Green Social Work:
Theory and Practice for the 21ˢᵗ Century
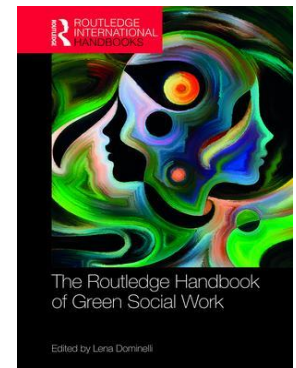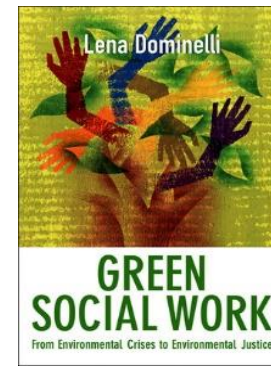
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Green Social Work (GSW)
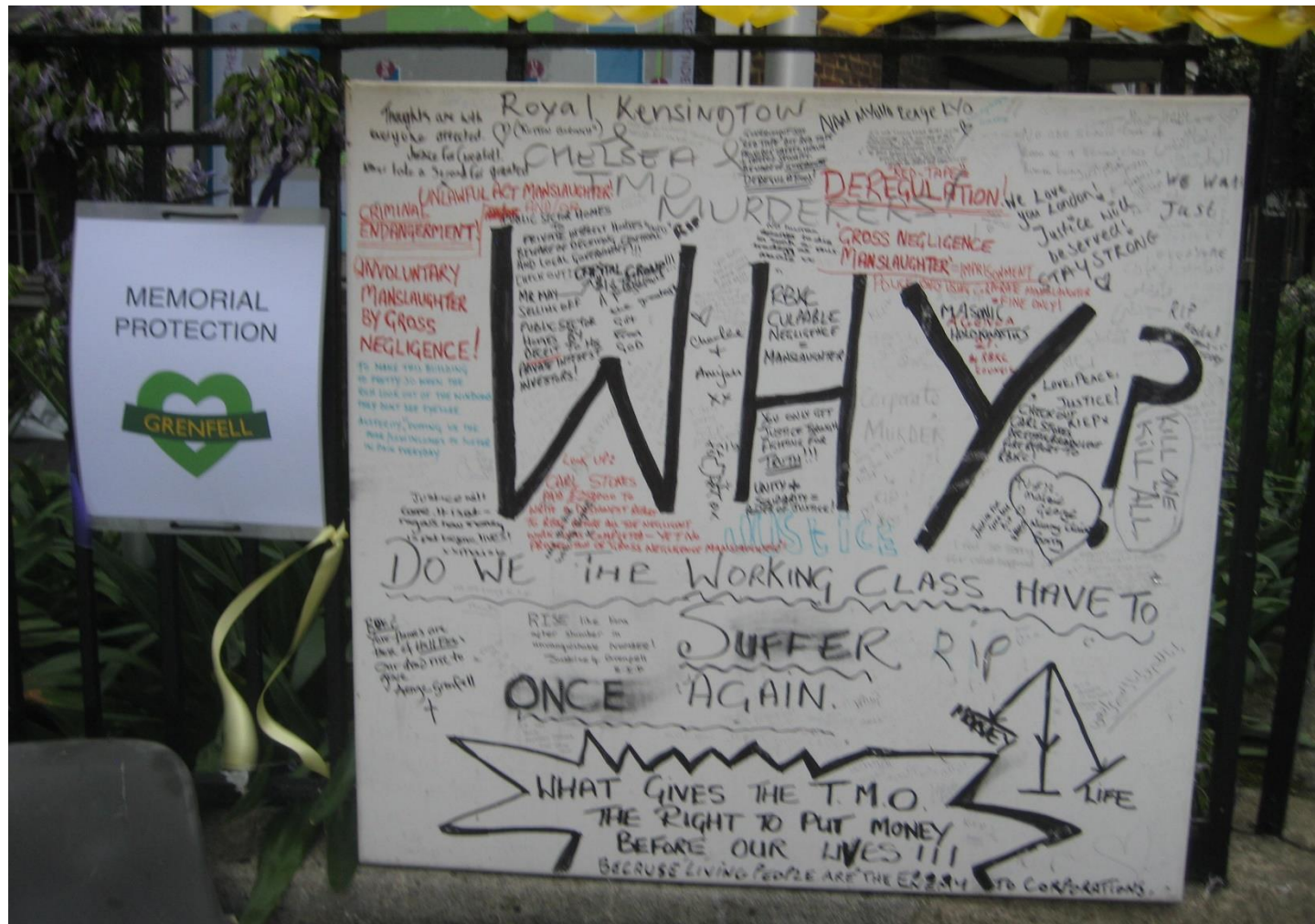
**Why should social workers do green social work?
Discuss with the person on your right.**

Defining Green Social Work (GSW)

Green social work affirms environmental justice within social justice while promoting social development. GSW:

> 'focuses on how the social organisation of relationships between peoples and their interaction with the flora and fauna in their physical habitats create the socio-economic and physical environmental crises that undermine the well-being of human beings and planet earth' (Dominelli, 2012:25).

Green Social Workers assess the risks posed by hazards and argue for:

- locality specific and culturally relevant practice.

- profound holistic conceptual and social transformations.

- sustainable relationships among peoples, other living things and inanimate world – caring for planet earth.

- transdisciplinarity relates to all sciences and professions in engagement with local communities/residents.

Defining Environmental Justice

- Environmental justice is the right to live in a sustainable, healthy environment that enables all peoples to use the earth's resources to meet current needs without jeopardising future generations' use of these while caring for the planet and all it contains.

- Duty to care for and care about others (oneself, Earth).

- This responsibility is holistic and global because it affirms interdependencies between people, their physical, social, political, economic and cultural environments as part of one whole.

- Recognises differentiated experiences of disaster.

Issues of environmental justice affect everyone

- Environmental justice is linked to social justice for all and integral to social work and community development in the 21st century.
- Achieving this requires paying attention to:
  - How the earth's resources and labour power are used.
  - Developing sustainability as the capacity to meet human needs now and in the future without costing the earth.
  - Creating and maintaining global solidarities.
  - Mitigating and responding to disasters.
  - The limitations of current models of urbanisation and industrialisation.
  - Social policy failures in implementing environmental justice, e.g., neoliberal economic development, Kyoto Protocol, climate change.
- Green social work issues affect everyone.
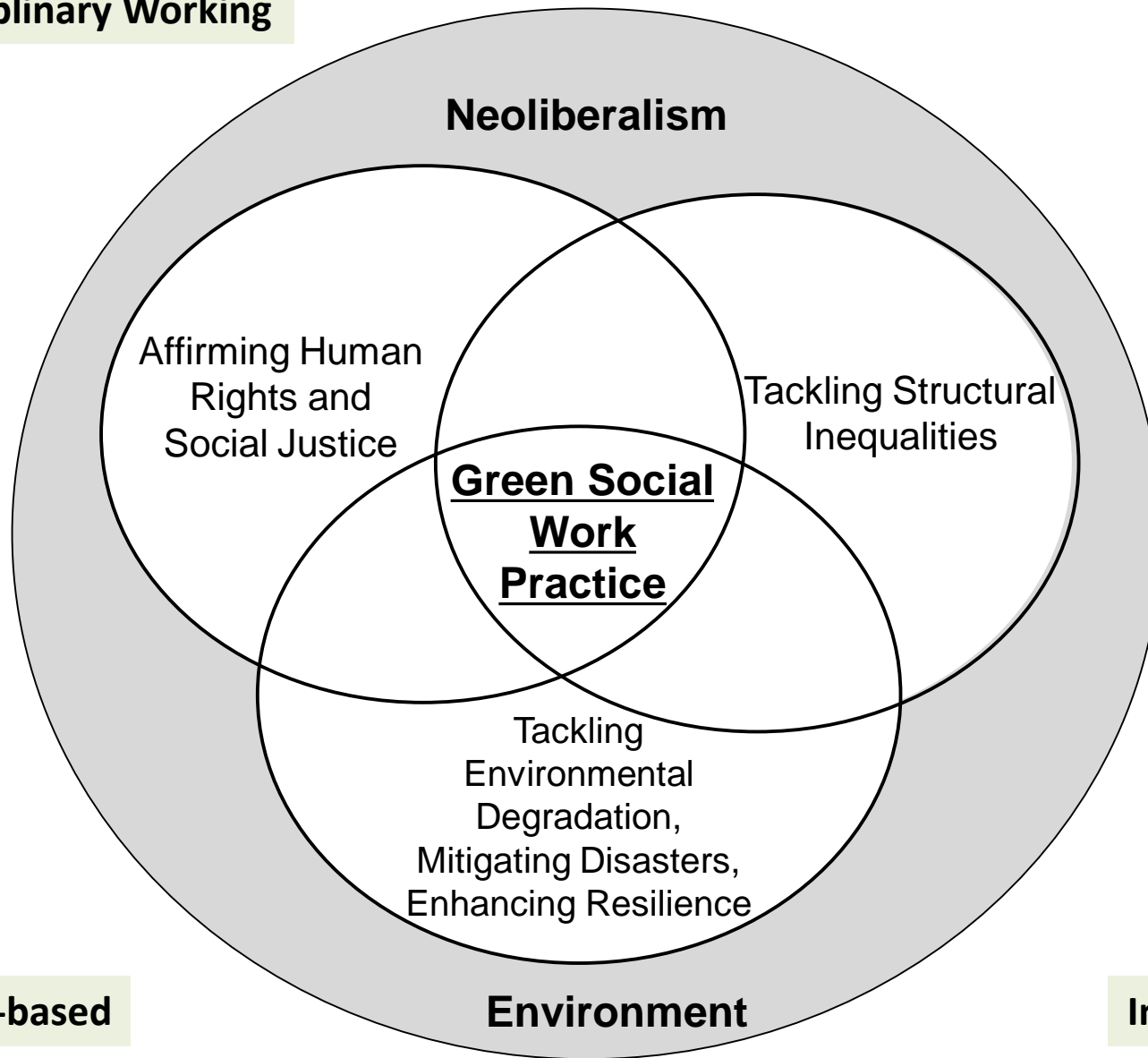
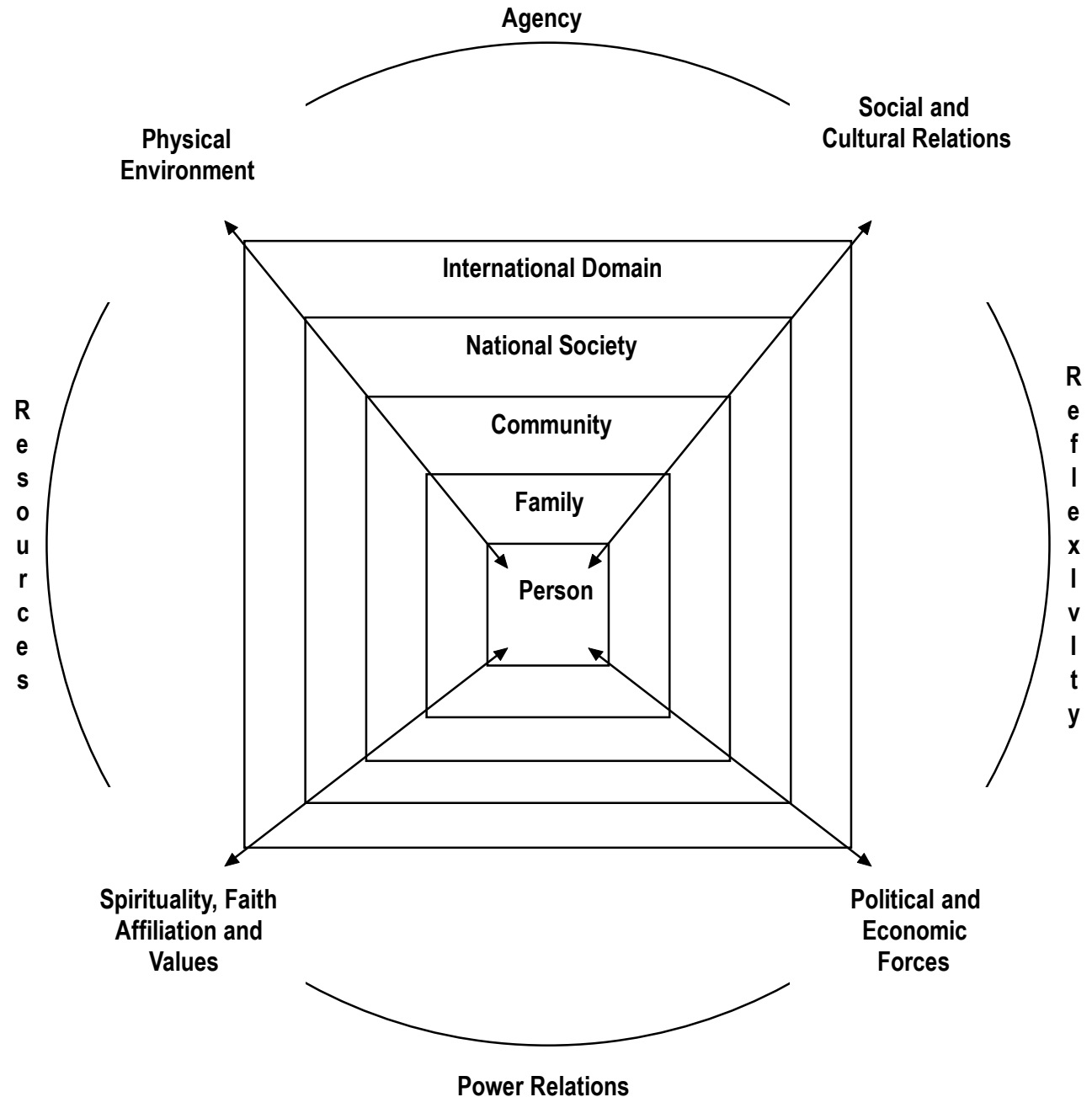Green social work practice (values and action) tackles the oppression of people and degradation of the environment and critiques neoliberalism's approach to exploiting people and earth's resources.

Holistic Green Social Work for Empowering Anti-Oppressive Practice Chart

Source: Dominelli, L (2002) Anti-Oppressive Social Work Theory and Practice (Palgrave)

Agency

Physical Environment

Social and Cultural Relations

International Domain

National Society

Community

Family

Person

Resources

Reflexivity

Spirituality, Faith Affiliation and Values

Political and Economic Forces

Power Relations

Green Social Work Processes and Intervention in Disasters
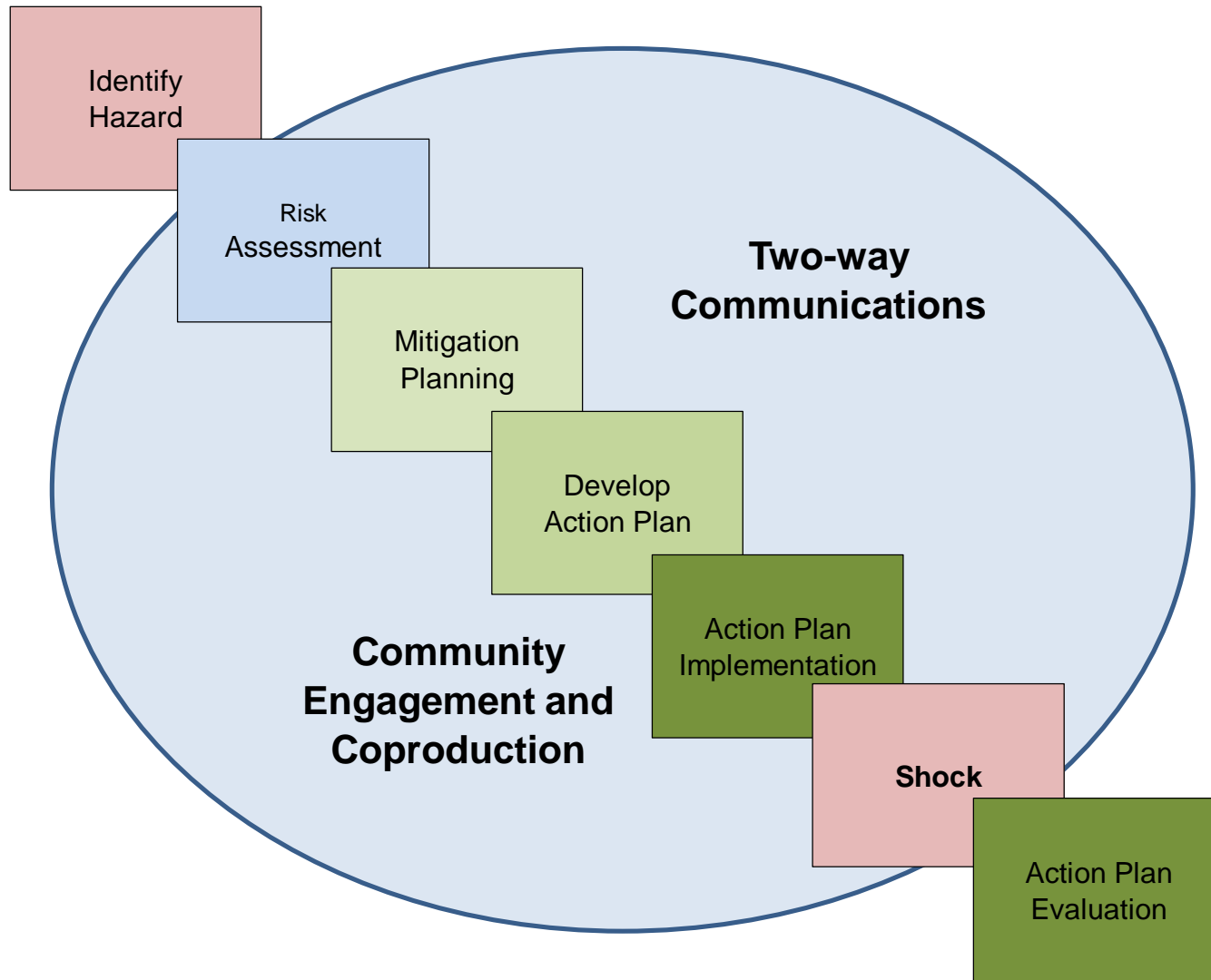
Transferable Evidence-based Disaster Risk Reduction Partnership Model

Environments

Disaster and Related Hazards (DRR)

Participatory Action Research in Communities

Potential Collaborators Local and International
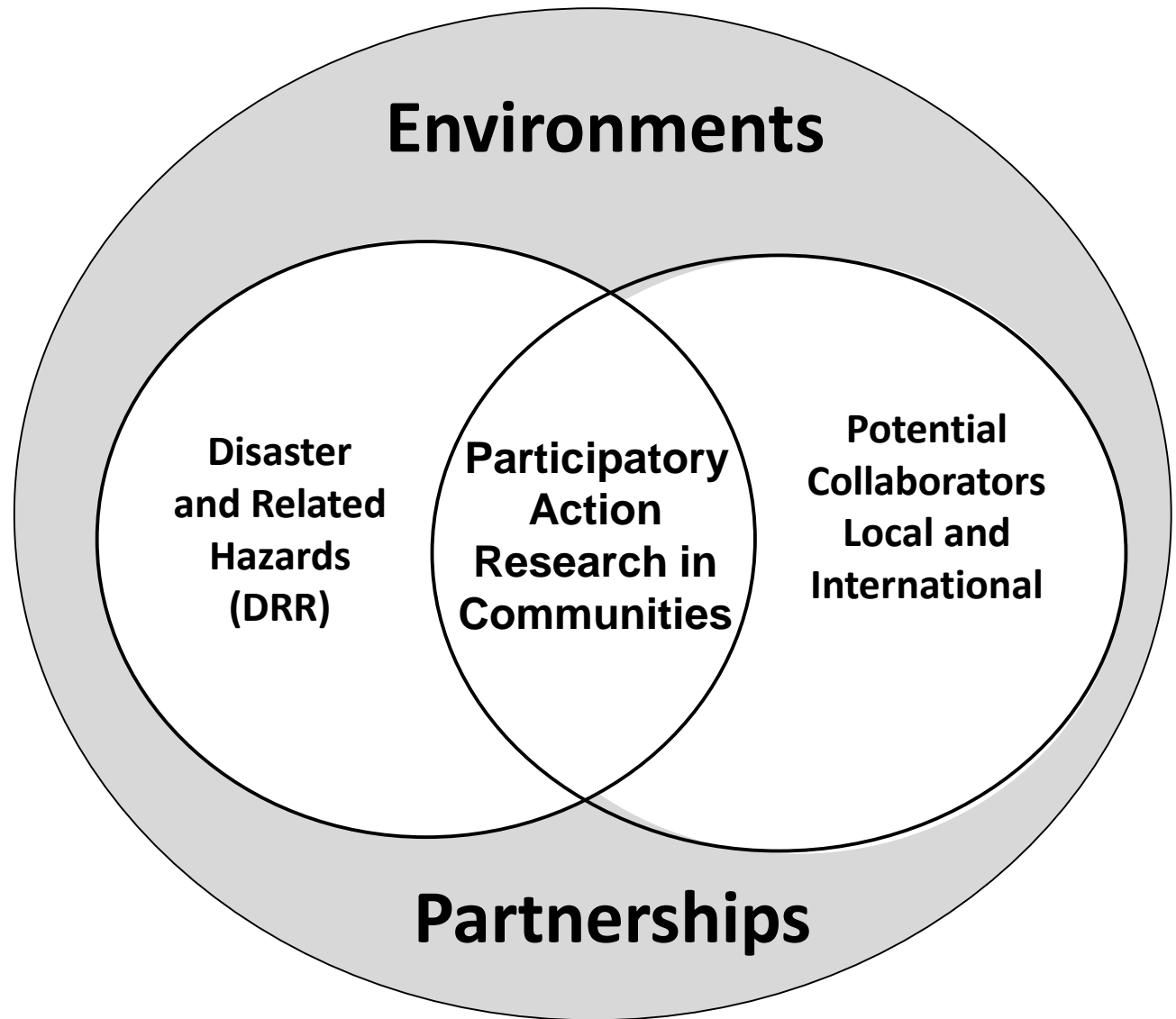
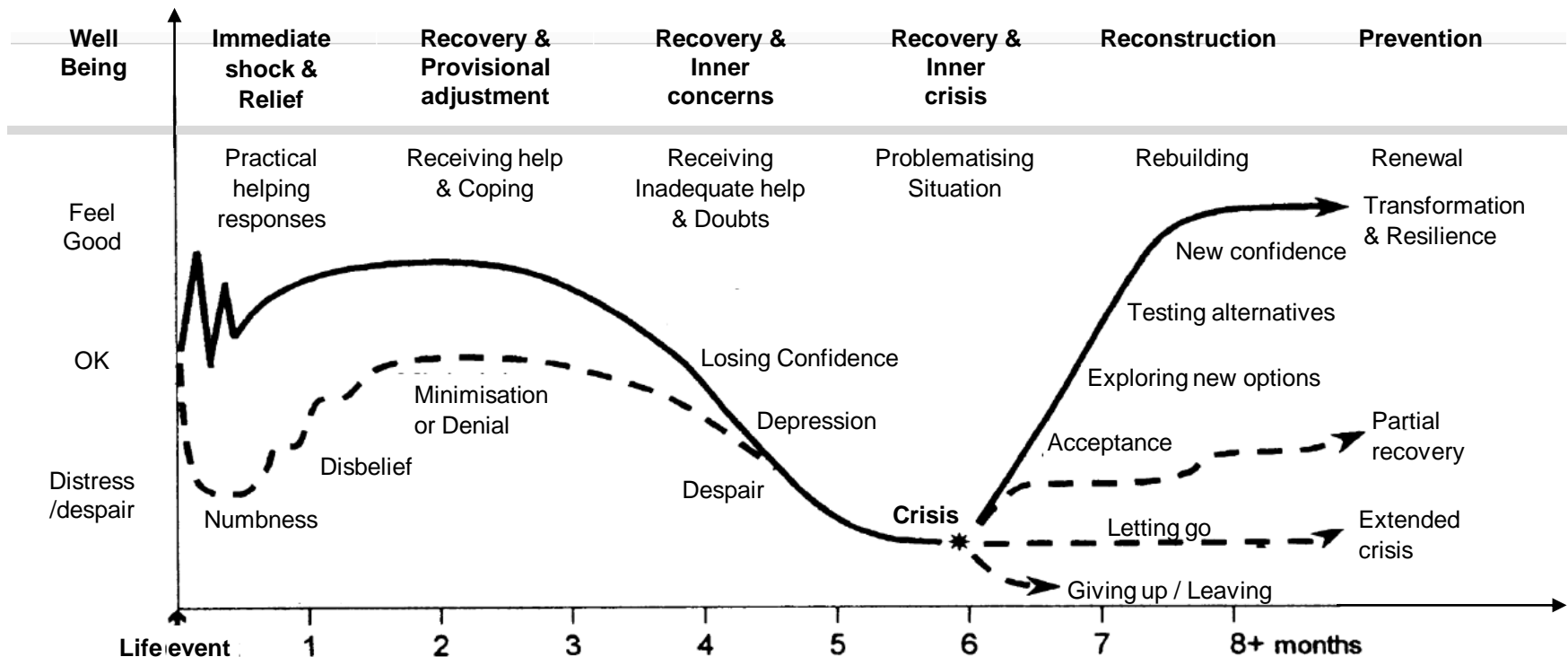**Partnerships**

Dependent on:
- **Disaster Type**
- **Legislation**
- **Policy**
- **Context**
- **Setting**
- **Partnership**

The Personal Dimensions of the Disaster Transitions and Recovery Cycle

Disaster Transition and Recovery Cycle

Well Being	Immediate shock & Relief	Recovery & Provisional adjustment	Recovery & Inner concerns	Recovery & Inner crisis	Reconstruction	Prevention
	Practical helping responses	Receiving help & Coping	Receiving Inadequate help & Doubts	Problematising Situation	Rebuilding	Renewal

Feel Good — Transformation & Resilience — New confidence — Testing alternatives

OK — Losing Confidence — Exploring new options

Minimisation or Denial — Depression — Acceptance — Partial recovery

Disbelief — Despair — Crisis — Letting go — Extended crisis

Distress /despair — Numbness — Giving up / Leaving

Life event 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8+ months

Adapted from Hopson and Adams (1976)

Disasters raise a variety of emotions in the individuals concerned as they move from experiencing a disaster to moving towards adjusting to it and mitigating risk. Green social workers address individual concerns and structural inequalities.

You Could Be Doing a Placement in Any of the Following Situations:

Burnside Gorge Community Centre Creates Rooftop Garden in 2007

Gets Platinum Green Roof Award in 2009

Social workers assess risks posed by these hazards and help people survive with practical assistance and psychosocial help

Social Workers and Health Workers Providing First Aid

Kathmandu, Nepal

Exercise for Breakout Group (10 mins)

- There is an extensive flood in rural Rosedale, B.C. The railway and road infrastructures, housing, and shops have been inundated, and a state of emergency has been declared in the area. You are on placement there in a community group working on sustainable development. You cannot leave the office which is the safest place for you. You remember that you have been told that you must:
  a) do no harm to those you are serving;
  b) be prepared for any eventuality; and
  c) engage in self-care.

- In your group discuss points a to c and decide what you would do. Choose one person to take notes and another person to feedback to the larger group.

Conclusions:
An urbanised, polluted world requires a holistic, transdisciplinary social work curriculum to pursue green credentials

Green social workers engage community stakeholders and residents in a process of coproducing solutions to agreed problems

Questions?

References

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