

How Facilitators Can Help After Disasters¹



In a recent training offered by [Global Facilitators Serving Communities](https://www.gfsc.org/) (GFSC), I learned a lot about the range of facilitation skills needed to help communities recover from disasters and other crises.

Key to this work is recognizing that each phase of post-disaster recovery requires different kinds of interventions.

The GFSC identifies four stages in the psycho-social reconstruction process:

- Survival
- Security
- Autonomy
- Transcendence

Applicable to individuals, groups and entire communities, this model serves as a guide for facilitators who want to help and are not sure what to do when.

¹ <https://www.iifac.org/papeles-en-las-reuniones/pueden-ayudar-los-facilitadores-despues-desastres/>

Strategies for self-care

To be truly effective in these demanding situations, as facilitators we need to bring more than our toolkit of participatory techniques to the disaster site. We need strategies for renewing our own energy so that we can work with joy as we connect with others who are struggling to rebuild their lives.

So along with your easel, paper and markers, pack your running shoes, yoga mat, and /or meditation cushion. Eat a balanced diet, think positive thoughts, laugh and smile as much as possible. Stay in touch with your own loved ones, sing and dance, be grateful for all you have been given – and then give generously.

Responding to a global need

Here is a quote from the GFSC website:

All over the world there are tremendous challenges: economic upheaval, social changes, natural disasters. Facilitation techniques are some of the most effective intervention tools for managing change, grief and building individuals' as well as community resilience and self-reliance everywhere.

Since 2002, the GFSC has trained and mentored thousands of professionals in techniques for psychosocial reconstruction after natural and social disasters. They have worked in Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Venezuela), Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and the USA.

[Learn more about this inspiring, volunteer initiative.](#)

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Beatrice Briggs is the founder and director of the International Institute for Facilitation and Change, a consulting firm based in Mexico. A Certified™ Professional Facilitator, she puts her years of experience at the service of leaders who want to make their meetings worth the time, talent and money invested in them. A native of the United States, Beatrice has lived in Mexico since 1998, working in both English and Spanish to alleviate the suffering caused by bad meetings wherever they occur.