

Advancing Equity and Resilience in the Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

Monica Schoch-Spana, PhD

HSMP Annual Meeting, September 29, 2022



JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Center for
Health Security

Today's Backdrop: Longing Ache for Normalcy

HEALTH NEWS

✓ Fact Checked

Fauci and Other Experts Debate When Our COVID-19 Lives Will Return to Normal



Dr. Anthony Fauci tells Healthline that a COVID-19 vaccine alone won't return our lives to a more normal state. Getty Images

McCarthy M, *Healthline*, 09/21/2020

<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/fauci-and-other-experts-debate-when-our-covid-19-lives-will-return-to-normal#1>

Biden Says the Pandemic Is Over. But at Least 400 People Are Dying Daily.

The president made the remark in an interview that aired on CBS's "60 Minutes" on Sunday night. By Monday, the backlash was in full swing.

Give this article



Stolberg S, *NYT*, 09/19/2022,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/19/us/politics/biden-covid-pandemic-over.html>

Overview

- Briefly introduce today's understudied topic and offer a working definition for *epidemic recovery*, applicable to COVID-19
- Review expert views of the limits to a “one-size-fits-all” ideal for the epidemic recovery process
- Identify potential reasons why, to date, the epidemic recovery period is vastly under-rated and under-resourced
- Relate how disaster recovery studies can jumpstart epidemic recovery thinking, while noting how biological hazards differ
- Outline key steps for a local jurisdiction to engage in comprehensive post-pandemic recovery planning

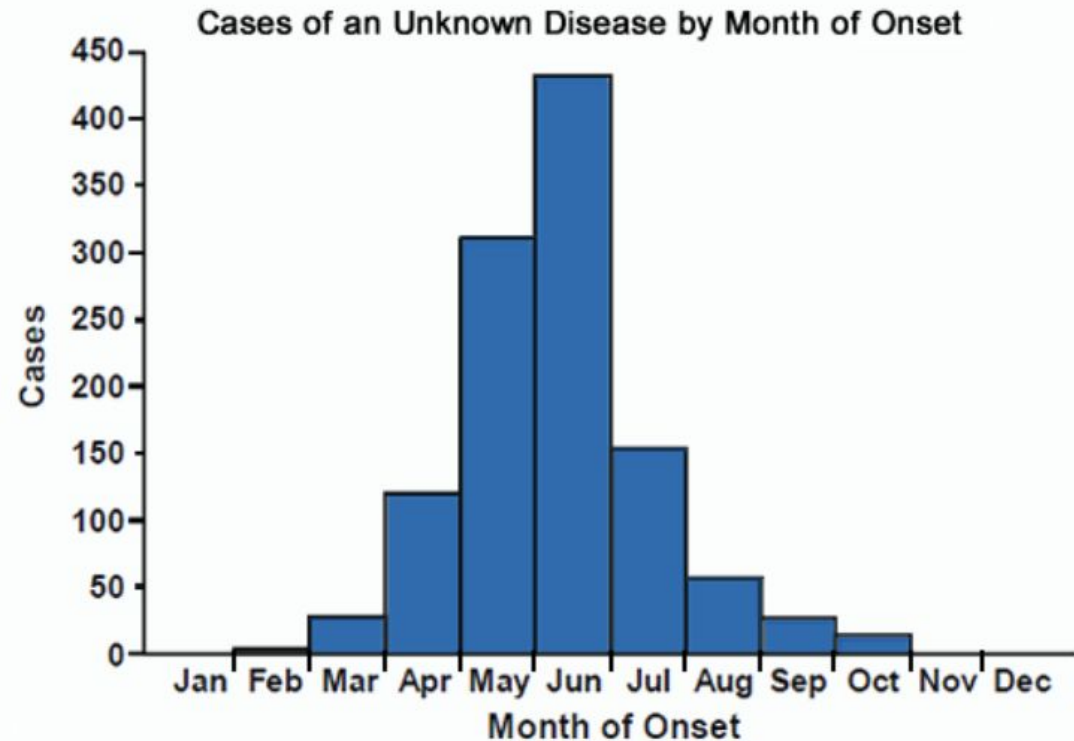
Resources for This Talk

- Schoch-Spana M. An epidemic recovery framework to jumpstart analysis, planning, and action on a neglected aspect of global health security. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*. Published 29 April 2020. ciaa486. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciaa486>
- Schoch-Spana M, Ravi SJ, Martin EK. Modeling epidemic recovery: An expert elicitation on issues and approaches. *Soc Sci Med*. 2022;292:114554. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114554>

Discovering and Defining Epidemic Recovery



The readiness and response phases of an epidemic capture the **disproportionate attention** of government, emergency professionals, and the media.



CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/training/QuickLearns/createepi/>

Survivors may have lingering medical conditions, financial burdens, emotional support needs, and social service requirements.



MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES

Branswell H. Zika infection can damage fetuses even if pregnant women show no symptoms. STAT. June 15, 2016.

<https://www.statnews.com/2016/06/15/zika-infection-asymptomatic-pregnancy/>

Healthcare facilities may struggle to regain full functionality due to workforce depletion, revenue losses, stigmatization, and/or contamination.



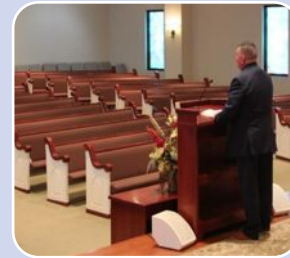
REUTERS/Mike Cassese;
<https://www.pri.org/stories/2014-11-10/us-ebola-cases-remind-toronto-healthcare-workers-their-sars-outbreak-2003>

Communities may require extra efforts to revitalize commerce, repair social schisms, recoup trust in government, and reconfigure health and human services delivery.



WORLD VISION, photo by Jonathon Bundu,
<https://www.worldvision.org/health-news-stories/2014-ebola-virus-outbreak-facts>

Pandemic Recovery Challenges Go Far Beyond What's Captured in a COVID-19 Epi Curve



WEALTH

Shuttered businesses
Lost jobs
Lost insurance
Foreclosures
Evictions

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Closed daycare
Closed schools
Closed universities
Closed camps

MENTAL HEALTH

Social isolation
Symptom flare-up
Healthcare worker burn out
Complex grieving
Substance abuse

CIVIC INSTITUTIONS

Diminished public revenues
Under-resourced agencies
Greater demand on safety net

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Stigmatization & discrimination
Amplified inequalities
Eroded public trust in institutions

SPIRITUALITY

Interrupted in-person worship
Smaller funerals
Complex grieving

LEISURE & CULTURE

Closed libraries
Financially precarious museums
Interrupted sports seasons

Just *One* Sector: Behavioral Health (BH) in COVID-19 Context

Teachers, Nurses, and Child-Care Workers Have Had Enough

The burnout crisis in pink-collar occupations puts everyone's well-being at risk.

By Annie Lowrey



The Atlantic

SEPTEMBER 27, 2022, 6 AM ET

SHARE

St. Mary's County Snapshot

- 85% of respondents who reported no BH symptoms pre-pandemic developed them w/i past 2 years
- 48% reported that fears of COVID-19 infection negatively affected their BH
- Nearly 70% reported difficulty in accessing BH care during the last 2 years
- Top barriers to care = long wait lists and costs of services

Knowing the Limits to a Single Recovery Ideal



Working Definition for Epidemic Recovery

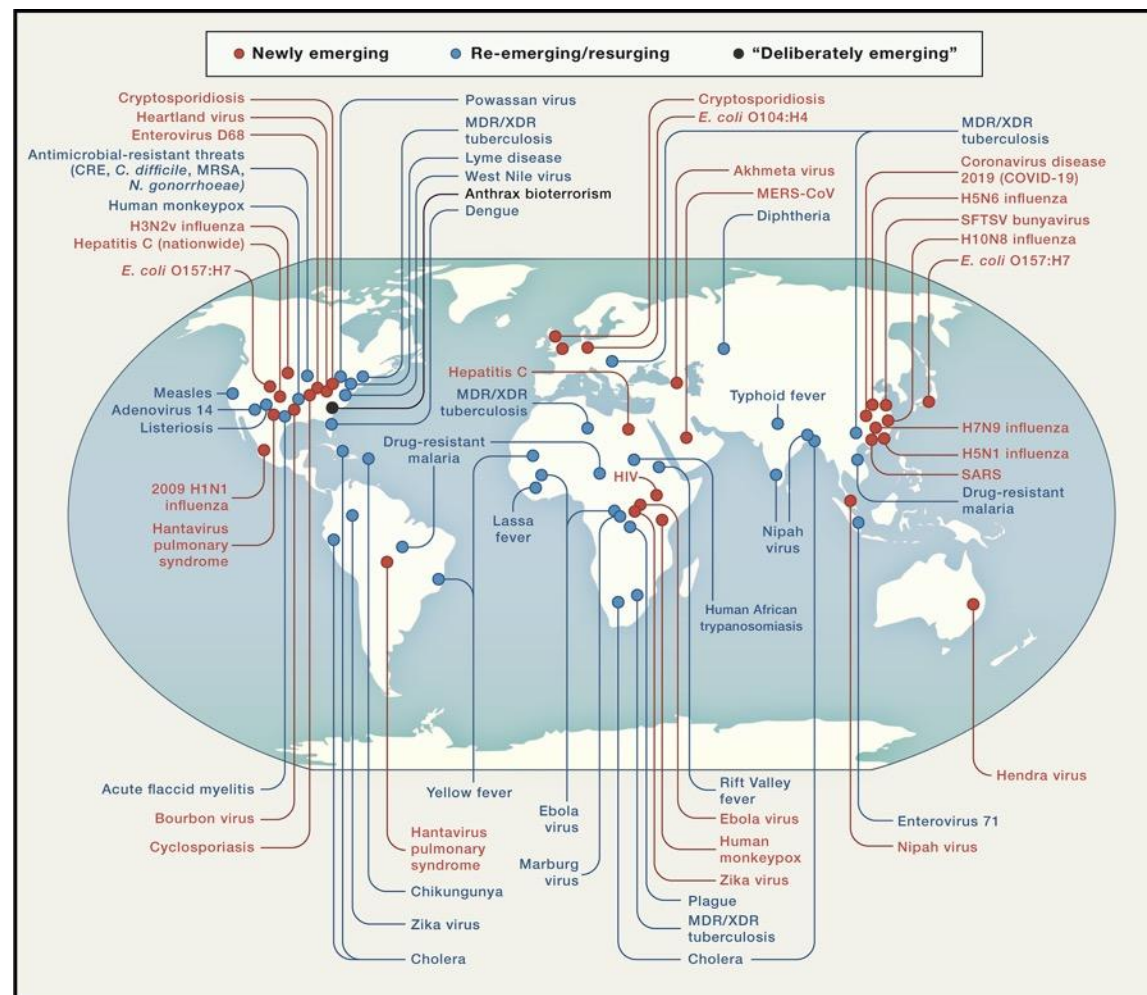
...the decisions and actions, both planned before and improvised after a major outbreak, that enable the restoration, revitalization, and reformation of the social, economic, physical, and natural systems impinging upon human health and wellbeing (Schoch-Spana 2020).

Definitional tensions exist between recovery as a goal of returning to baseline or seizing the opportunity to improve.



Photo by Nick Bolton on Unsplash – <https://unsplash.com>

The influence of context over the emergence, spread, and resolution of an epidemic may defy a one-size-fits-all definition for recovery.

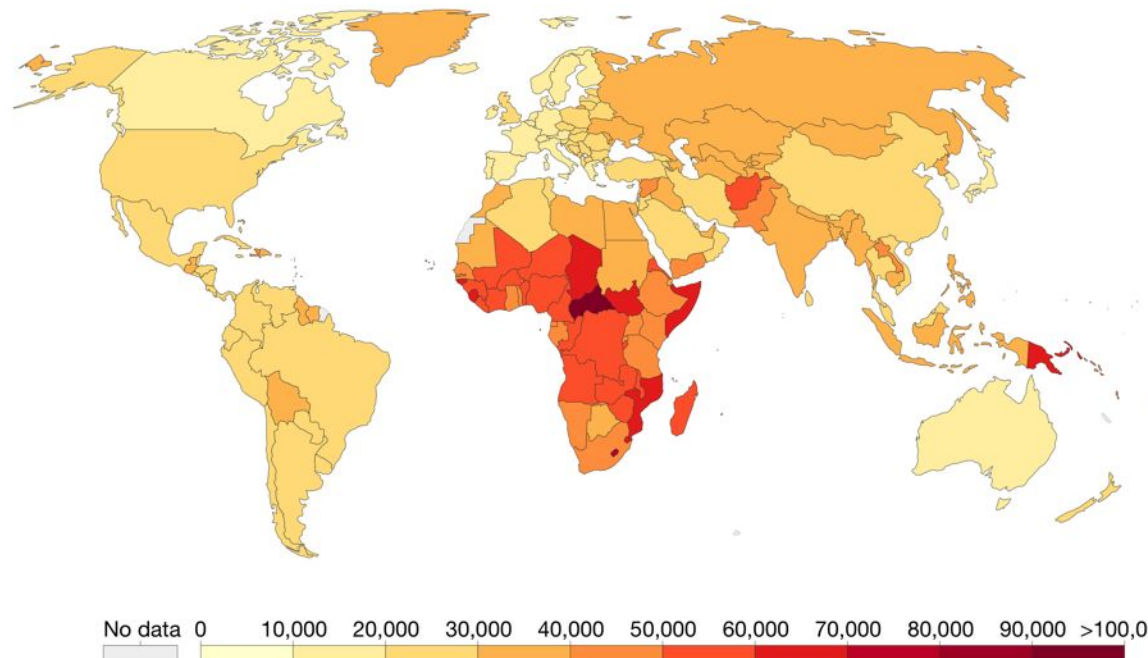


Morens DM, Fauci AS. Emerging Pandemic Diseases: How We Got to COVID-19. *Cell* 2020;182(5). <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0092867420310126#>!

Epidemic experiences in high-income countries differ significantly from those in **low- and moderate-income countries**, producing divergent “recovery” ideals.

Burden of disease, 2017

Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) per 100,000 individuals from all causes. DALYs measure the total burden of disease – both from years of life lost due to premature death and years lived with a disability. One DALY equals one lost year of healthy life.



Source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease

Note: To allow comparisons between countries and over time this metric is age-standardized.

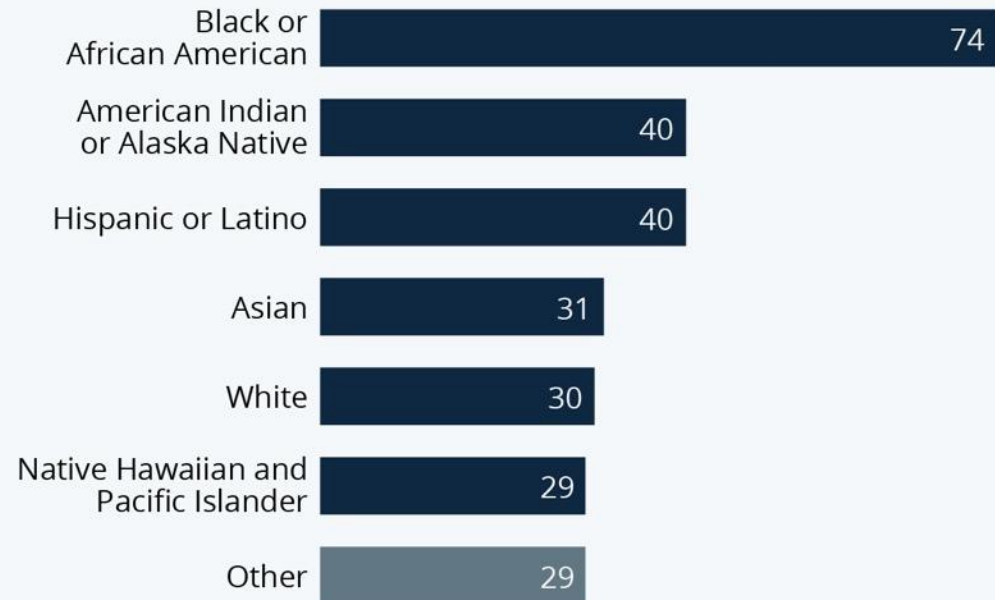
OurWorldInData.org/burden-of-disease • CC BY

COVID-19

One pandemic, many recovery trajectories...

The Pandemic's Racial Disparity

Covid-19 deaths per 100,000 people in the U.S. by race or ethnicity (as of July 30, 2020)



Source: The COVID Tracking Project



statista

Explaining Why Epidemic Recovery Has Not Emerged as a Problem in Need of a Solution



Urgent “**life and limb**” matters take precedence and evoke empathy, while recovery issues trail off into obscurity.

- A poor response can produce impacts that are very visible and readily communicated
- Constantly enumerated cases and deaths elevate problem and elicit emotional reactions
- Exhausted and burned out responders make it difficult to conceive of continuing a high-pitched recovery effort

Recovery is not problematized the same as response because the **prolonged recoveries** of marginalized people generate less social attention.

- How society assigns value to people on a differential basis explains the lack of available energy for recovery
- Struggles of people without voice or political influence are not likely to be addressed adequately
- Comfortable elites may focus on high-profile outbreaks while underserved others face “everyday emergencies” (e.g., poor housing, unclean water, and food deserts)

Overlapping realities, response and recovery both need **resources, planning and workforces**; yet, only response capabilities are developed

- Largely a medicalized process, epidemic response rests on the shoulders of skilled public health and healthcare workforces
- Recovery does not have a comparably coordinated, well-resourced, and skilled workforce
- A future epidemic recovery “system” should work in tandem with the response, while thinking ahead on a longer time-horizon

Using Disaster Studies to Jumpstart Thinking on Epidemic Recovery

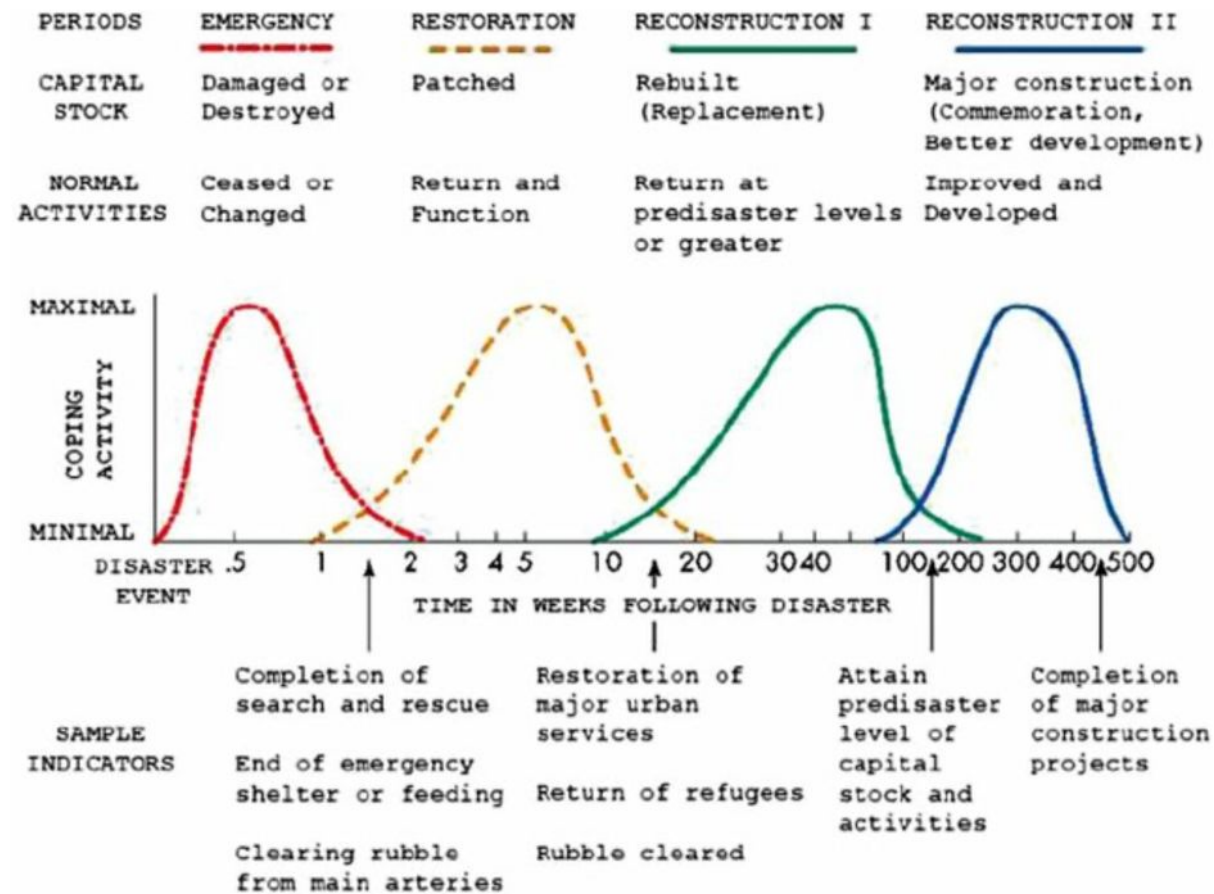


Think holistically,
broadening the
focus beyond the
immediately
discernible
damages.



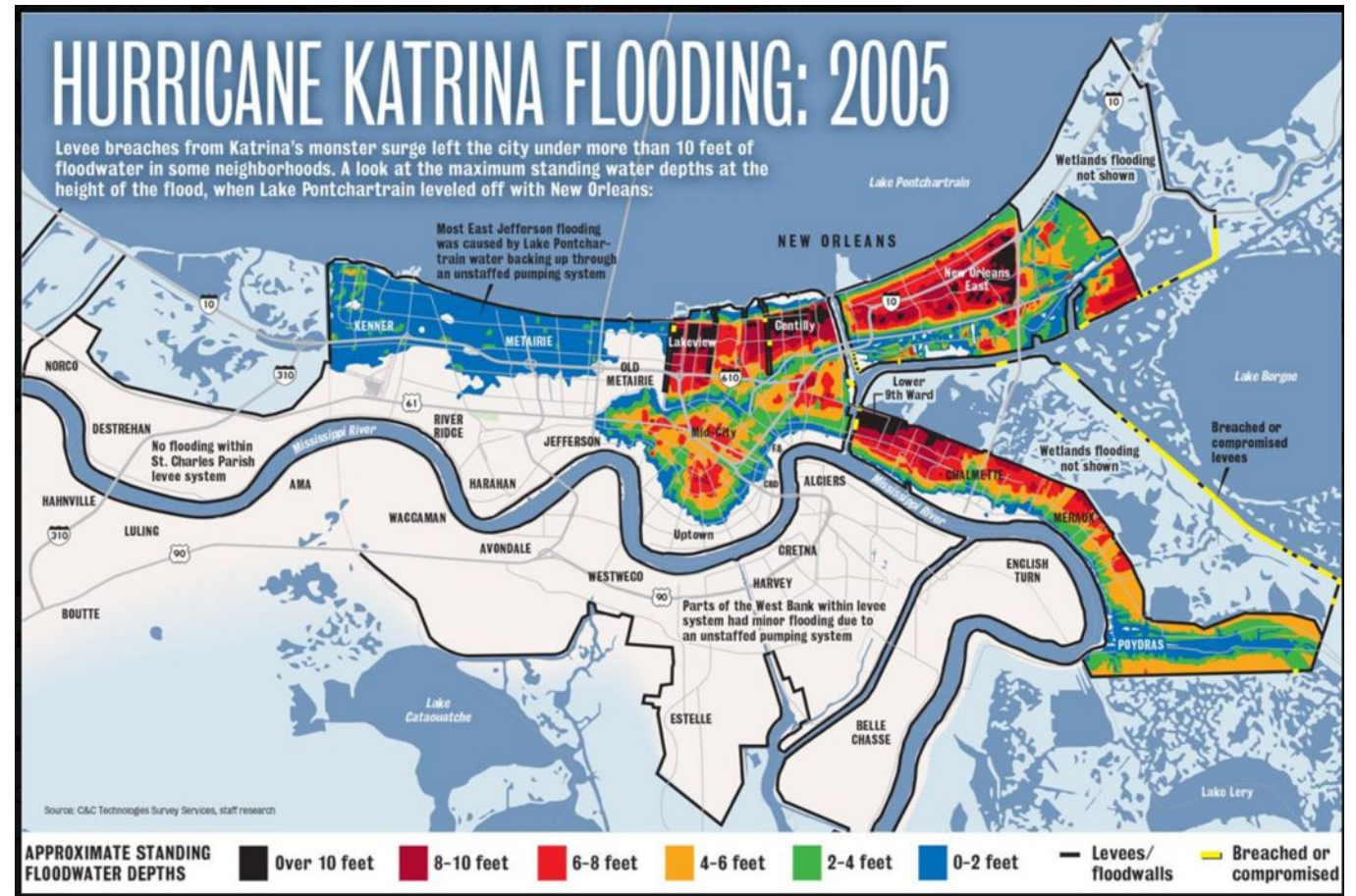
AP/Brennan Linsley – May 21, 2013. Moore, Oklahoma.
<https://www.csmonitor.com/Business/2013/0521/Oklahoma-tornado-Where-the-financial-relief-will-come-from>

Anticipate messiness, seeing recovery as a complex, non-linear, unevenly achieved process.



Model of disaster recovery, with time phases, adapted from Kates and Pijawka 1977, "From rubble to monument: The pace of reconstruction."

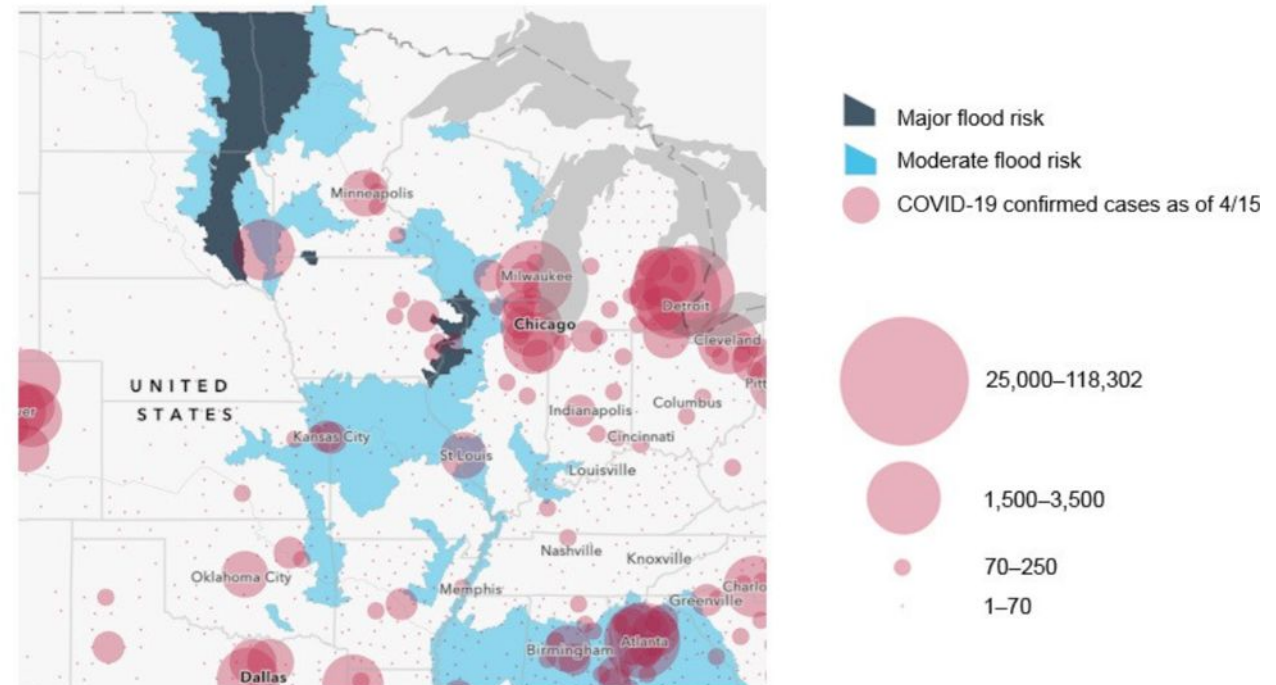
Specify the **unit of analysis**, knowing the differential nature of recovery processes and outcomes



Swenson D. Hurricane Katrina flooding compared to a 500-year storm today: Graphic. NOLA.com. August 16, 2013. https://www.nola.com/news/weather/article_a07212b9-6057-5ed6-8914-07b8135a430b.html

Recognize that event **severity** and **scope** influence the pace and quality of recovery.

Overlap of COVID-19 confirmed cases and 2020 spring flooding outlook

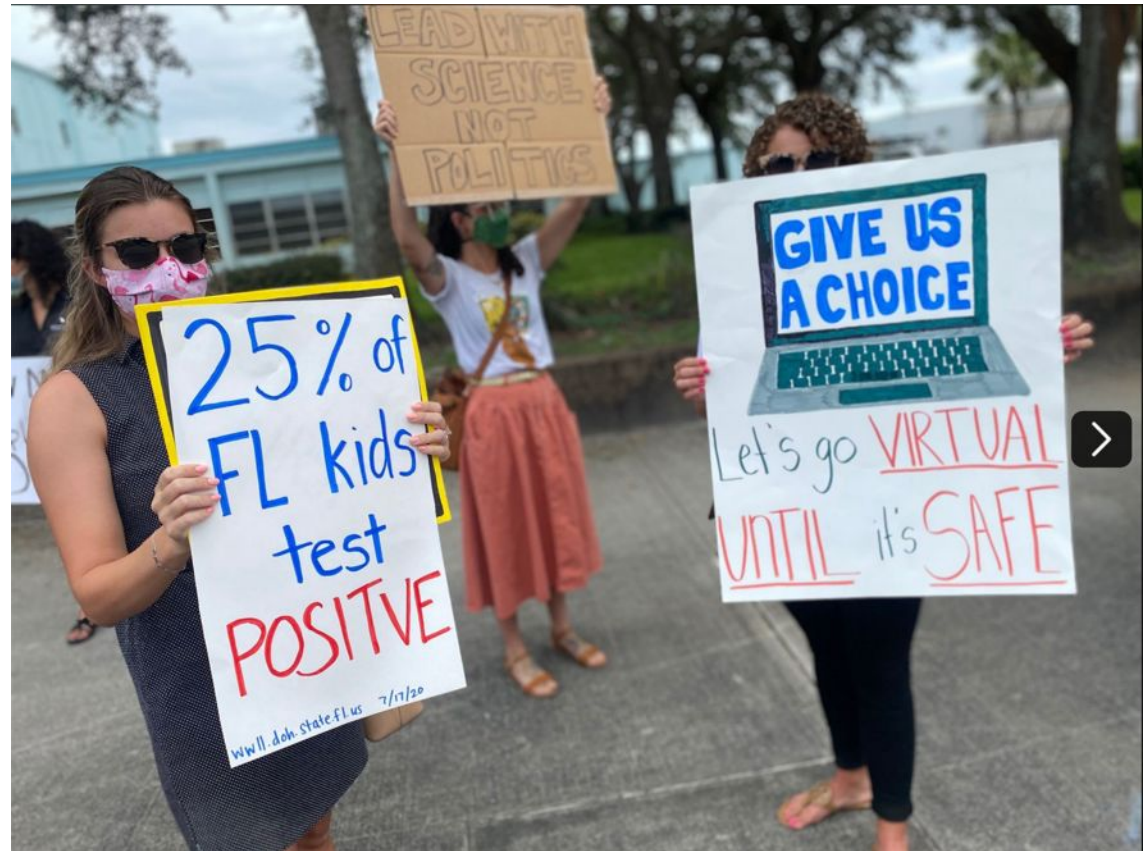


Sources: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2020 U.S. Spring Flooding Outlook; COVID-19 data from The New York Times as of 4/15/2020, based on reports from state and local health agencies.

American Flood Coalition -

<https://floodcoalition.org/2020/04/spring-flooding-and-covid-19-collide-in-the-midwest-challenges-and-considerations-for-local-governments/>

Treat recovery as restoration, but to a “new normal,” the outlines of which are potentially subject to **volatile debate**



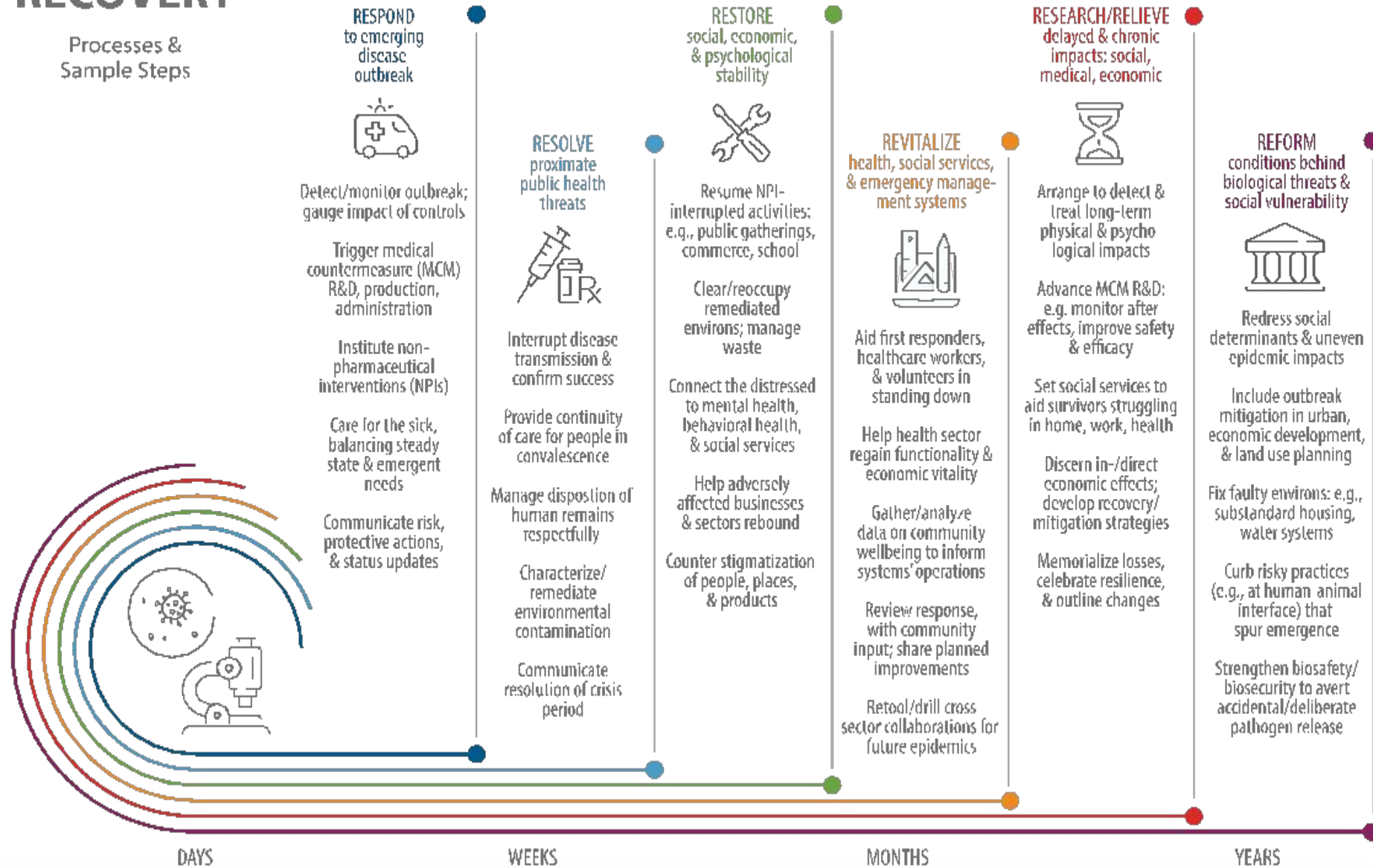
CBS12.com. Coronavirus could worsen teacher shortage on Treasure Coast - Protesters outside of the Martin County School District. July 21, 2020.
<https://cbs12.com/news/local/coronavirus-could-worsen-teacher-shortage-on-treasure-coast>

Outline key elements to a comprehensive and equitable pandemic recovery process



EPIDEMIC RECOVERY

Processes & Sample Steps



Restore Community Vitality and Achieve Equity Post-Pandemic – Action Steps

- Recognize that the desire to get back to normal as quickly as possible is a common reaction to disaster, *and* it is an impulse worth restraining
- Initiate a planning process for community revitalization (aka pandemic recovery) that runs in parallel with the public health response: i.e., meld organization, data, and future vision
- Consult diverse stakeholders and communicate broadly, to ensure that residents can partake in decision-making that is relevant to their lives

Takeaways from Today

- How communities recuperate from an epidemic's array of effects requires improved framing, more study, and translation into guidance and practical tools.
- A holistic understanding of epidemic recovery over a longer time horizon should build out from our now narrow response mindset that focuses upon biomedical aspects of the pandemic.
- It is worth resisting the understandable impulse to return to business-as-usual promptly, and instead, seizing the recovery idea or moment as an opportunity for societal transformation.

Thanks.

Contact information

mschoch@jhu.edu

<https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-people/schoch-spana/>



JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Center for
Health Security



Key Concepts for Resilience



RESIST +/-



Respond



+

Repair/
Rebuild



REFORM

RECOVER