

# Community Capacity Building and post-disaster psychosocial reconstruction

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# Meaninglessness

Lose of sense of security

Lose of sense of manageability in life

Lose of sense of coherence

Lose of goals in life

Dismantled social network and interpersonal relationships

Lose of hope



# Collective Capacity Building

## Restoring *Hope* and *Meaning* for Survivors of Trauma



Centre on Behavioral Health  
The University of Hong Kong  
香港大學行為健康研究中心



Catastrophe Management Initiative  
The University of Hong Kong  
香港大學巨災管理工程



# Restoring *Hope* and *Meaning* for Survivors of Trauma

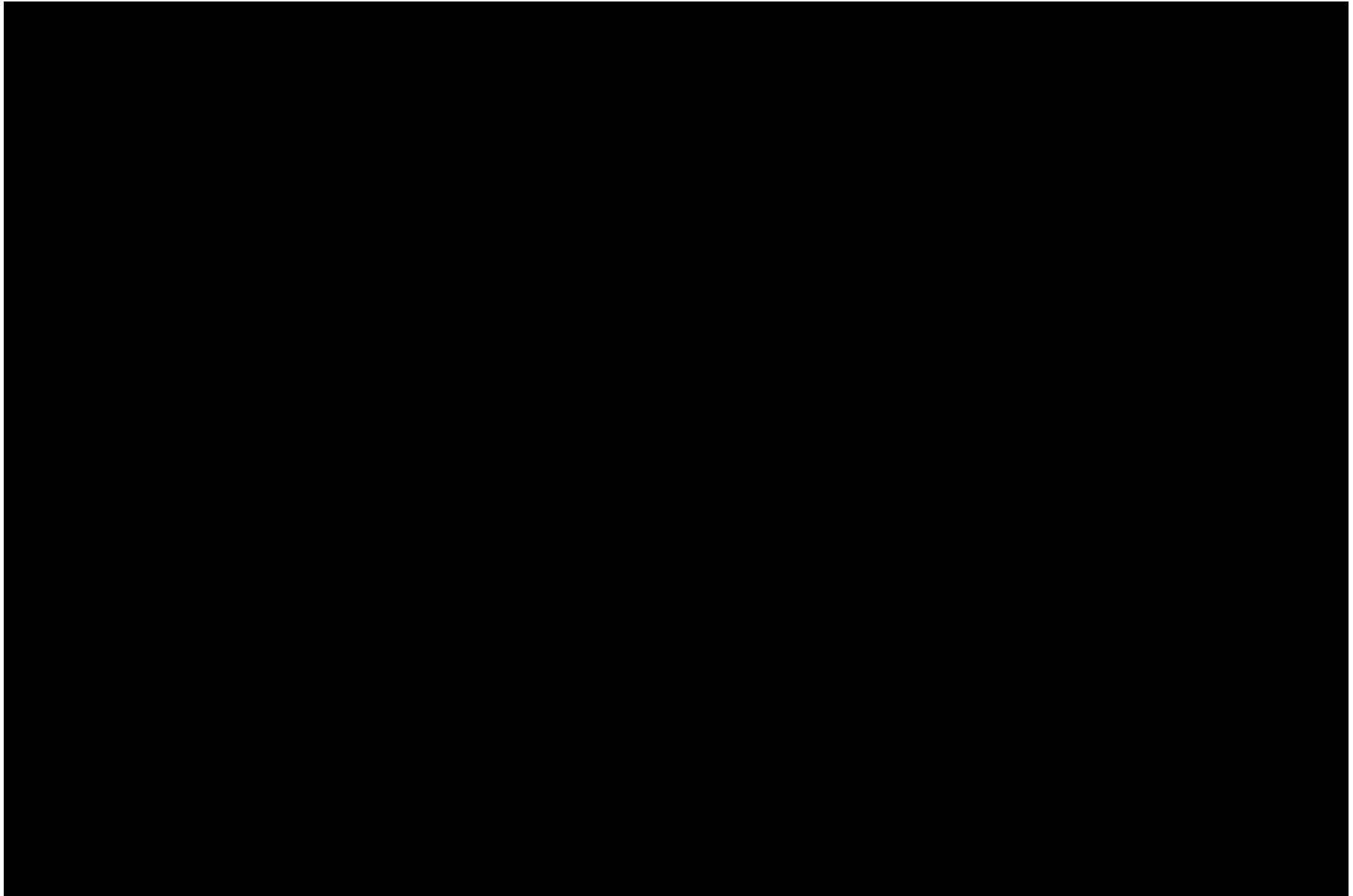
*Community Capacity Building :  
Long Term Solution for Reconstruction of  
Dignified Living in Sichuan*



# Catastrophe management



# Catastrophe Management Initiative



# Human Vulnerability

$$H \times V - C = R$$

Hazard x Vulnerability – Capacity = Risk





# Human Vulnerability

Hazard	Potential threat to humans and their welfare
x	
Vulnerability	Exposure and susceptibility to loss of life or dignity
-	
Capacity	Available and potential resources
=	
Risk	Probability of disaster occurrence
Disaster	Realization of a risk





# Mourning and Grieving over Loss

- Loss of loved ones
- Loss of home
- Loss of past
- Loss of hope
- Loss of dreams
- Loss of sense of safety
- Loss of sense of control
- Loss of sense of security



# Mourning & Searching

- Ambiguous Loss
  - Not finding the bodies of the loved one can block the normal grief process (Pauline Boss, 2004)
  - No markers exist, e.g. no bodies to bury, no mourning rituals to have a clear-cut loss

Boss, P. (2004). Ambiguous Loss Research, Theory and Practice – Reflection after 911. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 551-566



# Frozen Time

- We found a passer-by who was a resident of the city and a survivor of the 512 Earthquake.
- He escaped from the rubble on the 5th day of the disaster.
- However, some of his family members had lost their lives during the earthquake and still buried under the rubble.
- Half year after the Earthquake, he is still wandering around the abandoned city and searching for his family members and searching for his lost home.



# Hobfoll's 5 elements of intervention (2007)



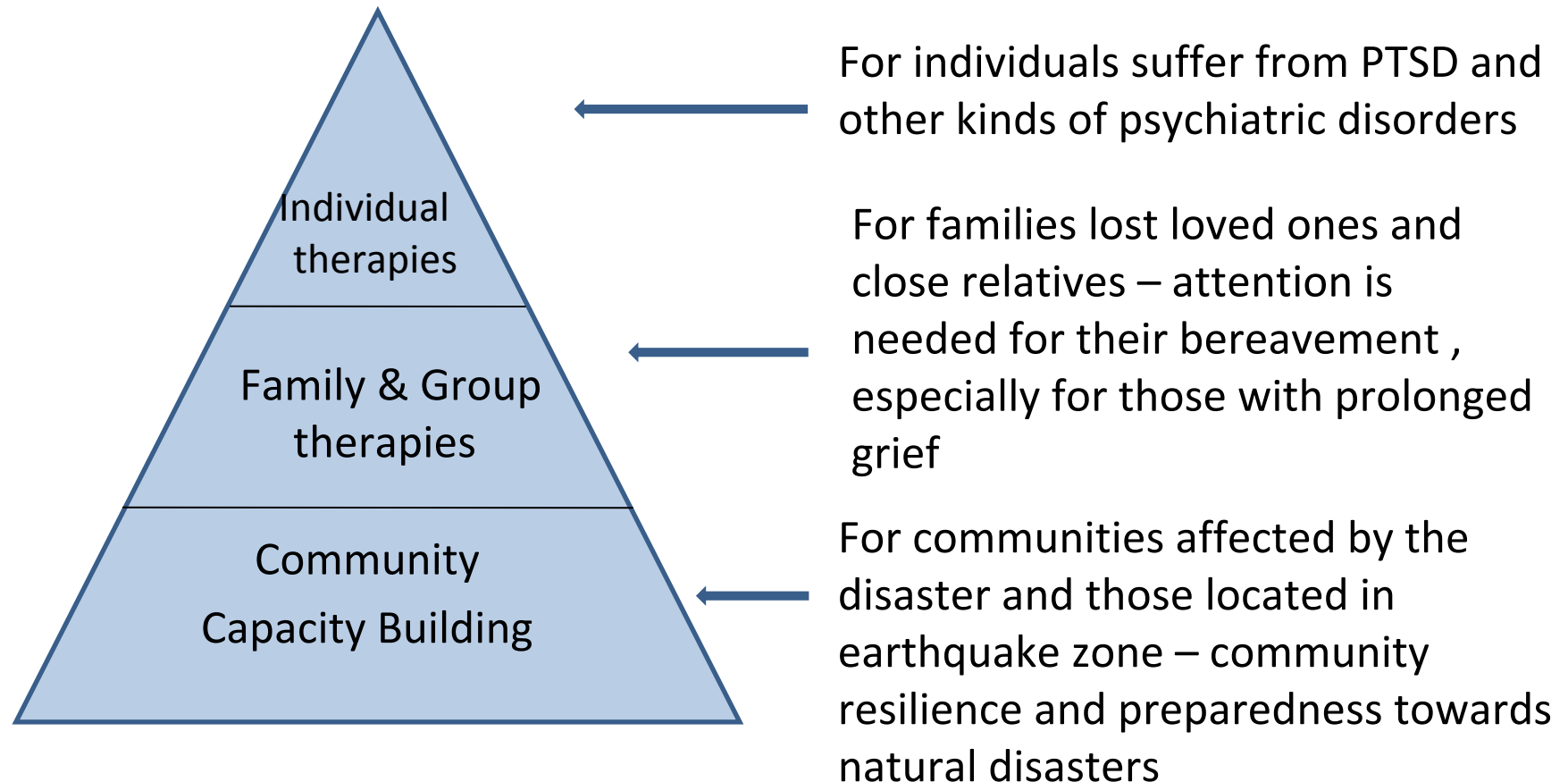
- Sense of safety
- Calmness
- Sense of self and community effectiveness
- Connectedness
- Hope

\*Hobfoll, S.E., Watson, P., Bell, C.C., Bryant, R.A. & Brymer, M.J. (2007). Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-term Mass Trauma Intervention: Empirical Evidence. *Psychiatry*, 70(4),

# Levels of Needs



- Problem-solving and task-centered





1<sup>st</sup>: Mourning & grieving

2<sup>nd</sup>: De-victimization

3<sup>rd</sup>: Restoration of dignified living

4<sup>th</sup>: Self-Help capacity building

5<sup>th</sup>: Restoration of quality living

Community  
Resilience  
&  
Social Cohesion

# Use of Community

- Ferrell N. and Cole J.B. (2002) advocated professionals to use the community as a context of healing
  - To help victims of disaster through focusing on the mending of disrupted social roles, rebuilding of dismantled community and social order of the world, re-establish interrupted routine so as to diminish the impact of loss





# To facilitate post-traumatic growth...



Chan, L.W., Fan, F.M. & Leung, P.Y. (eds.) (2009) The Holistic Body-Mind-Spirit Well-being Model – Chinese Culture and Group Counselling. Beijing: China Light Industrial Press. (in Chinese)



...creating a supportive school environment





Strength-focused and  
Meaning-oriented  
Approach to  
Resilience and  
Transformation  
(SMART) Model



# The SMART Intervention



- Aim
  - To enhance holistic well-being in face with trauma
  - To transform negative impacts into personal growth
- Model
  - Integrated with the philosophy of Chinese Medicine of harmony, modesty, balance, growth through pain, appreciation of life, accept unpredictability in life, so as to embrace adversity

\*Chan, C.L.W., Chan, T.H.Y. & Ng, S.M. (2006) The Strength-Focused and Meaning-Oriented Approach to Resilience and Transformation (SMART): A Body-Mind-Spirit Approach to Trauma Management. *Social Work in Health Care*. 43(2/3): 9-36.

# Overview of SMART



- **Strength-focused:** Re-affirmation of inner strengths
- **Meaning-oriented:** Re-appraisals of life values through cognitive restructuring
- **Result:**
  - **Resilience** – building strengths for future challenges
  - **Transformation** – gaining a new sense of purpose and appreciation of life

# Strength-focused



- Principle:
  - Based on affirmation
  - Not focused on elimination of negative emotions and symptoms
  - Stress the importance of looking for inner strengths and growth

# Meaning-oriented



- Grief work by R. Neimeyer highlights the power of meaning reconstruction
- Meaning searching, sense making, benefit finding, meaning reconstruction
- Coherent narrative for personal and social transformation (Berzoff, 2006)
- By bringing nuanced changes in narratives of the person, meaning could be reconstructed



# Post-traumatic growth

- Research emerging from records of anecdotal accounts to systematic investigation
- Ordinary people in face of trauma and major losses more likely to exhibit resilience than “psychopathological” responses (Bonanno, 2004)
- People who reported growth experienced less distress symptoms (Linley & Joseph, 2004)



# Post-traumatic growth

- Not anomaly, but rather within reach of most people under conducive and supportive circumstances
- ‘It is unlikely that the passage of time per se influences adversarial growth, but rather intervening events and processes.’ (Linley & Joseph, 2004, p.17)

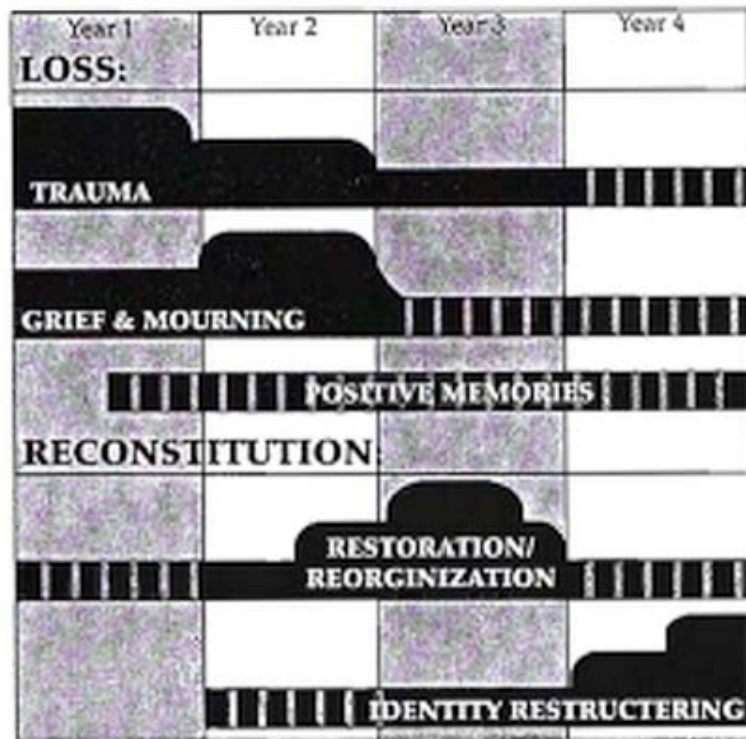


# De-victimization

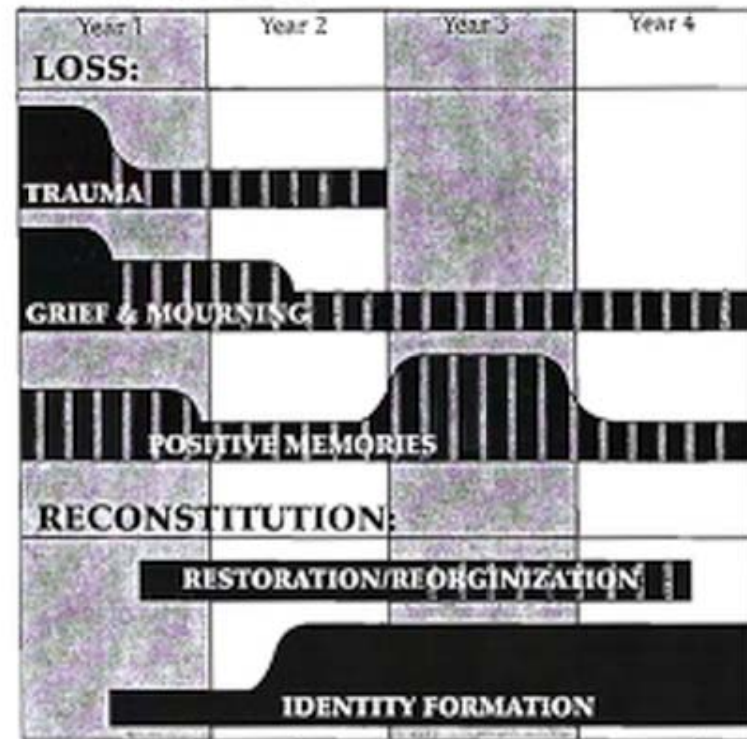
- Shelter
- Hygiene
- Back to school
- Return to work
- Establish daily routine
- Market and shops
- Retails
- Health care
- Communal activities

# Grief Pattern for adults and children

ADULT MODEL



CHILD MODEL



# Transformation Process



Uncover



Recover



Discover

## Coping

- Uncover the wounds
- Share their concerns and emotions with others
- Mindful of pain and suffering
- Cope with physical illness and psychological distress

Mourn over the lost of home and  
memories of the deceased spouse



# Collective Mourning



- Legitimize mourning and grieving
  - Group and collective rituals of mourning
  - Collective art and wisdom
  - Organized continuing bonds
  - Counting blessing of deceased
  - Blessings and mutual caring
  - Therapeutic elements of Oral History or Journal Writing



# Collective Memorialization



- Establishment of earthquake museum
- Preservation of traditional cultural practices



# Mourning Rituals



- Suggestions
  - Group rituals of mourning and dispensing remains breaks down the denial of death and loss
    - Allow bereaved and affected individuals to go through the normal grieving process
  - Collective celebration
    - Community theatre, songs, feast, music, rituals, festive activities, games, dance, opera, chanting

# Rebuilding Hope

- œ Culturally relevant
- œ Age appropriate
- œ Active community collective participation





# Mourning Rituals



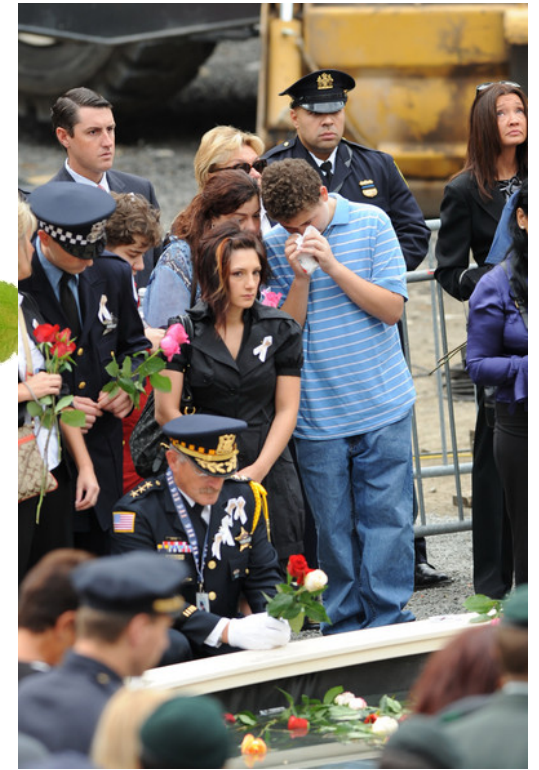
- Suggestions
  - Establishment of earthquake museum
  - Reservation of traditional cultural practices











# Transformation Process



Uncover



Recover



Discover

## Recovery and Rehabilitation

- Accept the situation
- Seek Help
- Adjust of self and others to the new situation
- Build up personal capacities
- Mobilize resources



Recover

Active coping

Fun time

Games

Sports

Expressive Arts



Music and Dancing Group

“Although we suffer during the earthquake,  
it is still okay for me to have fun now”



# Gratitude and Appreciation



- Appreciation (感恩的心) :

- ✧ Her house collapsed and her husband was injured
- ✧ Yet she found herself very fortunate to have soldiers helping to rebuild the house
- ✧ She gave these handmade insoles to soldiers as she explained "I don't have much to give, I just want to say thanks to them"



# Transformation Process



Uncover



Recover



Discover

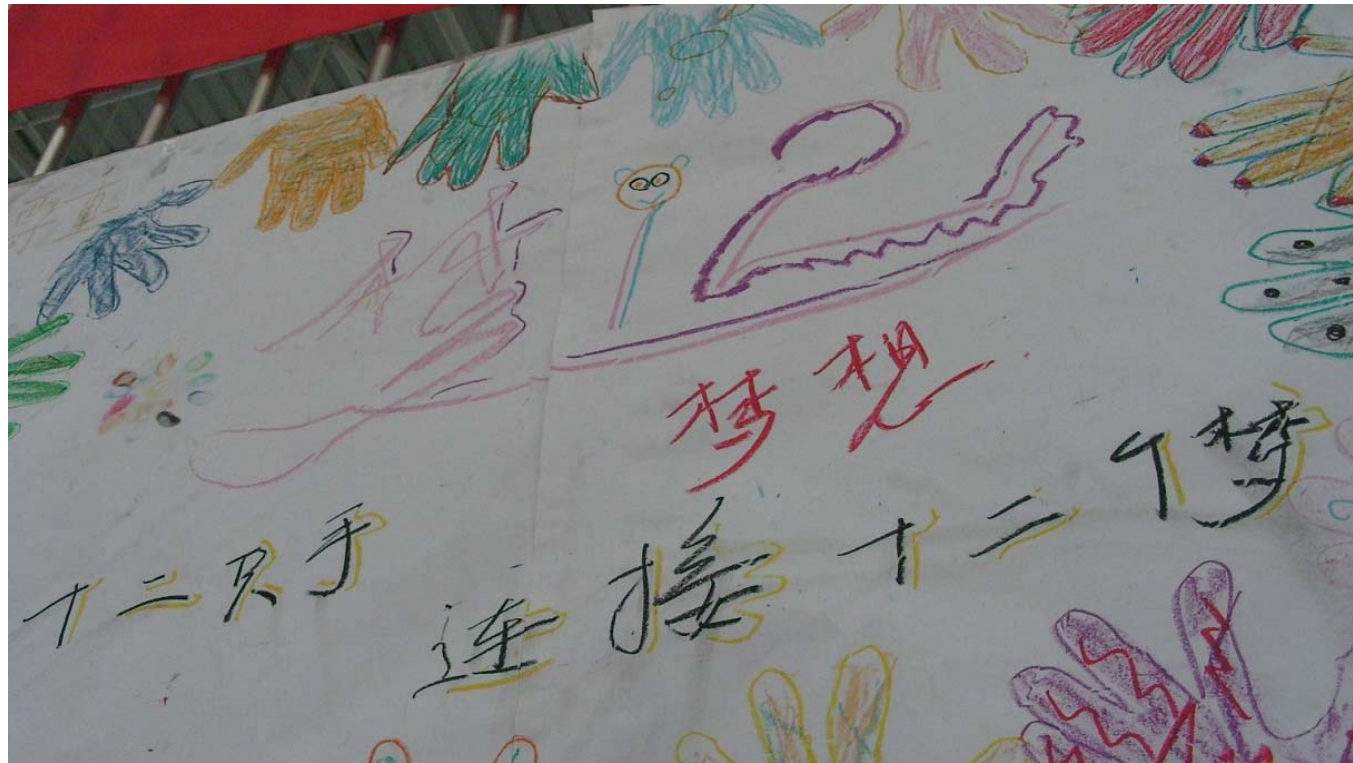
## Transformation

- Forgive themselves & others
- Focus on personal growth
- Redefine the meaning & priorities of life
- Discover new self
- Maintain a peace of mind

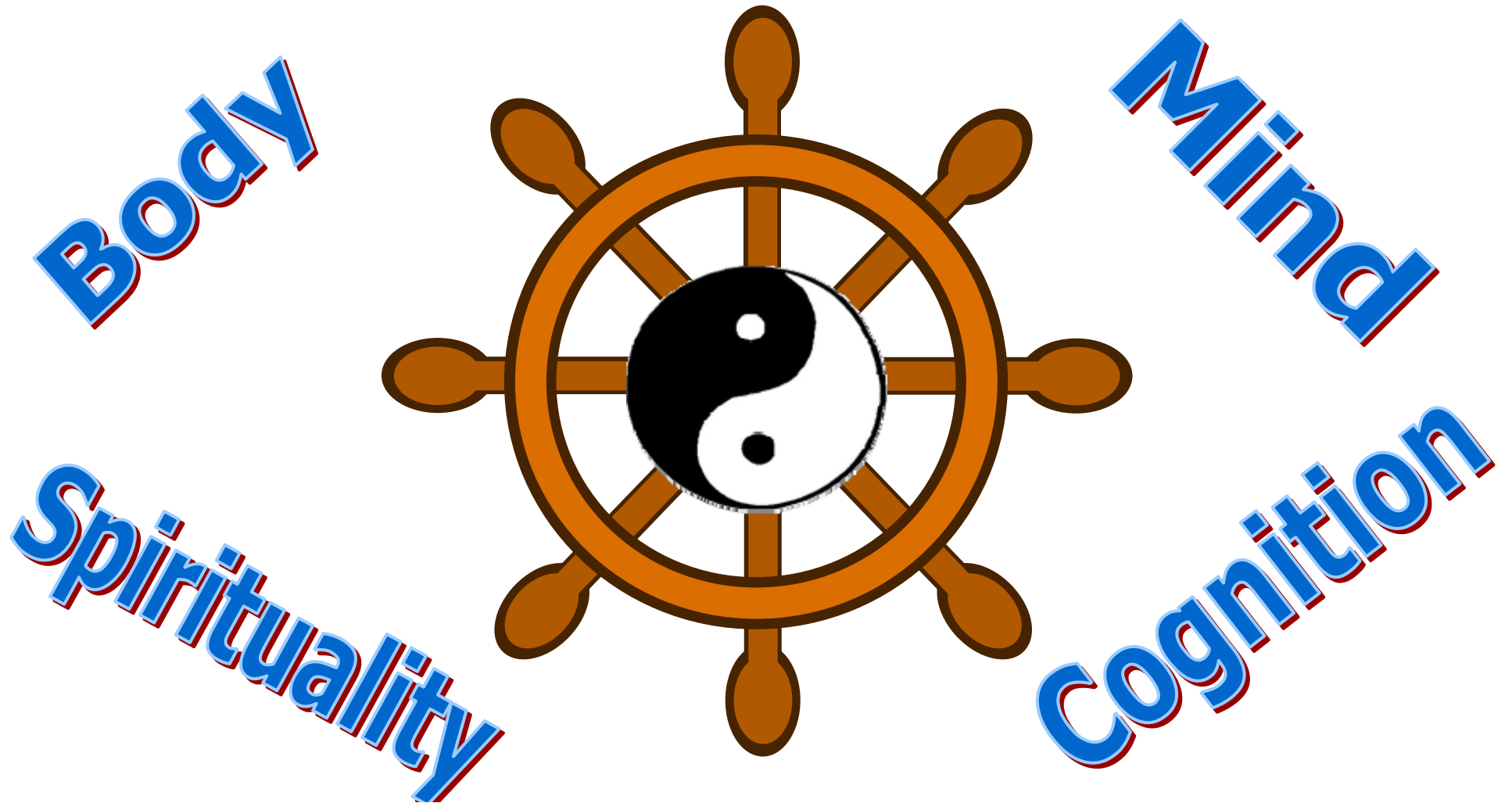
# Discover

“When the twelve of us walk hands in hands, our dreams can be materialized together”

Helping others



# WHEEL OF Transformation Relationships





# A Temporary School





# Discover

## Evaluation of Teachers' training in ShiFang (什邡)

"Put the earthquake behind us,  
let's focus on rebuilding our new lives"

"Now I understand happiness is a choice"

"I regain my faith and  
courage"

"Count our blessing"

"I choose to be strong, I  
know I can conquer  
anything"

"Now I realize it is my choice to be happy"

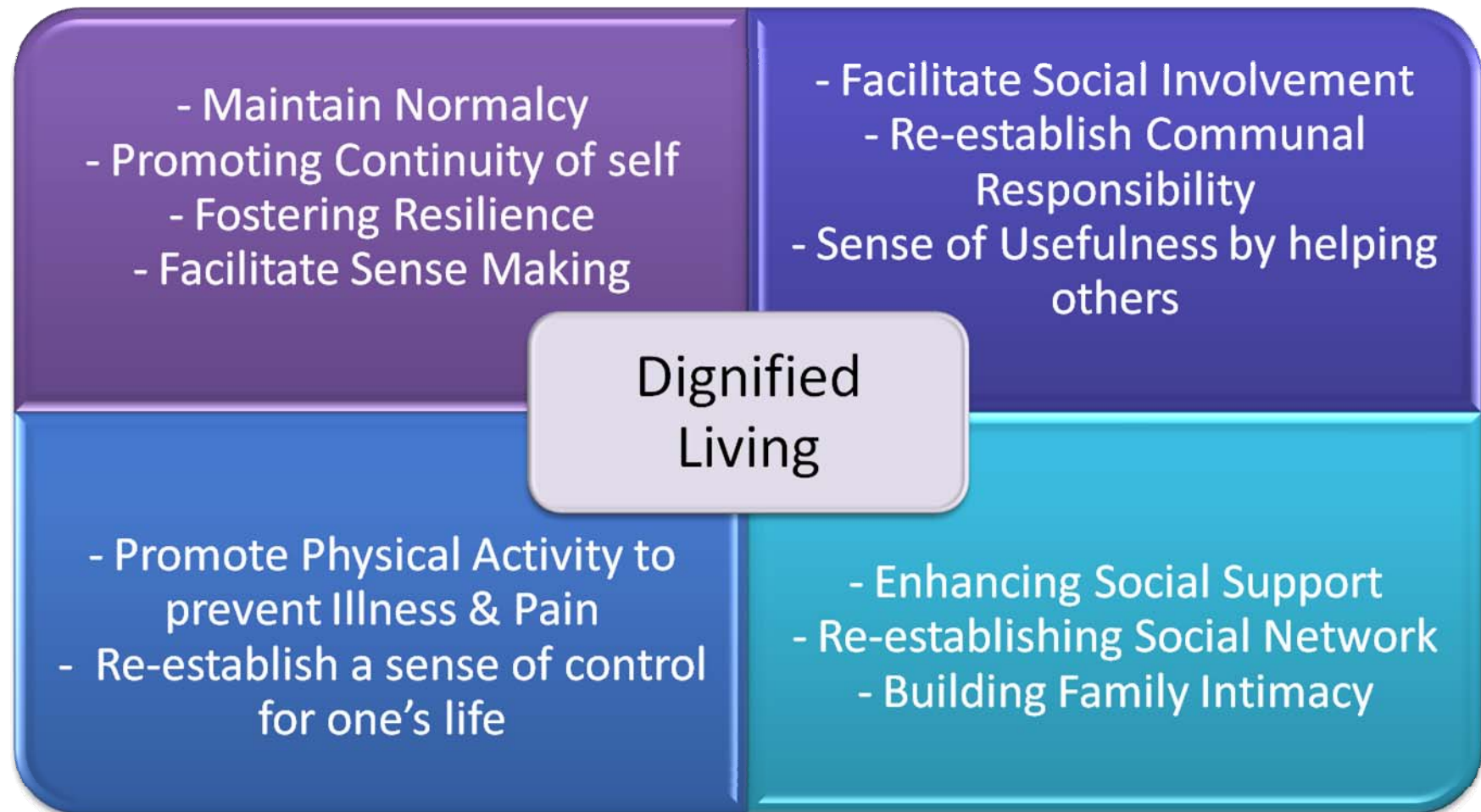
"I know how to find my direction in  
life, I know it will only be better"



陳麗雲、樊富珉 (2008) . 身心靈全人健康模式—中國文化與團體心理輔導



# Reconstruction of Dignified Living



# Return to Normality – Work, Income, Sense of Community



和坝镇方列休障争方所

# Community Resilience

- Building the community resilience to disaster
  - Readiness enhancement and risk reduction, including several representative adjustments to carry out at homes, schools and other places (Mileti & Darlington, 1997)
  - e.g. storage of emergency equipment

Mileti, D. S., & Darlington, J. D. (1997). The role of searching in shaping reactions to earthquake risk information. *Social problems*, 44, 89-103





# Current Projects

- **Establishing Community Service & Resource Centers (CSRC)**
- In Jiannan Township, Mianzhu County, Deyang City (in collaboration with Beijing Normal University)
- In Qushan Township, Beichuan, Mianyang City (in collaboration with Institute of Psychology, Academy of Science)



# Community Service & Resource Centers (CSRC)

- Promoting community recovery and redevelopment
- Serving the needs of the vulnerable groups through various social service provisions;
- Enhancing the community self-governing capacity through the training of local teachers;





# Recreate Joy in Temporary Housing Areas



# Returning to Normality







# Fostering resilience through self-help and capacity building activities





# Why do we need community capacity building?

Because disaster could happen any time!  
They are expected to happen more often!









Journal Writing,  
Calligraphy,  
Poetry,  
Art Work,  
Songs  
As  
Healing  
Activities



# Bereavement & Dislocation: Distraction, working teams, Social Support



Photo by Zhang Oi Lin – Xin Hua Net





# Healthy Physical Games and sports







# Project TRANSCEND



# Expressive Arts Intervention

- Movement Therapy





# Expressive Arts Intervention

- In a drawing activity, a child drew a big black hole representing his fear.
- During the workshop, the child was able to learn how to change his view from the unhappy experience into positive meaning.
- He added a head, four legs and a tail onto the black hole and transform his fear into a cute lovely tortoise.



# Local Cadres Training

- Self-care and grief intervention for local cadres to reduce work stress.



# Setting up Social Enterprise

- Flowers of Hope – local women making ribbon flowers for sell in Mothers' Day. All the profits are for the ladies' wage and the investment for further service for the community





# Reflections?

- Arranged remarriage for the bereaved couples
- Children of newly restructured families?
- Loyalty issues to deceased spouses
- Needs of connection with in-law families
- Tang Shan experience?
- When is a good time?
- Issues of child birth...



# Reflections?

- Rapid Pregnancy for bereaved mothers
- Knowledge of emotional resilience
- Trajectory of grief and bereavement
- Heros of the Earthquake. How do they adjust their new lives?
- Moving on and collective avoidance... denial of emotional needs, institutionalization of resilience?





## Gifts of Love in Rebuilding Hope & Dignified Living





Bless them and Thank you !  
Be Prepared for Crisis, Loss and Disaster!





To Everyone Of You:

"THANK  
YOU!"

