

The Outpost

Disaster and Hazard Readiness Foundations

From Crisis to Discovery

In the last Outpost, I combined the stages of disaster management Angie discussed in the first MFRA session with [Massimi and Keam's](#) asset-based community recovery framework. I added in the “change” stage as some food for thought, which could represent new ways of working with each other and with military families at personal, interpersonal, and even organizational levels.



IN THIS OUTPOST:

From Crisis to Discovery | 1
Resources | 3
Sanity Second | 4
Did You Know? | 4

We started discussing the crisis stage, which is dominated by emotions. Some of you have shared how those feelings of isolation and uncertainty during the first weeks and months of the pandemic were especially significant. And exhausting! Masimmi and Keam note it's that very feeling of fatigue—the experience of asking ourselves “how long can I keep this up?”—that moves us from the crisis stage to the discovery stage.

When we move into the discovery stage, we develop a new perspective and we start to settle into new patterns. Instead of focusing on the past—our familiar normals—we create new normals and new patterns to help us to see what is possible. I really like the creativity assumption here: we encountered a crisis, confronted it, it changed us, and now we get to respond in ways that make sense.



I can also personally acknowledge the tension here of both positive and negative new normals. As someone who likes to cook, I would happily go to the grocery store almost daily pre-pandemic. After COVID struck, I really struggled having someone else pick out my produce, particularly as late spring and early summer bounties were coming available. However, having groceries delivered instead not only saved me a lot of time and money, but I started cooking differently as well. I started seeing what was possible with what was already in the pantry. On the flip side, I also discovered the joy and convenience of mail-order wine. . . . Perhaps not the *best* new habit to foment.

In discovery, we develop new patterns, and we also start to connect differently. Those feelings of isolation, for example, may have had you spending a lot of time connecting on social media or on Zoom with a wide swath of family, friends, and acquaintances. Checking in on people, seeing how they were doing, letting others know how you were—that was an important part of the crisis stage. It helped us not feel so alone. But that breadth of connection likely also wasn't sustainable. I know I felt fatigue there, as well. In Masimmi and Keam's discovery stage, our connections with others start to focus more on depth of connection—quality over quantity. Our social circles start to shrink, but also become more meaningful.

We also start to experience confidence—the feeling that we can, in fact, get through this. Again, creativity comes into play as we begin to develop skills, strengths, and interests. Did you start baking sourdough bread during the pandemic? Pick up woodworking? Dust off any number of crafts or projects that had been tucked away in a closet or basement? In the crisis stage, the scarcity mindset dominates. But in the discovery stage, as Masimmi and Keam note, we start to experience abundance. We just need to recognize it. And celebrate it as much as possible.



I have to admit, reflecting on my family's COVID-19 trajectory as I typed this newsletter has been profoundly grounding. What has your journey been like? Do you have a story to share that inspires hope? Meet me over at the [Outpost Online](#) if you'd like to share.

All the best,
Brigitte
Director of Program Development and Evaluation
Military Families Learning Network

Reference: Massimi, J., and Keam, H. (2020). Asset-based community recovery framework. Tamarack Institute: <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/asset-based-community-development-recovery-framework> (accessed September 2020).

Resources from the Military Families Learning Network

Below are just a few resources available from the MFLN on building resilience and connection in complex scenarios:



Resilience webinar series:

<https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/resilienceseries>

Exploring Resilience blog post:

<https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/2019/06/30/exploring-resilience>

Resilience Matters for Military Families blog post:

<https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/2019/08/29/resilience-matters-for-military-families>

Practicing Connection in a Complex World podcast:

<https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/series/practicingconnection>

The Importance of Self Care for Military Caregivers and Families blog post:

<https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/2020/05/11/the-importance-of-self-care-for-military-caregivers>

Reimagine Your Skills as a Helping Professional: Working with Military Family Caregivers:

<https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/military-caregiving/mflnmc-virtual-learning-event>



Sanity Second

*Cultivate gratitude by paying it forward.
Think of a neighbor or friend who could
use a helping hand.*

Did you miss session 1?

The recording, resource list and other event materials for
Disaster and Hazard Readiness 101 can be found here:

<https://militaryfamilieslearningnetwork.org/mfra2020/session1>

Have other questions? Email us at MilFamLN@gmail.com.

