

# Leading the Local Response to the COVID-19 Event

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## ACTING IN TIME

Against Landscape-Scale Disasters

**BLOOMBERG  
HARVARD**

City  
Leadership  
Initiative

***Where do you stand right now?***

***How can you pivot and adapt?***

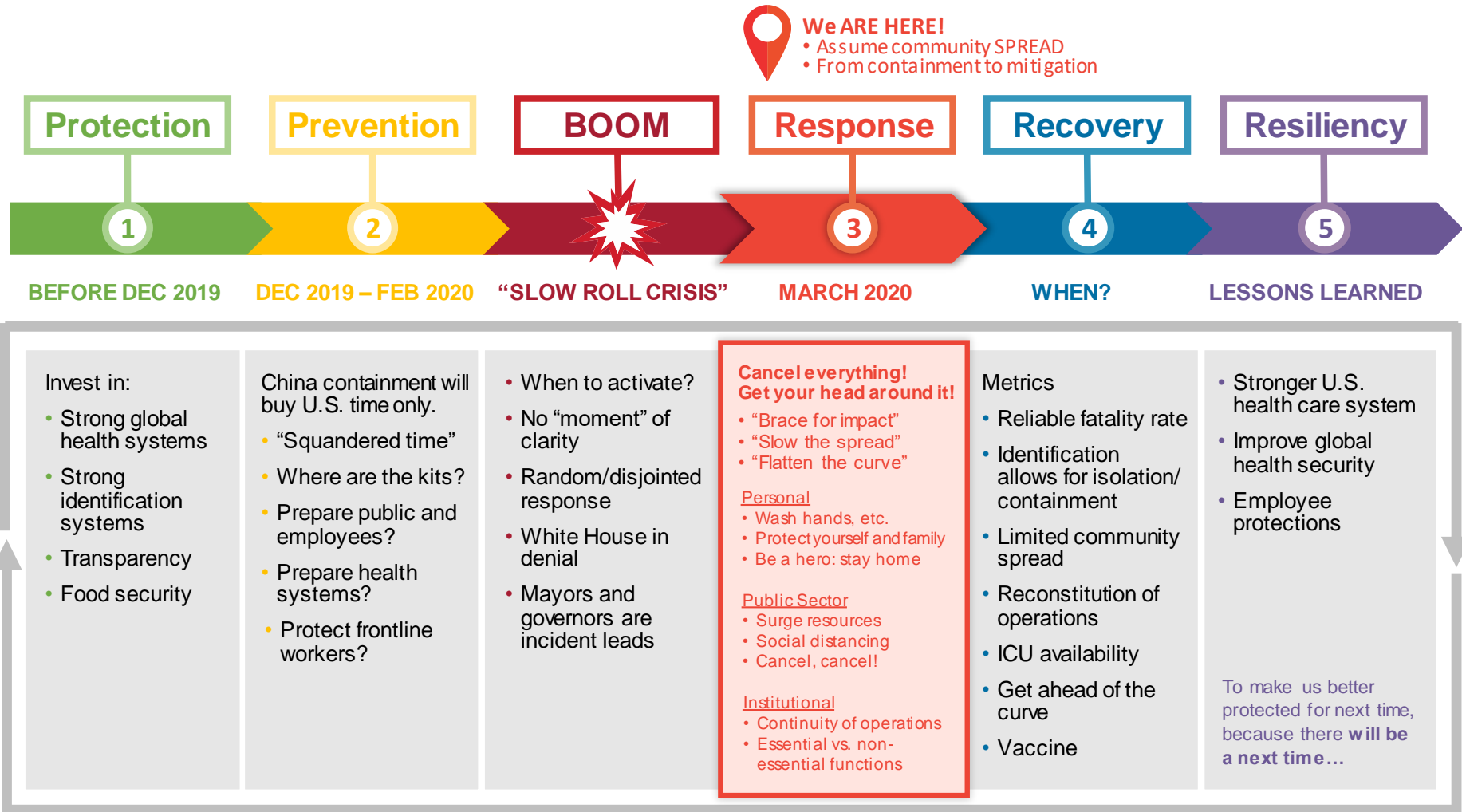
***What are the hardest political choices?***

*Where do you stand right now?*

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# The Five Stages of Crisis Management:

Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the U.S.



A CRISIS HITS A CITY AS IT IS, NOT AS IT WOULD LIKE TO BE.

***How can you pivot and adapt?***

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# Covid-19 is a medical phenomenon. The **COVID-19 CRISIS** goes beyond that.

- 1) Leaders have to manage the COVID-19 event as a whole event
- 2) Issues include:
  - 1) Medical
  - 2) Logistical
  - 3) Economic
  - 4) Psychological
  - 5) ...
- 3) Need an ***integrated, comprehensive process***

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# Major Emergencies are a VOLCANO

- 1) Issues
- 2) Competing priorities
- 3) Questions
- 4) Decisions
- 5) Tasks

**In routine emergencies, these are familiar and easy to identify, and there are known solutions.**

**In an unprecedented situation like COVID-19, VIRTUALLY NOTHING IS KNOWN.**

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In an unprecedented crisis, there are  
no pre-cooked **answers**.  
All we can offer is the best **process**.

- 1) Resist the pressure to provide quick answers (most of them will turn out to be wrong)
- 2) Remind yourself and others that
  - We don't yet fully understand the situation
  - The situation is continuing to change
  - It will take time to learn / develop the best approaches
- 3) Activate the best **process** you can with the best people you can recruit

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# I. Establish a Critical Incident Management Team and Process

- 1) Oversees all aspects of the event (medical, economic, logistical, ...)
- 2) Seeks to identify and understand evolving and emerging issues and competing priorities
- 3) Reframes issues as questions / decisions
- 4) Deliberates about key questions and decisions
- 5) Formulates and delegates problem-solving for specific issues to other groups

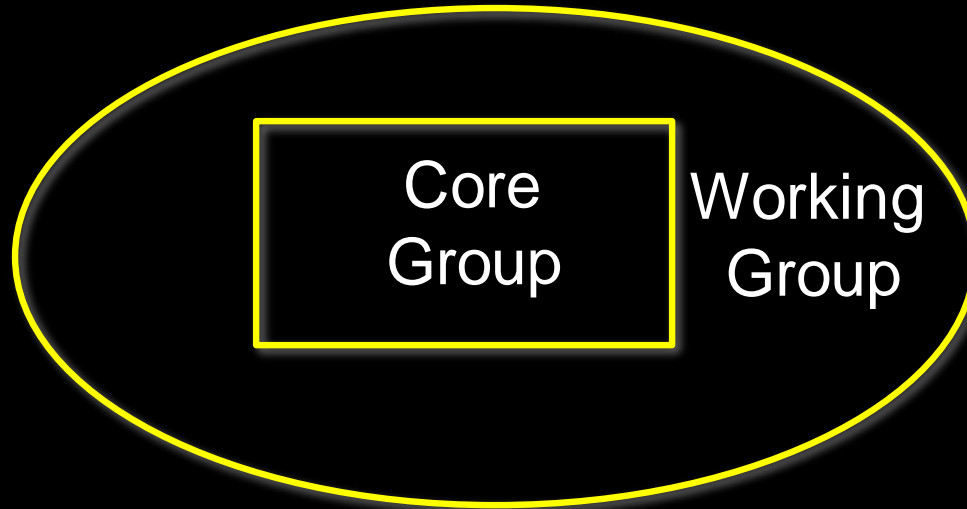
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## II. Assemble the Right People: Find and Recruit Three Groups

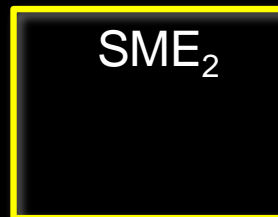
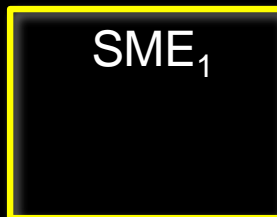
- 1) People who understand and represent the city's key priorities and values
- 2) People who have expertise in medicine, public health, and other key functions that will be involved
- 3) People who know the city, community, and city hall

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# Change the team as the event continues to unfold

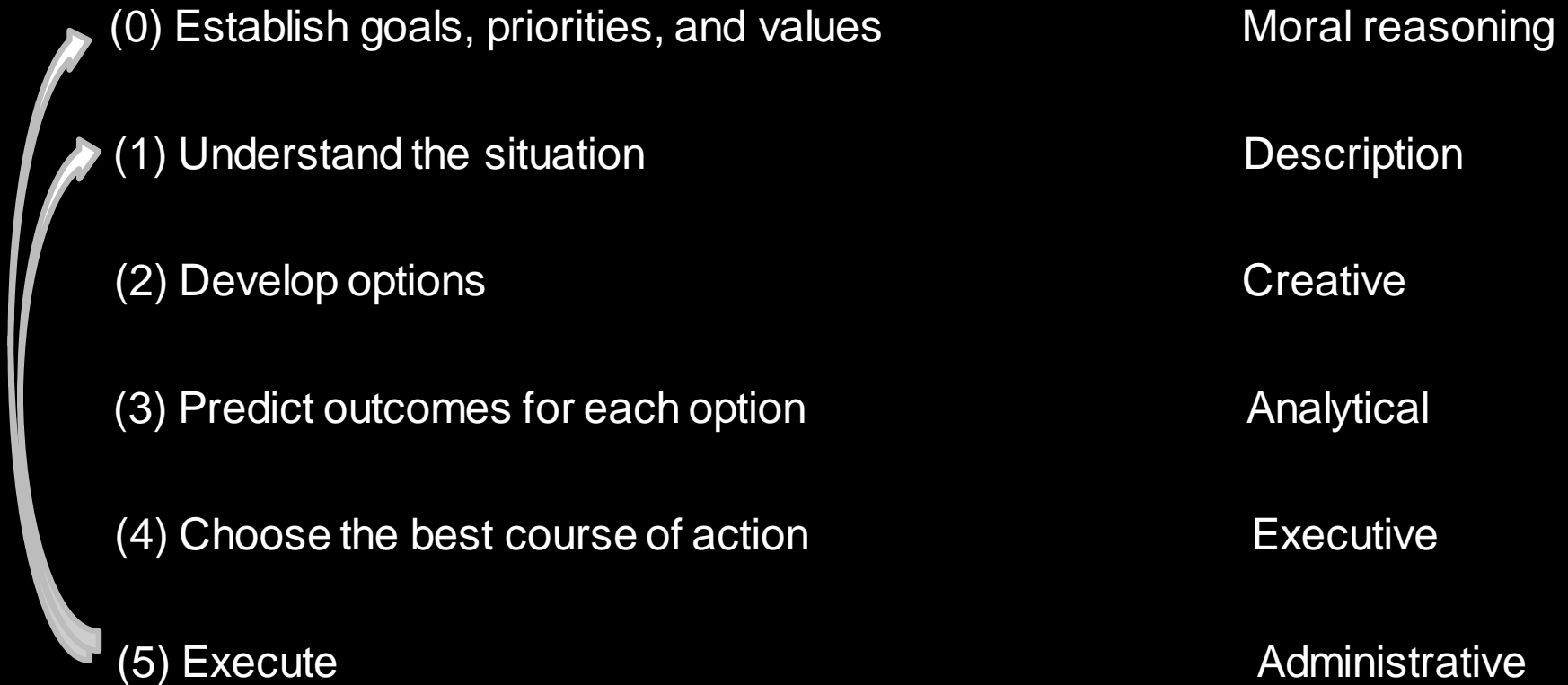


Rosters:



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# III. Engage in Iterative, Agile Problem-Solving



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# IV. Create Conditions for Successful Agile Problem-Solving

- 1) Facilitated deliberation
- 2) Diversity
- 3) Psychological safety
- 4) Joint *inquiry*, not *advocacy*

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# V. Execute Chosen Actions, But Treat Them as Tentative and Experimental

- 1) In routine situations, reliable, correct, efficient, effective answers are a reasonable expectation
- 2) In unprecedented situations, everything we are doing is an experiment in real time

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## VI. Set Reasonable Expectations

What you can reasonably expect:

- Best efforts
- Rapid learning
- Not everything we try will work
- We'll keep working until it does

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# Going forward

- New issues will continue to arise
- Important priorities will be in conflict
- Place confidence in your process
- Re-work the problem, continuously
- Self-care is critical for yourself and all participants – this is a marathon

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# *What are the hardest political choices?*

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