

One Approach

In unprecedented times of crisis, we must begin our work with immediate, rapid response interventions. When a short-term crisis becomes a long-term reality, it can be helpful to merge rapid-response planning tools with strategic thinking to plan for the short, medium and long term simultaneously.

Building on the work of [Erik Peterson's VAST](#) framework for campaign planning, as well as Leslie Sholl Jaffe and Randy Alford's [POP model \(shared via STP\)](#), Up With Community has compiled this map of questions to support strategic thinking in a long-term crisis. **NOTE: THIS IS AN INCOMPLETE AND EVOLVING WORK IN PROCESS. It's not meant to be an answer, but rather a start.**

- After the first week or two we need to transition from “sprint mode” (working at 100% speed) into “marathon mode” (50% to 75% speed) to sustain our pace for a longer period of time.
- To help that transition, we want an easy way to keep our long- and medium-term objectives in our mind, while continuing to rapidly respond to the short-term needs of our communities.
- It is important during this time to continue:
 - Creating pathways to process emotions, impact and grieving for all teammates—attending to both the observable and perceived losses of each person. This can be a time to explore somatics and other new habits that can support healthy, sustained action,
 - Collecting and analyzing our own sources of data on the crisis, assessing which governmental entities are the most valuable for our individual communities.
 - And foregrounding questions of justice—particularly as the most marginalized communities are most impacted by crises and fascists often use crisis as a way to consolidate power.

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- During a long-term crisis, we need to be able to see different “altitudes,” or perspectives, on the crisis at different times—and sometimes within the same meeting. We have mapped strategy questions to these altitudes to help your team move between perspectives. Please see this framework as a jumping-off point to organize and generate the questions most relevant to your work.

Altitude	Frame	Questions	Notes
80k	Seeing the Forest	<p>Are we observing the emergence of paradigm shifts in what we, our community, our people believe to be true about the world, ourselves and our futures?</p> <p>What opportunities do we have to nurture, nudge or create paradigm shifts? (Yes, this is easier said than done.)</p>	<p>Can we begin to observe, name and process some of those shifts and incorporate them into our discussions of the topics below?</p> <p>See the additional resources list at the end for help in this area.</p>
60k	Our Vision	<p>Is the mission and vision of our organization relevant in this crisis?</p>	<p>Affirming this question weekly or monthly with our team can be a source of energy and focus.</p>
		<p>Are there changes that need to be made to our mission or vision in this time to (1) respond to the immediate moment and (2) ensure we can survive in the long run?</p>	<p>Example: Local distilleries have shifted to creating hand sanitizer. Shifting our mission doesn't mean it didn't have value, but there may be other ways to repurpose our functions at this time.</p>
50K	Assessments	<p><u>Primary crisis</u>: What accurate sources of information can we use to have weekly updates on the core components of the situation?</p>	<p>How are we flattening the curve for the virus? What are incubation times? Reinfection rates? What can we learn from other cities that were impacted before us?</p>

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		<p><u>Rapid community listening:</u> What is happening in our community in real time that can help us anticipate needs in the next week or two?</p> <p>Can we listen for what the community is beginning to name that they need or want in the long term?</p> <p>Where are there opportunities to organize existing groups and constituencies in new ways or with new energy?</p>	<p>How are we setting up feedback loops on social media and through our existing networks to capture emerging trends and patterns as they arise?</p> <p>This is a time when there may be opportunities to institutionalize changes we have been hoping for, such as the expansion of paid sick days and unemployment insurance. We want to be engaging with and listening to our community at multiple levels.</p>
		<p><u>Important impacts:</u> What other crises are we tracking tied to the initial one? How can we gather accurate information in these areas? Which areas are most relevant to our community right now? How about six months from now?</p> <p>If the primary crisis begins to downgrade its threat, one or more of these crises may take its place.</p>	<p>What are short-, medium-, and long-term impacts on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (-) Employment (-) Food systems (-) Housing (-) Emergency systems (-) Healthcare system (-) Government, elections, and democratic process (-) The overall economy (-) Education systems (-) Social safety programs
		<p><u>Justice:</u> What areas of justice (race, gender, class, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, religion and others) are being threatened right now? Where are opportunities to protect or even advance justice for all?</p>	<p>What is our responsibility, capacity and ability to intervene now and with which partners?</p> <p>How do our previous strategies need to shift or</p>

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		<p>What are the areas of crisis, distress and inequity that we were already working on that have been made worse by the crisis?</p>	<p>change? Does increased messaging or additional resources around the pandemic offer any opportunity to address these underlying issues?</p> <p>An example is homelessness among LGBTQ youth. These kids are even more vulnerable in this moment and the need for support may rapidly increase as kids are forced to stay in unsupporting homes permanently. At the same time, there is an opportunity to raise the visibility of the problem and possibly mobilize resources to support youth homes and shelters.</p>
		<p><u>Positioning and collaboration</u>: Which of these crises is our team most positioned to address in the short, medium and long term? What is our role in this moment?</p> <p>Which EXISTING collaborations or partnerships do we need to strengthen to better support our work?</p> <p>What NEW collaborations or partnerships do we need to build in order to fulfill our role?</p>	<p>Here is a useful resource for mapping social change roles in a crisis.</p>
			<p>Rapid Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat check-ins on a weekly basis can be a useful tool.</p>

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40K	Timeframes	<p>It can be helpful to view the short term, medium term and long term in three chunks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Next six weeks: <u>Rapid response</u>: What do we need to do to survive the next six weeks? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community needs ○ Healing and resilience: Processing grief, supporting body and spirit, avoiding burnout ○ Fundraising and resources ○ NOTE: We take rapid response in two- to six-week chunks, until primary crises have downgraded ● Six months: <u>Restructuring</u>: What do we need to do in the six months following rapid response mode, whenever we drop out of it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community needs ○ Healing and resilience ○ Restructuring our work (revisit or shift the mission, strategies, programs) to engage with the long-term shifts in our society ○ This is a useful time for scenario planning. We have more information than we did during rapid response mode, but not the full picture yet. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What will we do if the crisis deepens? ■ What if new crises emerge? ■ What if the crises begin to calm down and there is an opening for larger healing and restoration? ● Two to three years: <u>Engaging the new realities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the most important data points and analyses we need to gather before we can plan for the future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ On the primary crisis? ■ On collateral crises? ■ On impacts in our community? ■ On decision making structures, rules and processes that will determine long-term decisions? ○ What are core questions we answer now in order to be prepared to plan for the future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What would we like to recreate? What would we like to shift and how?

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we need to be building power to influence decisions today that will impact our communities for years? 	
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20K	Strategies	<p><u>Rapid response</u>: Can your team start each week with a reminder or affirmation of the POP for each rapid response bucket?</p>	
		<p><u>Restructuring</u>: Can you build a “bike rack” for a six-month restructuring: In order to help maintain focus and sustainability it can be helpful to put together a Google Doc for staff to share their concerns, ideas and brainstorms, so that they may be addressed when you have the capacity.</p>	<p>If we take on these questions too soon, or during the rapid response time, we risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (-) Undermining rapid response efforts, (-) Creating inaccurate plans without full info, and (-) Burnout of staff <p>If we don’t begin to map them we risk not being prepared for the next stage of crisis management.</p>
		<p><u>New realities</u>: Can you establish a team working on long-term research and analysis? There may be some on your team that are well equipped to be collecting data and information which you will need for future long-term planning.</p>	<p>We want to avoid moving onto fixing problems or making plans before we fully understand our new reality. The new reality will be a moving target, so now is the time to develop tools that will give this emergent reality shape and form.</p> <p>"What do we know? What don't we know? What can we control right now? What can't we control?"</p>

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10k	Implementing	Work plans: Traditional weekly work plans often seem unnecessary or unrealistic within a rapid response time, but after the first two to three weeks of a crisis we face serious burnout if we don't begin mapping our weekly work. How can your team build simplified plans to guide your work?	From Rajasvini Bhansali: A note to leaders who set organizational tone
		Calendaring restoration: How will your team maintain energy while grieving, serving and planning at work—not to mention supporting their families and communities?	Here are some of our favorite resources in this area
		Communications - internal and external: What systems for internal and external communications do you need to develop? How do they need to adjust each week?	Additional resources
		Altitude check-ins: How often should we meet as a team to check-in on new information we are gathering/changes to our understanding of higher altitudes of work (questions above)?	While many of the old systems we used for check-ins (weekly staff mtgs, quarterly progress to goals) may not be/seem relevant now - it is important to maintain a practice of talking about the evolution of ideas/info at higher altitudes to help our team (1) ground (2) focus and (3) pace ourselves.
Ok	Day-to-Day	<u>Being in the present moment:</u> How can we be fully present in this moment to deeply listen to the people around us and give the maximum energy to necessary solutions??	A few resources: (1) For addressing pain and soreness that arises in our bodies, The Ready State physical therapy you can do at home. (2) For building the techniques and skills of

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			mindfulness, the Waking Up meditation. (3) For exploring generative somatics at home.
		<u>Digesting fear and stress</u> : Fear and stress are natural—and often healthy—parts of processing crisis. But they can be harmful when repressed. What are ways your team can release and process the fear and stress which is an inevitable part of this time?	We are one of the few mammal species which lacks a habitual mechanism to digest stress. As Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers explains, after a zebra survives a chase from a predator it finds a safe spot and starts shaking on the ground to release all the hormones and pressure that built up during the chase. Humans need to intentionally create habits to do the same.
		<u>Grieving</u> : This is a time of action and a time of loss. Can we set up time, space and rituals to help process the grieving that is present in this moment?	Here's a resource to start at home.
		<u>Trauma-informed and healing-centered approaches</u> : This moment will tap into and activate trauma for many of us. How can we bring a trauma-informed and healing-centered approach to our work as a team?	Here are a few resources we have found helpful.
		<u>Nurturing joy and hope</u> : It can often feel paradoxical, if not downright wrong, to experience joy in a crisis. But our ancestors have taught us that joy and love are a path to hope that can sustain us in hard times. How can we embrace the paradoxes of this moment? How can we notice, share and nurture joy and hope during this time?	Here is a place where we share joy. Have one to share?

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		<p><u>Making meaning</u>: Would a practice of journaling, gratitude journaling, voice memos, collage making, drawing or other activity help us process and remember this moment?</p>	<p>Thanks to Big Bowl of Ideas for this inspiration: “Journaling is a simple thing but I’m pretty confident it will mean much in the years to come for us to document and archive what happened. And I think it will be powerful at some point to share collectively.”</p>
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Have something to add/edit/suggest in this framework? Email - nicola@upwithcommunity.org.

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Want to stay connected? UWC will be sharing more tools and resources each month - [Sign Up Here](#) - We’ll be launching a searchable database of tools and resources in May.

Additional Resources to Go Deeper (in alphabetical order):

- [Antifragile: How to live in a world that we don’t understand](#) by Nassim Taleb ([His twitter is fire right now](#), check him out!):
 - [What is a black swan event?](#)
 - [What’s a long tail event?](#)
- [Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why](#) by Laurence Gonzales, a recommendation from Erik Peterson:
 - The people who have no fear generally die. There are actual, dangerous threats that exist, and we need to acknowledge that.

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- Those who panic or give up hope of surviving also tend to die.
- And those who jump up immediately, take charge and leap straight into action also die.
- But here's the good news: The people who tend to live are the ones who pause—acknowledge the situation they're in—and then assess what's around them. In other words, even in the midst of crisis they don't merely react to the situation but make a plan and execute it to sustain a hopeful vision.
- [Emergent Strategy](#) by adrienne maree brown.
- [Sacred Instructions](#) by Sherri Mitchell.

Searching for resources to share virtually made us acutely aware of the barriers to BIPOC folks putting resources online, and the need for more resources authored by and for BIPOC communities. All resources are welcome but we are naming a particular need here.