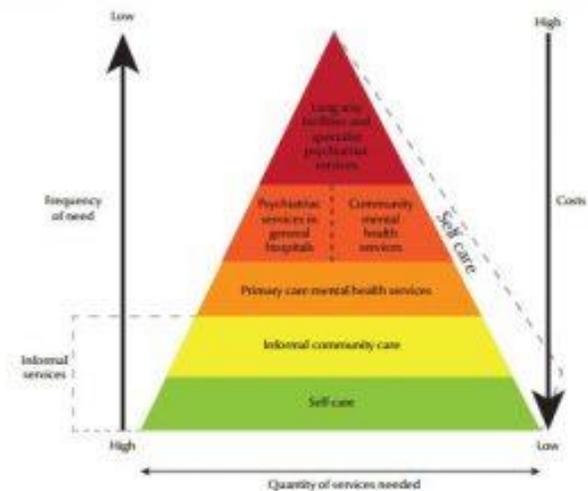


Figure 2 WHO Service Organization Pyramid for an Optimal Mix of Services for Mental Health (3)

Figure 1: WHO Service Organization Pyramid for an Optimal Mix of Services for Mental Health

Dr. Walker suggests that there is value to community connection, which is something that many communities have lost. He firmly believes that connectedness is worth "doubling down" as a key element of building community resilience. Knowing your neighbor, he indicates, is one of the most important ways community members can build resilience. Dr. Walker points to the unique intimacy of tribes he has worked with, which often results from their long-standing traditions that support community cohesion and increase their ability to cope with traumatic changes. He also points to research by Daniel Aldridge on building social capital in post-disaster recovery, which quantifies that the closer communities are before a disaster, the better and more quickly they can recover after.²

Finally, Dr. Walker also recommends a framework called Elements for Wellbeing (EFW), offered by Patricia Watson, Ph.D. (National Center for PTSD), which promotes the following five essential elements of immediate and mid-term intervention (for the self or others) that aid better recovery from stress:

- 1. Promote a sense of safety.** Maintaining or re-establishing a psychological sense of safety lowers the risk of stress injury. Safety can be relative and it is important to have a balanced view about the levels of danger in one's environment.
- 2. Promote calming.** Some anxiety is normal and healthy. However, extended arousal of heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration is associated with disruption of sleep, lack of hydration, poor decision-making, and long-term health problems.

¹ National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Psychological First Aid (PFA) Field Operations Guide: 2nd Edition (2006), <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/psychological-first-aid-pfa-field-operations-guide-2nd-edition>

² Aldrich, Daniel P. Building Resilience: Social Capital in Post-Disaster Recovery (University of Chicago Press, 2012), <https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/B/bo13601684.html>

3. **Promote social connection.** Social connection is one of the strongest protective factors against stress injury and is linked to emotional well-being and recovery following trauma and adversity.
4. **Promote sense of self and collective efficacy.** People who believe that they can persist through life's difficult times can handle stress better, solve their problems, and show greater resilience during stressful times.
5. **Promote a sense of hope.** Hope is linked to optimism, faith, and/or the belief that things will work out in the best possible way

Another expert, Dr. Bob Doppelt, professor, author of *Transformational Resilience*, and head of The Resources Innovation Group, suggests that building our psycho-social-spiritual resilience is the most sure-fire way to reduce the human suffering that climate change will inevitably bring.³

The psychosocial resilience approaches discussed in this report can be adapted for appropriate application in different tribal cultures to build climate resilience.



Figure 2: Quotation from a Tribal Emergency Manager Compiled by Oregon Health Agency

³ Prosper Sustainably. What About Wellbeing: How Communities Can Prepare for the Psychosocial-Spiritual Impacts of Climate Change (2018), <https://prospersustainably.com/what-about-wellbeing-how-communities-can-prepare-for-the-psycho-social-spiritual-impacts-of-climate-change/>

PSYCHOSOCIAL STRATEGIES AT PALA

While many tribes have long-standing, traditional practices in place to sustain individual and community wellbeing, it is difficult to ascertain how psychosocially resilient Pala already is. There are indicators that suggest mental and emotional wellness is an area Pala should address. San Diego County's Community Health Needs Assessment Committee identified behavioral health as the number one health need in San Diego County.⁴ According to the California Healthy Places Index,⁵ in a census tract just north of Pala's, 10.3% of adults reported 14 or more days during the past 30 days during which their mental health was not good.

Despite the need, members of the Planet Pala Working Group scored "Mental and Emotional Wellness" as the lowest in importance of all the "community assets" polled that may be threatened by climate change. Dr. Walker and the adaptation planning team considered that a cultural bias against the language of mental illness may be behind the lack of interest in focusing efforts on protecting mental wellness. Pala plans to use more positive, attractive, and culturally-informed terms for this work, such as self-care, spiritual health, social connection, emotional wellness, and community wellbeing.

The following sections outline 14 psychosocial resilience strategies derived from the latest literature and evidence in this emerging field that were included in Pala's Adaptation Plan. The list is organized by the four categories of psychosocial resilience best practices proposed in Pala's NIHB Climate Ready Tribes grant application, which were also based on the latest relevant, evidence-based literature (see Figure 3). These best practices can support community wellness and resilience before, during, or after a climate event.



Figure 3: Pala's Psychosocial Climate Resilience Framework

⁴ Institutes for Public Health. San Diego 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment (2016), https://www.palomarhealth.org/media/file/Community%20Health%20Improvement/HASDIC_CHNA_2016_Executive_Summary.pdf

⁵ Public Health Alliance of Southern California. The California Healthy Places Index (2019), <https://map.healthyplacesindex.org/>

Sub-bullets under some of the strategies outlined below indicate those that are funded as an activity under Objective 2 of the NIHB grant (“Early Community-Building Strategy Implementation”) and are anticipated to be implemented this year. For each of the four categories of strategies, this report provides resources and examples to assist with further learning and implementation. The goal of this focused section is to outline planned strategies intended to be effective specifically for the Pala community, and to provide a possible framework for other tribes seeking to protect and enhance psychosocial, spiritual, and cultural wellbeing and resilience.

Category 1. Provide health education and psychoeducation to train adults, youth, and organizations on ways to recognize and reduce Pala’s specific health risks; to calm, stabilize, and orient community members struggling with these risks; and to promote positive coping and problem-solving strategies.

Pala’s Strategies

1. **Conduct education to help residents recognize illness symptoms, avoid risks (including food/water), and build skills to psychologically cope with and recover from climate exposures.** Tailor health-related risk messages, materials and social media/webpages to at-risk individuals with consideration to culture, trusted individuals, and health knowledge. Involve advocacy organizations, services entities and support groups representing at-risk individuals in the design and dissemination of health-related information.
 - a. NIHB Activity 2.2: Tribe will develop and distribute digital and hard copy materials to increase community awareness of climate health threats, including a new webpage and mailing list for related notifications
2. **Conduct education to encourage community members to prepare for exposure** (e.g. home improvements, check equipment, list family/friends and neighbors who may need assistance, know closest evacuation/cooling centers, personal cooling strategies, develop family emergency plan, subscribe to alert systems, vector-borne disease prevention)
 - a. NIHB Activity 2.2: Tribe will develop and distribute digital and hard copy materials to increase community awareness of climate health threats, including a new webpage and mailing list for related notifications
3. **Develop trainings to help nurses, coaches, etc. recognize exposures and related illness and mental health impacts**
4. **Develop trainings for key staff to help community members increase local human emotional and mental health resilience before, during, and after climate impacts.**
5. **Collaborate with regional tribes to enhance training and capacity of emergency tribal response teams**



Figure 4: Educational Event with Pala Environmental Department

Resources and Examples

- “Skills for Psychological Recovery”⁶ (SPR), an evidence-informed secondary prevention model developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, advocates educating survivors (children, adolescents, adults, and families) on the six skills summarized below, which have been found to be more effective in post-trauma situations than supportive counseling for most people.
 1. **Gathering Information and Prioritizing Assistance** helps survivors to identify their primary concerns and to pick the SPR strategy to focus on.
 2. **Building Problem-Solving Skills** teaches survivors the tools to break problems down into more manageable chunks, identify a range of ways to respond, and create an action plan to move forward.
 3. **Promoting Positive Activities** guides survivors to increase meaningful and positive activities in their schedule, with the goal of building resilience and bringing more fulfillment and enjoyment into their life.
 4. **Managing Reactions** helps survivors to better manage distressing physical and emotional reactions by using such tools as breathing retraining, writing exercises, and identifying and planning for triggers and reminders.
 5. **Promoting Helpful Thinking** assists survivors learn how their thoughts influence their emotions, become more aware of what they are saying to themselves, and replace unhelpful with more helpful thoughts.
 6. **Rebuilding Healthy Social Connections** encourages survivors to access and enhance social and community supports while keeping in mind the current post-disaster recovery circumstances.
- To combat the psychosocial spiritual stresses resulting from climate change, Dr. Doppelt’s “Resilient Growth Model”⁷ focuses on using psychoeducation to build psychological skills derived from practices ranging from social Buddhism to adversity-based growth. Skills collectively referred to as “Presensing” can help individuals turn inward to calm their nervous system (e.g. mindful breathing), remember their strengths and social networks, and observe their reactions with self-compassion. Additionally, building “Purposing” skills, such as connecting to a greater sense of personal meaning and hope, can help communities fare better during periods of disaster or prolonged climate adversity, and also make them better able to tackle solutions to lower local emissions and other climate actions. He recommends looking to the example of Targon



Figure 5: Sage burning is a calming, cultural practice at Pala

⁶ National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Skills for Psychological Recovery (2019), <https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/psychological-first-aid-and-skills-for-psychological-recovery/about-spr>

⁷ Doppelt, Bob. Transformational Resilience: How Building Human Resilience to Climate Disruption Can Safeguard Society and Increase Wellbeing (Greenleaf Publishing Limited, 2016), <http://www.theresourceinnovationgroup.org/tr-book>

Springs, Florida,⁸ a community actively working on becoming “trauma-informed” and more resilient.

- The Puyallup tribe is enhancing its existing public education and outreach efforts to inform residents about air quality, food security, and other health risks associated with climate change.⁹
- The American Public Health Association provides climate change and health fact sheets¹⁰ that offer reader-friendly information for community members.
- The Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative¹¹ (based in Sacramento, California) brought in speakers from ACEs Connection¹² for a Quarterly Adaptation Exchange to help their local member agency employees learn about the connection between climate change and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The meeting also addressed how to implement trauma-informed decision-making to build social resilience, which Resilient Sacramento is working on.
- The Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County sponsored a Wildfire Survivor Mental Health Training¹³ on the Elements for Wellbeing to help the community develop skills to address disaster-related stress reactions.

Category 2. Build social connection to increase trusted, compassionate, and helpful relationships with emotionally supportive members of the community to better assist each other through challenging times (e.g. working together, community dinners/discussions, etc.)

Pala's Strategies

- **Develop a Planet Pala advisory committee to provide input on environmental issues including collaborative climate resilience.** This committee can 1) build initiatives to help residents during and after disasters cope with psychosocial spiritual stresses, reconnect with purpose and hope, and achieve post-traumatic personal growth, and 2) develop preventative initiatives before the next disaster to build human resilience skills (e.g. education) and increase social support networks (e.g. learning groups, community mapping)
 - NIHB Activity 2.1: Tribe will formalize adaptation committee to build community wellbeing by working together on ongoing climate initiatives, including adaptation implementation and evaluation



⁸ Peace4Tarpon (2019), <https://www.peace4tarpon.org/>

⁹ Puyallup Tribe of Indians. Climate Change Impact Assessment and Adaptation Options (2016), http://www.puyallup-tribe.com/tempFiles/PuyallupClimateChangeImpactAssessment_2016_FINAL_pages.pdf

¹⁰ American Public Health Association. Fact Sheets: Climate Change (2019), <https://apha.org/publications-and-periodicals/fact-sheets#climate>

¹¹ Capital Region Climate Readiness Collaborative. Creating a Climate-Smart Capital Region (2019), <http://climatereadiness.info/>

¹² ACEs Connection. Resilient Sacramento (2019), <https://www.acesconnection.com/g/sacramento-county-ca-aces-connection>

¹³ Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County. Wildfire Survivor Mental Health Training Flyer (2018), https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p4jUn2Zyq_19h43XiZ5eCHR-gIDtzUy_EHZvkz8f774/edit?usp=sharing

- **Assess the location and robustness of social networks**, with attention to which community organizations will serve as lead agencies in disseminating risk information and resources to constituents for response and recovery.
- **Mobilize "emergency ambassadors"** and social contacts of vulnerable individuals.

Resources and Examples

- Events like community dinners, tribal cultural events, or conversations in places where neighbors already gather (e.g. schools, libraries) can be much more effective than bringing in unfamiliar new strategies or technologies to build connection.
 - At Mercy Family Center, Dr. Walker has successful traction with a program called "How's your 5,"¹⁴ which is conducted at community gatherings to help community members get past "I'm fine" and have a deeper conversations about how they are doing on five specific domains: Work, Fun, Love, Sleep, Eating. He has used this model with tribal communities at traditional events such as pow wows.
 - Another successful program Dr. Walker refers to is the "National Night Out,"¹⁵ an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live.
- The Qungasvik Toolbook is an indigenous health intervention model for promoting reasons for life and wellbeing through culture developed by the Yup'ik Alaska Native community. A distinguishing feature of this model is the focus on the traditional "qasgiq," which serves as a communal gathering place and a setting for decision-making and the delivery of community services and activities. People gather in the qasgiq to share knowledge and plan activities that build strength and protections.¹⁶
- FEMA produced a discussion guide for Social Capital in Disaster Mitigation and Recovery, based on Dr. Aldrich's research, that explains that bonding, bridging, and linking are key drivers of resilience. The guide also provides key questions and action for communities.¹⁷ It points to the Community Preparedness Toolkit,¹⁸ which instructs community-based organizations on how to engage citizens on grassroots, collective preparedness actions.



Figure 6: Mercy Family Center's How's Your 5? Program Model

¹⁴ Mercy Family Center. How's Your 5? © (2019), <https://www.mercy.net/practice/mercy-family-center-metairie/hows-your-5/>

¹⁵ National Night Out (2019), <https://natw.org/about>

¹⁶ Center for Alaska Native Health Research. Qungasvik (Toolbox): An Indigenous Intervention Science Model for Alaska Native Communities (2009), <http://canhr.uaf.edu/research/past-canhr-projects/qungasvik-toolbox-indigenous-intervention-science-model-alaska-native-communities/>

¹⁷ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Prep Talk Discussion Guide: Social Capital in Disaster Mitigation and Recovery (2019), https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1519923987372-58f3c3ea073f3d4b769cb21687foa191/PrepTalks_Discussion_Guide_Aldrich_v2.pdf

¹⁸ <https://www.ready.gov/community-preparedness-toolkit>

- “Deepening Community: Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times”¹⁹ by Paul Born, founder of the Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement, outlines four options for achieving a community’s natural need for deep connection and belonging, based on the results of an assessment of 500 individuals.
 - Sharing our Stories
 - Enjoying One Another
 - Caring for One Another
 - Working Together for a Better World

A case community cited by the Deepening Community website is Waterloo, Canada, which developed a Neighborhood Strategy²⁰ to realize its vision of a “city of caring, vibrant, engaged neighborhoods where everyone belongs.” This strategy outlined three goals:

1. Encourage neighborhood interactions
 2. Empower neighbors to lead
 3. Commit to a corporate City culture that supports neighborhood-led and delivered initiatives
- The San Diego American Indian Health Center conducts weekly Elder Circle meetings to reduce isolation and increase social bonds and support for older tribal members living in urban areas.²¹

Example: San Diego American Indian Health Center – Elder Circles

The Elders Circle meets weekly and is open to individuals of all ages who desire an opportunity to meet together in a small group to hear from, and honor, our Elders. We begin by gathering in the kitchen for coffee and snacks while we prepare a potluck brunch. After a blessing, we enjoy a meal together then gather into a healing circle to share stories, offer encouragement, and learn from the teachings of our ancestors. Activities vary from talking circles, drumming, movie viewing and discussion, art projects, and more.



Figure 7: San Diego American Indian Health Center - Elder Circle Program

Category 3. Deliver health and psychological first aid resources to address immediate needs and concerns and provide rapid and practical help during/after climate events.

Pala’s Strategies

- **Develop collaborative referral system** to ensure residents can access available resources and services during and after climate events

¹⁹ Born, Paul. Deepening Community: Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times (2019), <http://www.deepeningcommunity.org/>

²⁰ Tamarack Institute. Case Study: Strong and Connected Neighbourhoods – Waterloo’s Neighborhood Strategy (2018), https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Resources/Case%20Studies/2019%20Waterloo%20Case%20Study%20by%20Heather%20Keam%20&%20Waterloo.pdf?__hssc=163327267.1.1554484223823&__hstc=163327267.fo83e1fb2f41f57e0afcd8569202b98a.1554484223823.1554484223823.1554484223823.1&__hsfp=1983104990&hsCtaTracking=320cdbc3-e75e-4070-a195-98aad872f2b6%7C683ab438-8d9a-4bcd-902f-a75fbcc9odd5

²¹ San Diego American Indian Health Center. Adult Programs: The Elders Circle (2019), <https://sdaihc.org/community/adult-programs/>

- NIHB Activity 2.3: Tribe and adaptation committee will evaluate existing health and psychosocial first aid services and develop a collaborative referral system to respond to climate events
- **Make psychological first aid resources and services available** to support people suffering mental health consequences due to the emergencies and long-term impacts caused by climate change.
- **Develop an emergency, disaster response and/or health management plan** to anticipate and prepare public services and evacuation plans for exposure risks. Include procedures for post-disaster repairs and needs and pre-health incident access to health services as well as post-health incident continuity of care. Identify existing community assets (e.g. fire stations, businesses, faith-based organizations) that can play a role in preparedness and recovery.
- **Develop a health safety plan and map** to identify and assist those at greatest vulnerability or risk e.g. increase medical personnel, expand homeless intervention services to cover daytime, create ambassador program

Resources and Examples

- “Psychological First Aid,”²² a program of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, provides evidence-informed guidance on ways disaster response and mental health workers can assist children, adolescents, adults, and families in the aftermath of disaster. While the vast majority (80%+) of disaster and trauma survivors recovery naturally, some will develop PTSD and other mental disorders. The manual includes in-depth information about each of the eight core actions.
 - Contact and Engagement
 - Safety and Comfort
 - Stabilization
 - Information Gathering: Needs and Current Concerns
 - Practical Assistance
 - Connection with Social Supports
 - Information on Coping
 - Linkage with Collaborative Services
- A RAND publication called “Building Community Resilience to Disasters”²³ provides a list of best practices that can help a community ensure high-quality health, behavioral health, and social resources and services before, during, and after a climate event. These include planning for longer-term food, shelter, clothing, and medical needs of recovering low-income populations.
- In some communities, like the County of Santa Barbara, service providers band together to provide collaborative services to better meet the psychosocial needs of a community after a climate disaster. This County’s Community Wellness team worked to support both formal crisis counseling and mental health services and psychosocial wellness services in response to the devastating Thomas Fire in 2018 and subsequent debris flows.²⁴

²² National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Psychological First Aid (PFA) Field Operations Guide: 2nd Edition (2006)

²³ Chandra, Anita, Acosta, Joie, Stern, Stefanie, Uscher-Pines, Lori, Williams, Malcom V., Yeung, Douglas, Garnett, Jeffrey, Meredith, Lisa S. Building Community Resilience to Disasters: A Way Forward to Enhance National Health Security (RAND Corporation, 2011), https://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR915.html

²⁴ Santa Barbara County. Community Wellness Team (2019), <https://readysbc.org/health-safety/community-wellness-team/>

- Similarly, Sonoma County's ACE's Connection formed a mental-health collaborative after the Tubbs Fire to address specific fire-related trauma.²⁵

Category 4. Improve communication because access to clear and reliable information helps reduce danger and stress and increase safety and comfort.

Pala's Strategies

- **Provide early, real-time warnings and clear emergency notifications** before and during exposure events via website, text, social media, TV, radio, and other media. Notifications should include relevant safety tips (e.g. limit outdoor activities, don't drive through flooded roads, limit water usage, evacuation zones, boil advisories, etc.) and how to access additional information or help. Implement emergency communications to provide realistic recovery timelines and plan to set reasonable expectations given likely post-event challenges to avoid greater mental health impacts.
 - NIHB Activity 2.2: Tribe will develop and distribute digital and hard copy materials to increase community awareness of climate health threats, including a new webpage and mailing list for related notifications
- **Set up kiosk/signs for emergency notifications, fire danger, etc.**



Resources and Examples

- "Building Community Resilience to Disasters"²⁶ by the RAND Corporation recommends ensuring ongoing information to the public about preparedness, risks, and resources before, during, and after a disaster. Best practices include coordination with partner agencies to provide accurate information about health threats and tailoring the information for at-risk individuals with consideration to culture, literacy, and trusted channels.

²⁵ ACEs Connection. Sonoma County ACEs Connection: Fire Recovery Resources (2019), <https://www.acesconnection.com/g/sonoma-county-aces-connection/collection/fire-recovery-resources>

²⁶ Chandra et al. Building Community Resilience to Disasters: A Way Forward to Enhance National Health Security (RAND Corporation, 2011)

- The Cocopah Indian Tribe (Arizona) and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (North Carolina) have completed all steps necessary to become an Alerting Authority in FEMA's Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).²⁷ IPAWS is an internet-based capability that federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial authorities can use to issue critical public alerts and warnings during emergencies.
- Fort Mojave Indian Tribe's Office of Emergency Response enrolls residents in the CodeRED system to send emergency notifications (e.g. evacuation notices, weather warnings) to residents by cell phone, land line, text, and email.²⁸
- As part of a comprehensive psychosocial response and recovery effort after a large wildfire in 2016, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in Alberta, Canada implemented communication strategies²⁹ such as:
 - Establishing a streamlined email system so all stakeholders would receive accurate and timely updates.
 - Developing an "Alberta Wildfire" app for resident updates and contact information for support services.

²⁷ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Alerting Authorities (2019), <https://www.fema.gov/alerting-authorities>

²⁸ Fort Mojave Indian Tribe. Office of Emergency Response. <https://www.fortmojaveindiantribe.com/fmit-office-of-emergency-response/>

²⁹ Kulig, Judith, GermAnn, Kathy, Parker, Naomi, Salt, Valerie, Walker, Doug, Scott, Cathie. Psychosocial Response and Recovery Evaluation of the RMWB Wildfire 2016: Final Report (Policy Wise for Children and Family, 2017), <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/cc032ofd-c107-48b5-a882-b62c4f9524ee/resource/3e7e2ac7-b038-49ac-925a-c74ef7d46f99/download/2017-08aug-29-rmwb-pss-final-report.pdf>

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

Dr. Walker provided the following tips for successful implementation of psychosocial strategies:

- Build community capacity early so the community has full ownership of any program. Communities do not need clinical experts to do the work of building community connectedness or social capital. In fact, some of the best models are led by multi-disciplinary teams and involve building the capacity of youth, “people persons,” problem solvers and community champions such as a social worker, a barber, or an underemployed plumber.
- It is critical to listen, understand, and honor community knowledge and practices.
- Resources such as Psychological First Aid³⁰ and Skills for Psychological Recovery³¹ provide a helpful framework for communities interested in investing in short- and long-term psychosocial recovery and resilience, acknowledging that these “best practices” would be adapted to fit the tribe’s values and beliefs.
- Vet partners that offer assistance to find out how long they plan to be around, how capacity can be sustained, and what’s in it for them (e.g. building credibility). Recovery can be long and hard. When the 366th day after the disaster comes, many communities find that the partners and resources go away.

³⁰ National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Psychological First Aid (PFA) Field Operations Guide: 2nd Edition (2006)

³¹ National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Skills for Psychological Recovery (2019)