



## RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE FOR SOCIAL PROFIT LEADERS

### *Leading after disaster strikes*

By Charmaine Hammond

Leading can be challenging at the best of times. Leading after disaster and trauma will be different, challenging and full of new learnings.

As you return to your organization there are some things you can do to begin helping your team recover, rebuild and be resilient. First, recognize that you have all been affected by the fires and evacuation, including the emergency responders.

- Assess your organization's readiness and capacity to resume services. This will include decisions about staffing, potential changes in services delivered, hours, and capacity to serve clients. There will be a need for some flexibility especially for staff who have a home that is damaged or destroyed.
- Have a team meeting, or debriefing upon the return to work, and continue these regularly. Team communication is essential for resilience.
- Communicate effectively and frequently with your staff. Don't assume that they have access to the information that you do (e.g. emergency alerts, updates from the RMWB). Where possible provide your staff information that impacts them professionally and personally.
- Expect that there will be many decisions, some will not be like those you have needed to make in past. You may be needing to seek legal, funder, accountant or board input more than usual as the decisions may have impacts on your organization and services.
- Set boundaries. Stick to your mandate. It will be easy to get sidetracked but now more than ever sticking to your mandate and providing your core services will be essential to the rebuilding and resilience of the community.
- Document everything. Having a paper trail is very important. Ensure you take pictures and videos of your interior and exterior of your office and the building you are in. Report any damages and concerns to your landlord and insurance company. Ensure you have a solid paper trail along with video and photographs (and have a backup).
- Take care of urgent matters such as your physical building, legal and financial commitments, and staffing needs immediately.
- Take care of your personal and family needs.

Model the way: Leadership (Board, ED and supervisors) need to lead by example in taking care of personal wellness. This sets the tone for the organization and the team. It also impacts how clients will be served.

Work at creating or maintaining a positive and healthy organizational culture; respect and good faith go a long way in tough times. Deal with issues and concerns immediately. Don't let them fester, it can destroy the culture and resilience of your organization.

If you have EFAP supports, ensure your staff know how to use these benefits and encourage them to do so.

Celebrate wins, milestones and progress - even the little accomplishments. This restores hope and resilience. Show appreciation and recognition.

**Some of the decisions you may need to make fairly soon into the recovery process:**

Working schedule	Changes in services/delivery	Filling any positions
Messages to communicate publically (communication plan)	Strategies to build team's resilience	Communication
Who will be responding to media request (and ensure they are media trained)	What events you will attend/ Participate in	Any programs or events that need to be cancelled or postponed
Ensure current partnerships or collaborations are still intact or what changes to be made	Key messaging for your organization	

Information to ensure you learn about

- Compassion fatigue and resilience
- Learn how trauma affects people
- Crisis Communication
- Media skills
- Your staff may need additional training around customer service and dealing with angry clients