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Navigating the Transition with Strength:

Developing strategies through the phases of COVID

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One Minnesota | mn.gov/covid19

The world of transitions

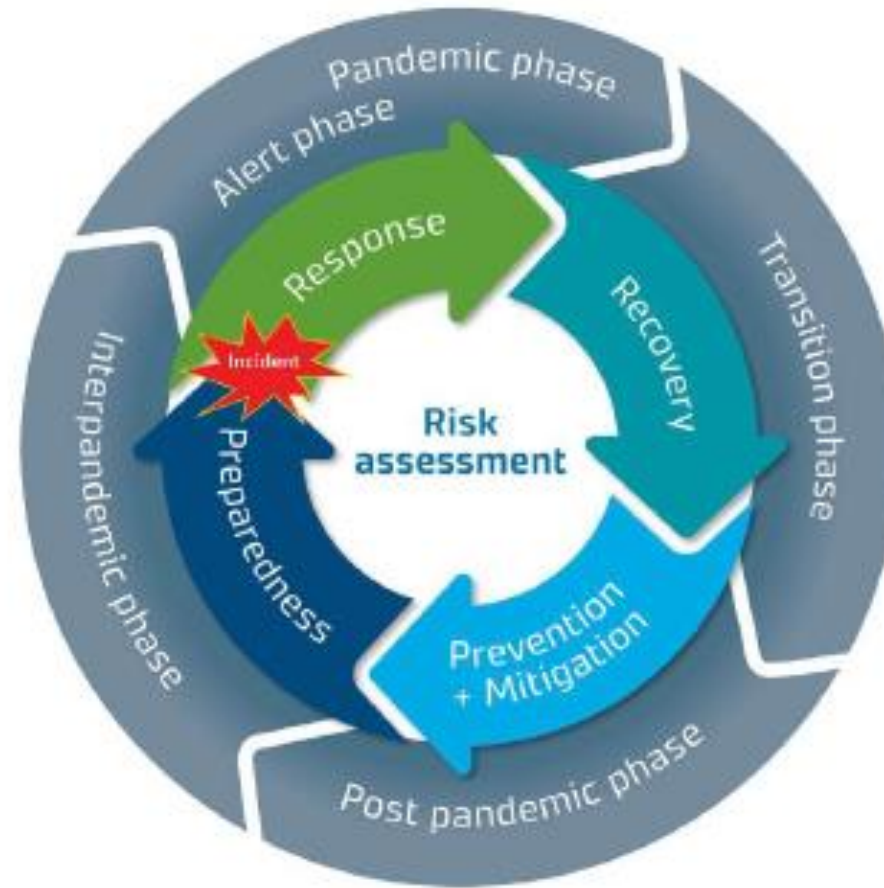
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- Life is full of transitions
 - How you manage these transition is the key.
- What do the post COVID-19 transitions look like?
- Universal experience of COVID-19



Traditional emergency management preparedness cycle

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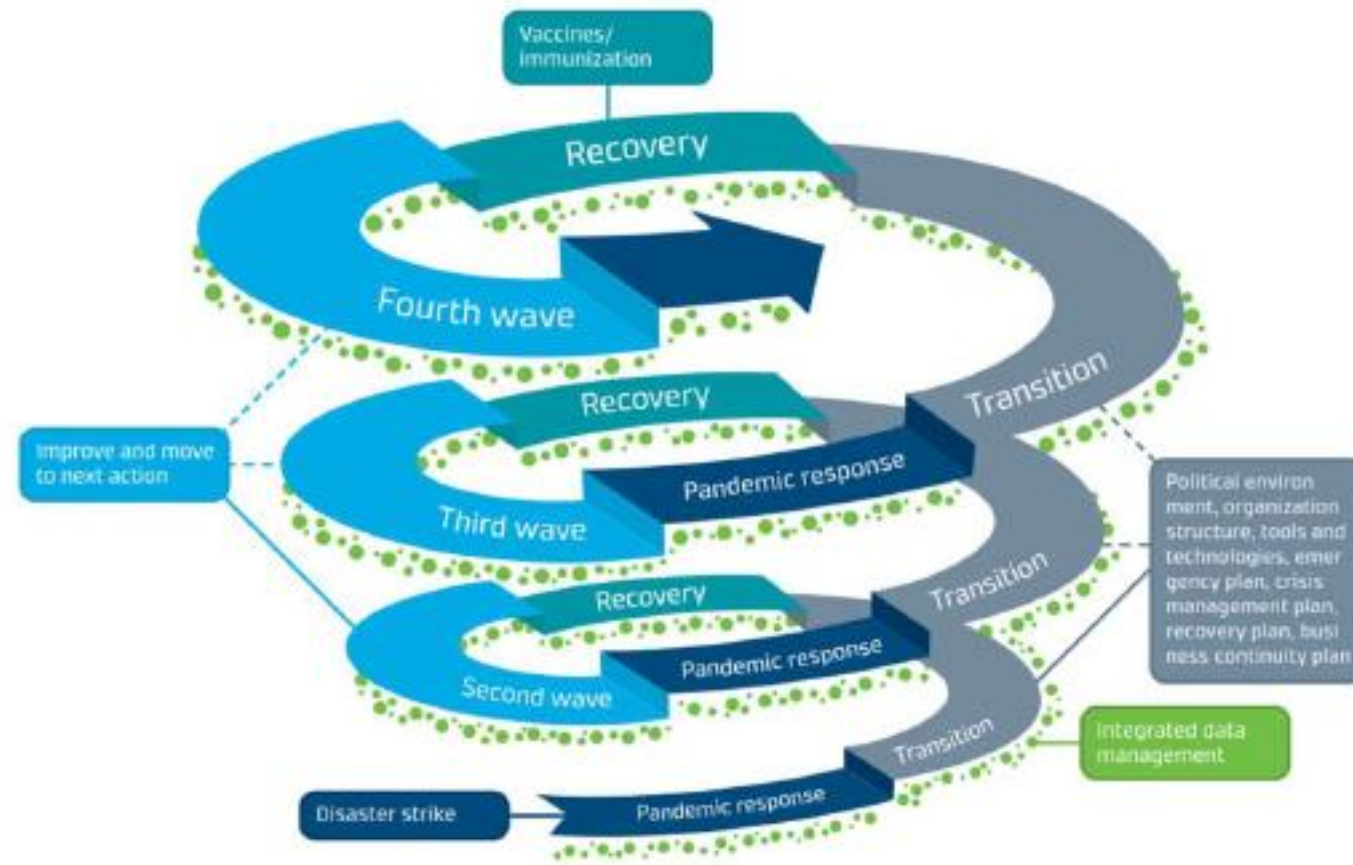
B. (S.H.M.) Fakhruddin et al. *Progress in Disaster Science* (2020)

Complexity of pandemic waves

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B.(S.H.M.) Fakhruddin et al.

Progress in Disaster Science 7 (2020) 100102



What is demobilization?

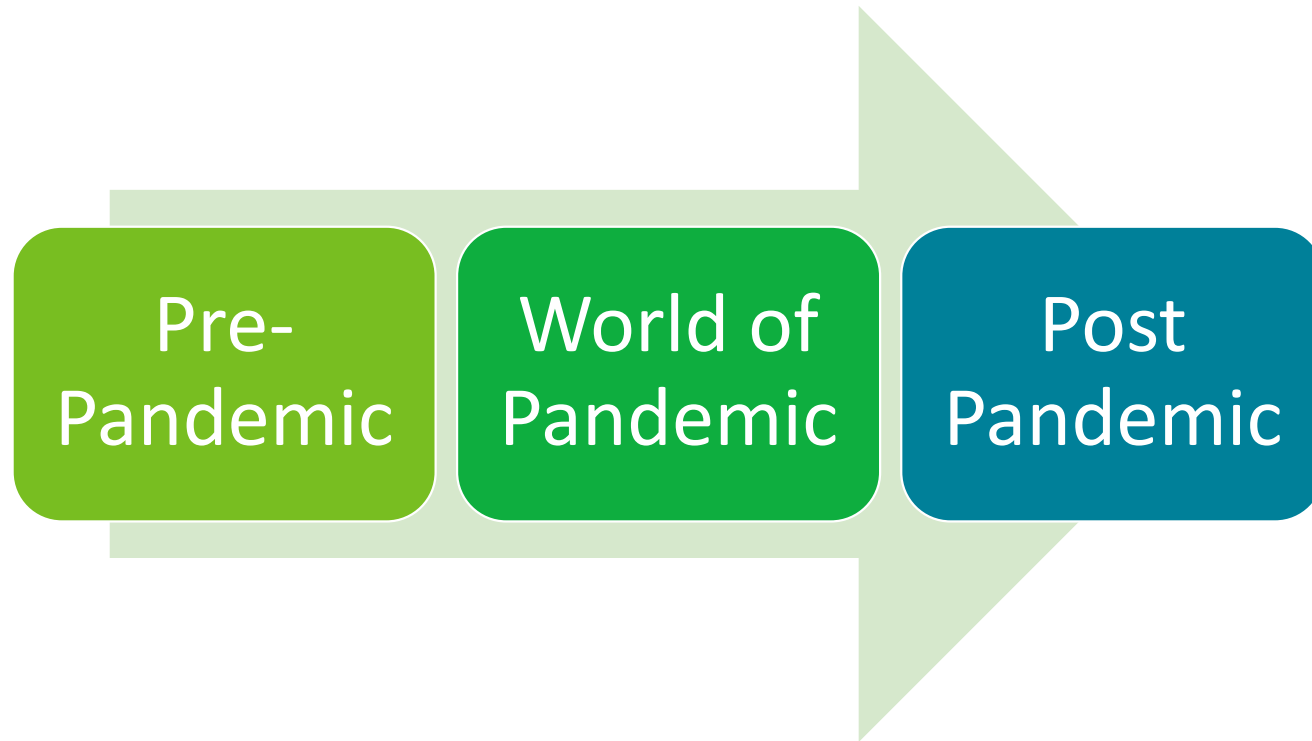
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- The orderly, safe, and efficient return of a resource or resources to their original location and status (Homeland Security).
- The planned process used to return to pre-disaster, day-to-day functioning (FEMA).
 - The standing down of the incident command system
 - The return of staff to their pre-disaster work duties
- How is COVID-19 demobilization different?



Where am I in the process as an individual?

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Poll: Where are you?

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Please put in the chat the number that best describes where you are in the demobilization process.

1. I have NOT thought about the ending of my COVID-19 responder role.
2. I HAVE thought about the ending of my COVID-19 responder role.
3. I am ACTIVELY PLANNING for the end to my responder COVID-19 role.
4. I have a PARTIALLY RETURNED to my pre-COVID-19 work.
5. I have FULLY RETURNED to my pre-COVID-19 work.

What it means to respond to an event for more than a Year: *Building meaning and awareness*

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- Multiple stressors
 - Work, personal, school, social, travel
- Resilience built and challenged
 - Coping skills, loss, burnout, moral injury
- How do you deal with ambiguity?
 - What you know - Come to know - Never know



Common psychosocial reactions during demobilization

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- Physical
- Emotional
- Cognitive
- Interpersonal
- Spiritual



Individual differences in dealing with transitions

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- Age/experience
- Culture
- Past trauma
- History of physical and mental illness
- Personalities
- Coping skills
- Support system



Potential stressors for responders transitioning out of the response

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- Processing traumatic, morally injurious events that occurred during the response.
- Change in workplace and/or community safety measures.
- Questioning meaning and identity.
- Adjusting to less demanding work.
- Going back to working with coworkers who were not directly involved in the response.
- Job insecurity.



Organizational challenges during this time of transition

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- Responders may lack the awareness of impact on them.
- All staff are impacted, but in a variety of ways.
- Staff may find themselves moving back and forth between response.
- We can expect an adjustment period of at least a month, perhaps longer

Participant reflection

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- There is a direct correlation between how you managed the stress of transition in the past and how you believe you can manage it in the future.
- Reflect on an important transition in your past and how you dealt with it.
- Please share your experience in the chat, If you feel comfortable doing so.



Understanding post traumatic growth

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- The term “post-traumatic growth” refers to **positive** psychological change experienced as a result of adversity, which leads to a higher level of functioning (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).
- It is also described as a "life-changing" psychological **shift in thinking**, which contributes to meaningful personal change.



Tips to manage transition stress and build post-traumatic growth

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- Admit that you feel vulnerable.
- Become pro-active in the change process.
- Focus on the positive emotions.
- Recognize and learn from your past successful transitions.
- Practice self care and engage in mindfulness activities to calm your mind and body.
- Ask for help when you feel especially vulnerable or overwhelmed.



Prepare for demobilization: Individuals

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- Think about how you can apply lessons learned during your response work to future situations.
- Reflect on what your disaster response experience has meant for you personally and professionally.
- See the positives, such as learned and applied new skills, or how you have learned that you can be flexible and are able to multitask when needed.
- Continue to monitor your stress level and practice physical and emotional self care.
- Maintain connections with family and friends.

- Have you begun to prepare for the transition (emotional/psychological) to a post pandemic world?
 - No.
 - Yes, only in the past month.
 - Yes, from the beginning.

Prepare for demobilization: Leadership

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- Talk openly about demobilization stress and how you manage as a leader.
- Provide an opportunity for your staff to share experiences to normalize reactions and reduce feelings of isolation.
- Facilitate connections back to staff's COVID-19 team for support.
- Acknowledge that change is a process.
- Encourage staff who are struggling or seem overwhelmed to reach out to EAP or another mental health provider.



Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress

Prepare for demobilization: Organization

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- Create a workplace environment where staff can be open with leadership about their thoughts, experiences, and concerns.
- Create a structured plan to share lessons learned and improvement plans.
- Encourage use of vacation time and encourage liberal or flexible leave policies.
- Be open and honest about the complex and difficult job faced by supervisors and managers in meeting individual staff needs while maintaining ongoing work.

SAMHSA Tips for Supervisors of Disaster Responders: Helping Staff Manage Stress When Returning to Work

- Has your organization begun to prepare for staff support for during the transition to post pandemic life?
 - No.
 - Yes, only in the past month.
 - Yes, over three months.
 - I don't know.

When to suggest that your staff seek help

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- Unrelenting fatigue
- Pace change
- Cynicism
- Dissatisfaction with routine work
- Easily evoked emotions
- Oversharing of response experience
- Difficulties with colleagues and leadership



SAMHSA Tips for Supervisors of Disaster Responders: Helping Staff Manage Stress When Returning to Work

- [Recovery and Reintegration for Healthcare Workers Following COVID-19 Surges \(cstsonline.org\)](https://cstsonline.org)
- [Helping Staff Manage Stress When Returning to Work \(samhsa.gov\)](https://samhsa.gov)
- [Tips for Disaster Responders: Returning to Work](#)
- [First Responder Toolkit](#)
- [WellnessMN](#)
- [SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline and Text to Talk line](#)

Thank you!

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