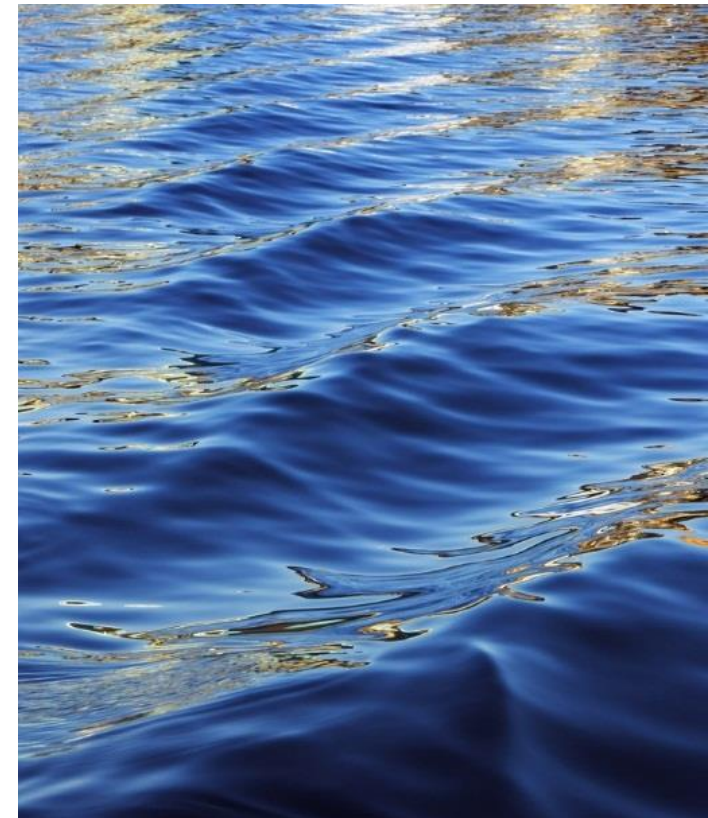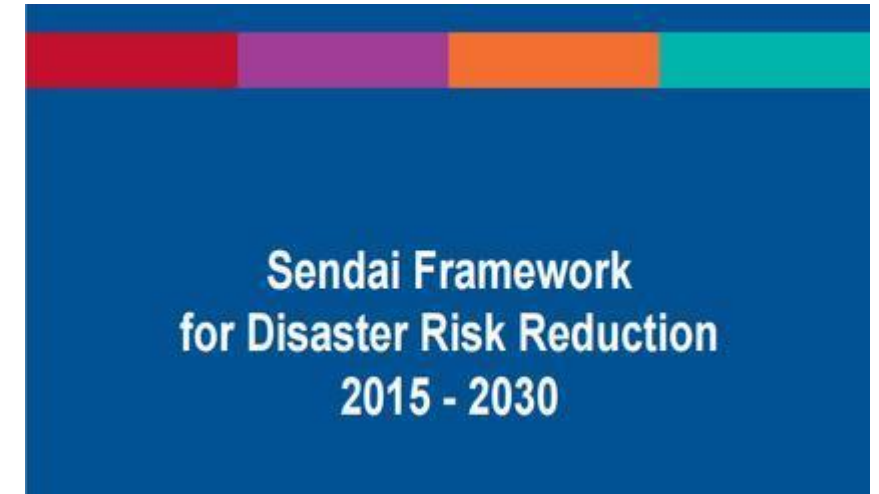# Moving Towards "Just Resilience"

Dr. Brenda Murphy &
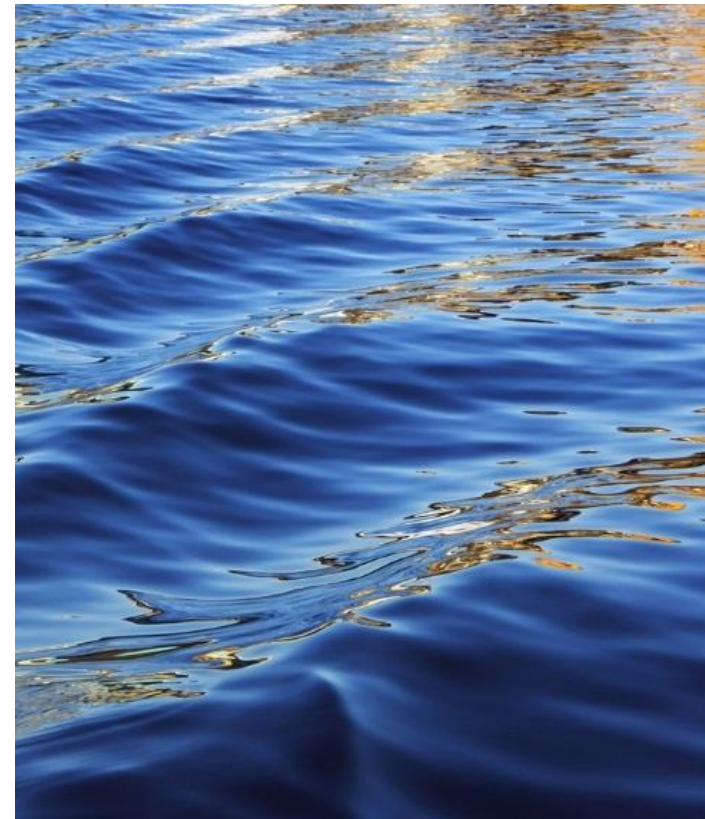Bryce Gunson, Ph.D.(C)

October 2020

Agenda

- The Sendai Framework and "Just Resilience"

- Framework Pillars:
  - Environmental Justice
  - Resilience
  - Sendai/Emergency Management

- Recommendations and Best Practices
  - Examples and Resources

Sendai Framework
for Disaster Risk Reduction
2015 - 2030

Framework Pillars

Sendai Framework 2015-30

- 13 Guiding Principles (A-M)

- D: "Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted. In this context, special attention should be paid to the improvement of organized voluntary work of citizens" (pg. 13; highlighting added)

Environmental Justice (EJ)

- Environmental Justice is "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies" (Bullard 1997).

Source: https://cen.acs.org/environment/pollution/rise-environmental-justice/98/i32

- EJ has evolved and broaden its focus from fighting hazardous waste dumps in the Southern USA in the 1960's

- Modern EJ encompasses a variety of social issues including women's rights, climate justice, race, immigration, Indigenous rights and other injustices


Source: https://therising.co/2020/06/04/environmental-justice-social-equity/

EJ Focuses on Structural Equity

- Structural: the power to access and influence social, economic, environmental and political processes and outcomes such as climate change policy, disaster recovery funding, and clean drinking water

- Equity: regardless of starting points, the outcome should be fair to everyone. We should all have access to what we need to survive and thrive.
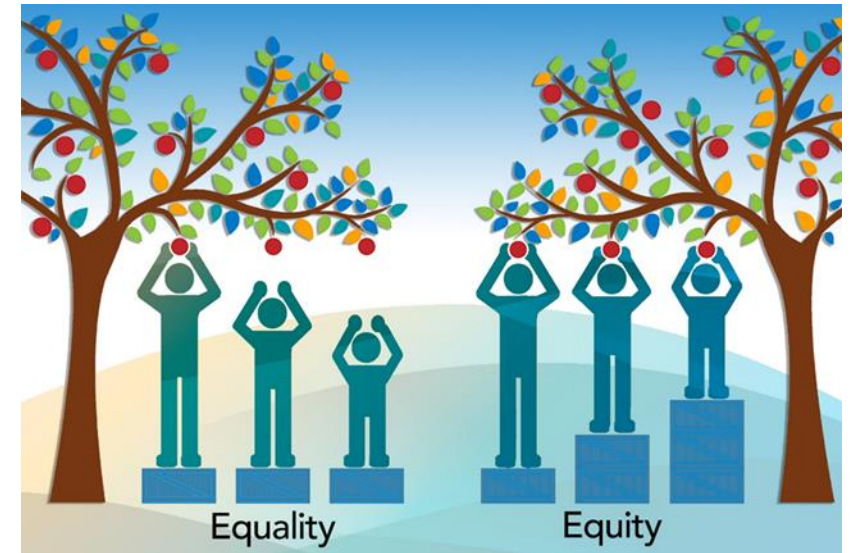
EJ Dimensions

- *Distributive justice* – the fair distribution of hazards and resources across communities

- *Procedural justice* – equitable access to information and public participation, especially for those most impacted by a hazard

- *Justice of recognition* - acknowledgement and inclusion of the voices of marginalized groups

- *Intergenerational justice* – consideration of the needs of future generations
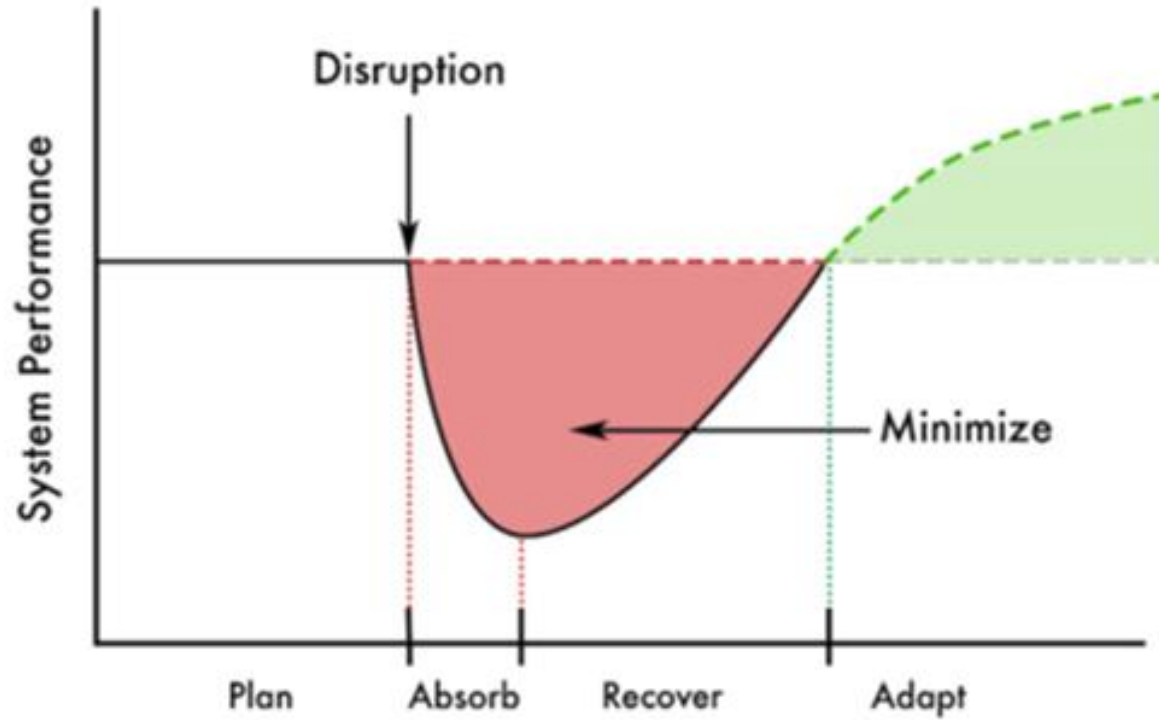
Resilience

- Ability of a system to absorb disturbances (disasters; change), respond to and reorganize from the disturbance

- Systems thinking looks at the overall patterns and structures, rather than focusing on a particular component (e.g. Ontario health care system vs hospitals)

- Capacity to bounce back AND the ability to learn, grow and flourish after a shock
  - Not necessarily return to former state, especially if that state led to vulnerability (e.g. returning to same level of poverty after a flood)

COVID System Shock: Resilience?

Just Resilience

- *Just resilience* is the set of resilience "practices and relationships characterized by deeper and broader commitments to equity, social, and environmental justice" Pellow, 2018, pg. 276

- Adopting a *just resilience* approach moves us toward a proactive approach that highlights the needs of marginalized groups, and takes seriously the capacity of people and places to anticipate, endure, adapt to, and ultimately minimize the damage from inevitable threats such as climate change, pandemics, economic shocks, and political upheavals.
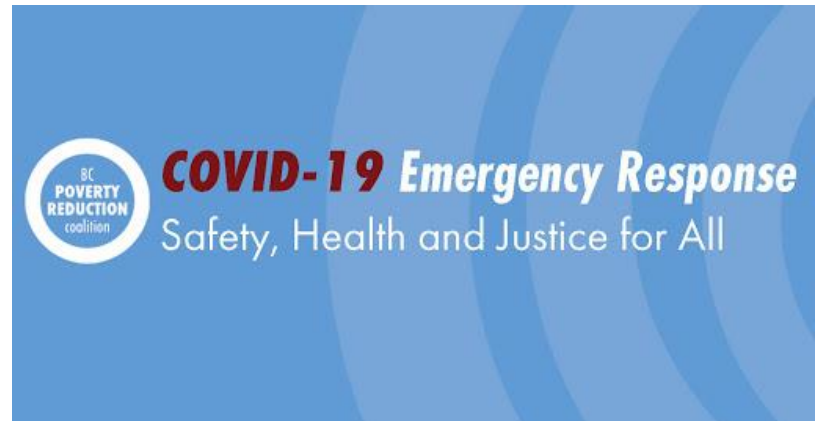
'Just' Resilience

Environmental Justice

Key Dimensions
- Distributive Justice
- Procedural Justice
- Justice as Recognition
- Inter-Generational Justice

Resilience

- Capacity to adapt, reorganize, evolve and seize opportunities across all phases of the disaster management cycle
- Ability to undergo positive growth and learning, even as the community is changing and/or dealing with immense surprises and shocks, such as a disaster

Sendai Framework

Just resilience is defined as the ability to proactively prepare for, and rebound from, crises and changes in a way that increases future emergency management capabilities, prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable and addresses social inequities across a range of dimensions (location, age, class, gender, etc.) (Agyeman, Schlosberg, Craven, & Matthews, 2016, p. 574)

Recommendations and Best Practices

1) Develop a Whole-of-Community, All Hazards Approach: Plan Beyond the Typical Emergency Management Partnerships

- BC Poverty Alliance Highlighted the Following Issues During the Early Stages of the COVID-19 Pandemic:
  - Support for those with physical and mental disabilities
  - Support for Indigenous Friendship Centres
  - Need for paid sick days
  - Rental housing support
  - Support for parents and guardians
  - Accessible, affordable child care
  - Addressing the staffing and living condition problems in long-term care homes
  - Specific union concerns such as workers in the beef processing industry
  - Income support for those who don't qualify for unemployment insurance
  - School and teacher concerns
  - Congregate setting issues including prisons
  - Need to deal with homelessness
    - "A more aggressive plan is needed to meet the urgency of thousands of unhoused residents who are unable to self-isolate or practice physical distancing, creating further health safety risks for a population already vulnerable to chronic health issues."

2) Do Your Homework: Recognize Where Injustices Lurk in Your Jurisdictions and Whose Voices Are Often Unheard

- Undertake Ongoing, Active Relationship Building Across Your Jurisdiction, Especially Between Crises

- Undertake Public Participation Processes Specifically Designed To Be Inclusive and Empowering

- Incorporate the Feedback From Grassroots and NGO Sector Organizations Who Represent or Provide Services To At-Risk Populations Into Your Plans and/or Activities

Resource: Community Outreach Information Network (COIN)

- "…grassroots network of people and trusted community leaders who can assist with emergency planning and the delivery of information to at-risk groups before, during, and after an emergency. A COIN composed of trusted community leaders will be helpful in identifying and reaching at-risk people." pg. 8
- 3 Phases:
  - Define at-risk- groups
    - Conduct demographic research (languages spoken, cultural practices, beliefs, physical/mental limitations)
  - Locate at-risk groups
    - Identify organizations and key contacts; include trusted community leaders; identify existing services and local gathering places; map at-risk groups and key locations; establish communication strategies
  - Reach at-risk groups
    - Survey agencies and organizations; conduct community assessments; disseminate results and strategies

- https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/disaster/atriskguidance.pdf
- See also: CDC>emergency preparedness and response>resources for emergency health professionals

3) Consider the Distribution of Hazards Within And Beyond Your Jurisdiction: How Will That Distribution Impact "Just Resilience"?

- "Landfills, hazardous waste sites, and other industrial facilities are most often located in communities of colour. When a disaster event hits one of these neighbourhoods, there is a heightened risk that these communities living there will be exposed to toxins."

  NAACP_InTheEyeOfTheStorm.pdf

- "In Louisiana, Tropical Storm Barry this weekend has sparked concern about a repeat of the "toxic gumbo" of sewage, chemical waste and other contaminants released when Hurricane Katrina devastated the city of New Orleans more than a decade ago."

  https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/15/climate/flooding-chemicals-health-research.html

4) Develop Plans and Actions that Provide Short-Term Benefits And Longer-Term Resilience: How Will Today's Actions Impact Future Resilience, Especially for At-Risk Populations?

- Facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and environmental amenities are important to neighbourhood quality, yet lack of investment, aging and stress from extreme events has resulted in geographic inequity in many cities prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of marginalized populations and has shown that the spatial distribution of hazards is unequal

- Post-pandemic investment plans have the potential to move beyond a return to normal and address some of these systemic inequities (e.g. greater investment in public transit; active transportation)

- Today's plans and actions should include efforts to minimize existing disparities, thus moving toward a different "normal" in which equity is considered.

Cheryl Tansony (2018). Just Resilience? Evaluating Equity and Justice in a Sample of 100 Resilient Cities Plans. UWSpace. http://hdl.handle.net/10012/13641

5) Don't Go it Alone: Maximize "Just Resilience" Opportunities and Resources By Reaching Out to Other Departments, Levels of Government, the NGO Sector and Private Businesses

- The municipal level (much like other organizations and levels of government) are comprised of many departments that rarely communicate. As a result, municipal environmental resilience policies have largely come from environmental departments.

- This separation of sectors makes communication difficult to organize and is especially problematic given the interdisciplinary nature of resilience. Just resilience needs to move beyond siloed governance approaches.

- To overcome this barrier, mainstreaming can take just resilience issues out of a single sector and into the centre of decision-making so that these issues are reflected in other sectoral policies

- Mainstreaming "Just Resilience" during COVID-19 recovery may encourage more holistic solutions and improve the chances of implementation.

Coaffee, J., & Lee, P. (2016). *Urban Resilience: Planning for Risk, Crisis and Uncertainty*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Contact:
bmurphy@wlu.ca
bgunson@wlu.ca

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