

University of Maryland

# Project Management Symposium

*NEXT SESSION*

## Team Resilience in Action: Risk Management in Clinical Research Projects During Ebola Outbreak in West Africa

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT  
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING  
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

This session will be recorded.

# Project Management Symposium

## Team Resilience in Action: Risk Management in Clinical Research Projects During the 2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa

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**Date:** April 18-19



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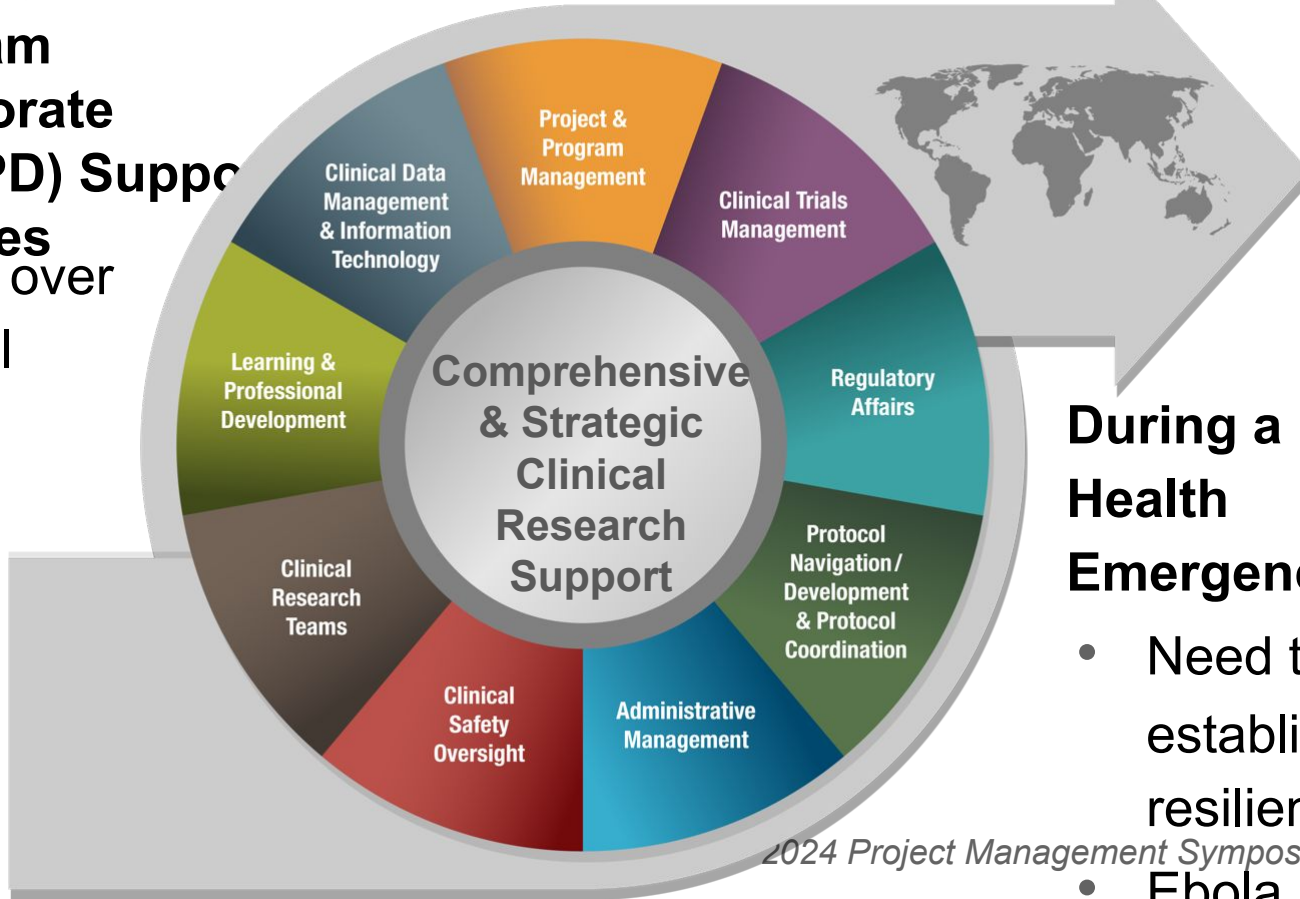
# Presentation Outline

- Describe clinical research projects from PM perspective
- Define team resilience and its core characteristics
- Identify key strategies for building team resilience
- Describe a resilient team's role in promoting risk management
- Explain how a resilient team can apply tailored risk mitigation strategies to lead a clinical research project



# Clinical Monitoring Research Program Directorate (CMRPD) Support Services

Supported over  
600 clinical  
research  
projects



## During a Public Health Emergency:

- Need to establish resilient teams
- Ebola project

Reference: CMRPD, Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research, Leidos Biomedical Research, Inc., Frederick, Maryland 21702



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# Clinical Research Project from PM Perspective: Definitions

- **What is clinical research?**

Clinical research is a component of medical and health research intended to produce knowledge that is valuable for understanding human disease, preventing and treating illness, and promoting health.

Reference: Institute of Medicine, 2002

- **What is a clinical trial?**

A type of research study that tests how well new medical approaches work in people.

Reference: National Institute of Health (NIH)

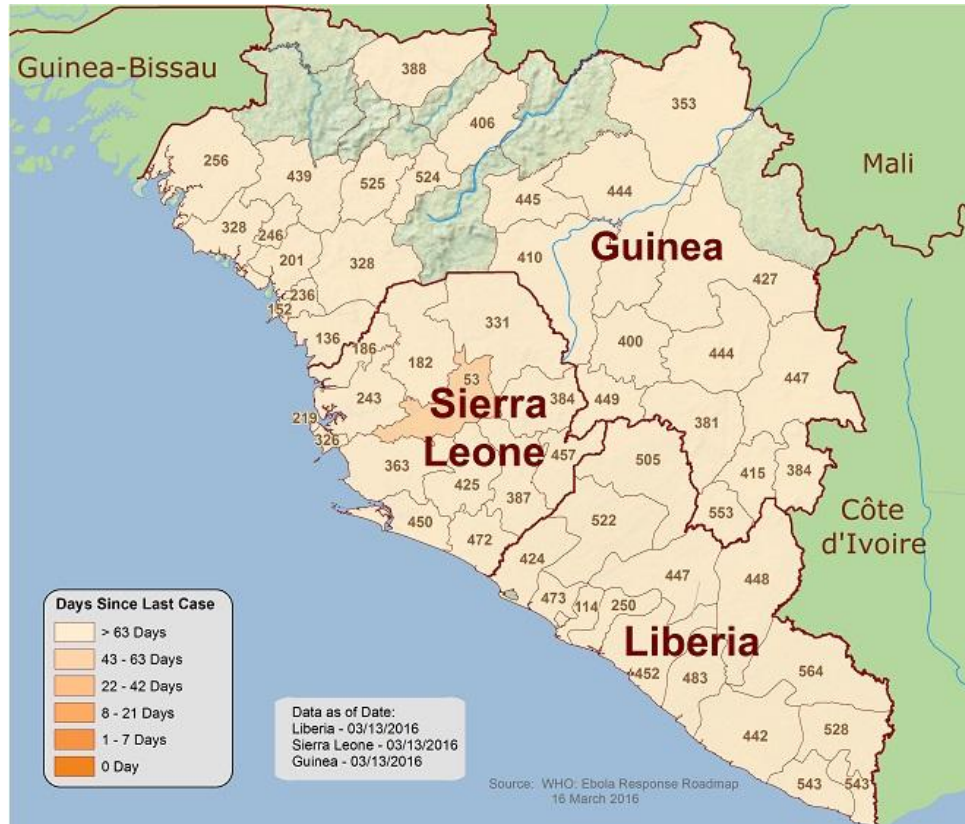


# Clinical Research Project from PM Perspective: Background for 2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa

Impacted three  
countries,  
communities  
and societies:

- Guinea,
- Liberia, and
- Sierra Leone

Reference: Fallah et al, 2023;  
Dixon, M. G., & Schafer, I. J.  
(2014).



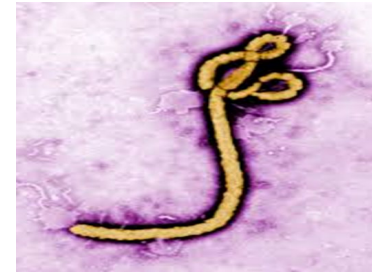
Outbreak Distribution Map

As of June  
10, 2016:  
**28,616**  
cases;  
**11,310**  
deaths; and  
over **10,000**  
survivors of  
Ebola virus  
disease.

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# The 2014 Ebola Virus Outbreak

- Ebola virus disease (EVD): a severe, often fatal, hemorrhagic disease
- EVD research was still in the early stage
- No licensed products available at the time
- No safe and effective Ebola therapy at the time
- Researchers had no potential vaccine efficacy in hand
- EVD outbreak: provided research opportunities





# Project Management Uncertainties: Risks and Challenges

## Current State of the 2014 Ebola Emergency in West Africa



**Ebola  
Emergency**



### Project Context/Operational Challenges

- **No known clinical research infrastructure:** workforce (HR), IT/research infrastructure, weak healthcare system
- **In-country logistics:** travel, food, accommodation, safety, security, procurement, supply chain infrastructure
- **Community barriers:** rumors, false perceptions, fear, and misinformation
- **Environment:** epidemiological, regulatory, political, geopolitical, ecological, and socioeconomic complexity



**Not Enough  
People**



**Balancing  
stakeholders'  
interests**

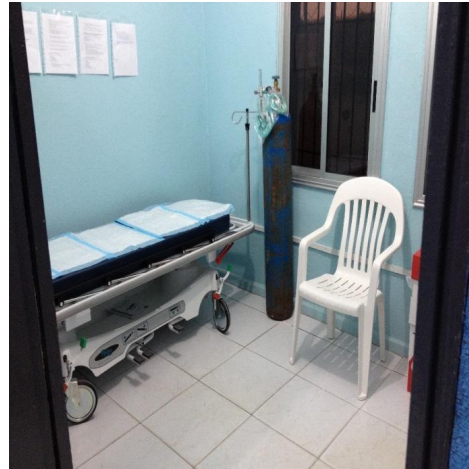
# Former State of Clinical Research Infrastructure

Redemption  
Hospital:  
Before



# Renovated Clinical Research Infrastructure

Redemption  
Hospital:  
After



# Team Resilience and Risk Management in Support of Clinical Research Project

## Topic # 1

Define resilience, team resilience, and their core characteristics

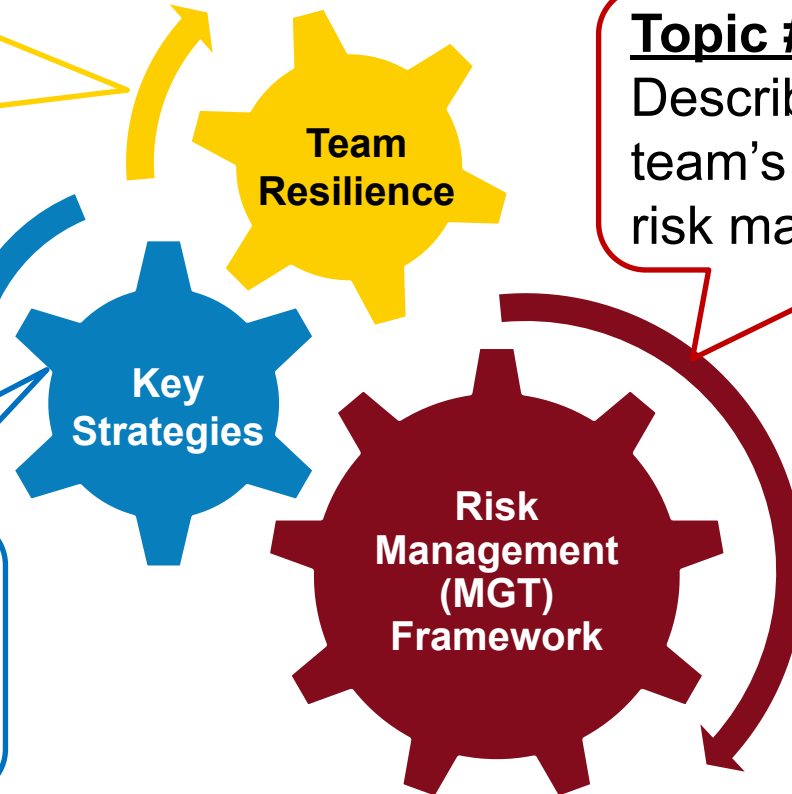
## Topic #2

Identify key strategies to build team resilience

## Topic # 3

Describe a resilient team's role in promoting risk management

In the context of the 2014 Ebola Outbreak in West Africa



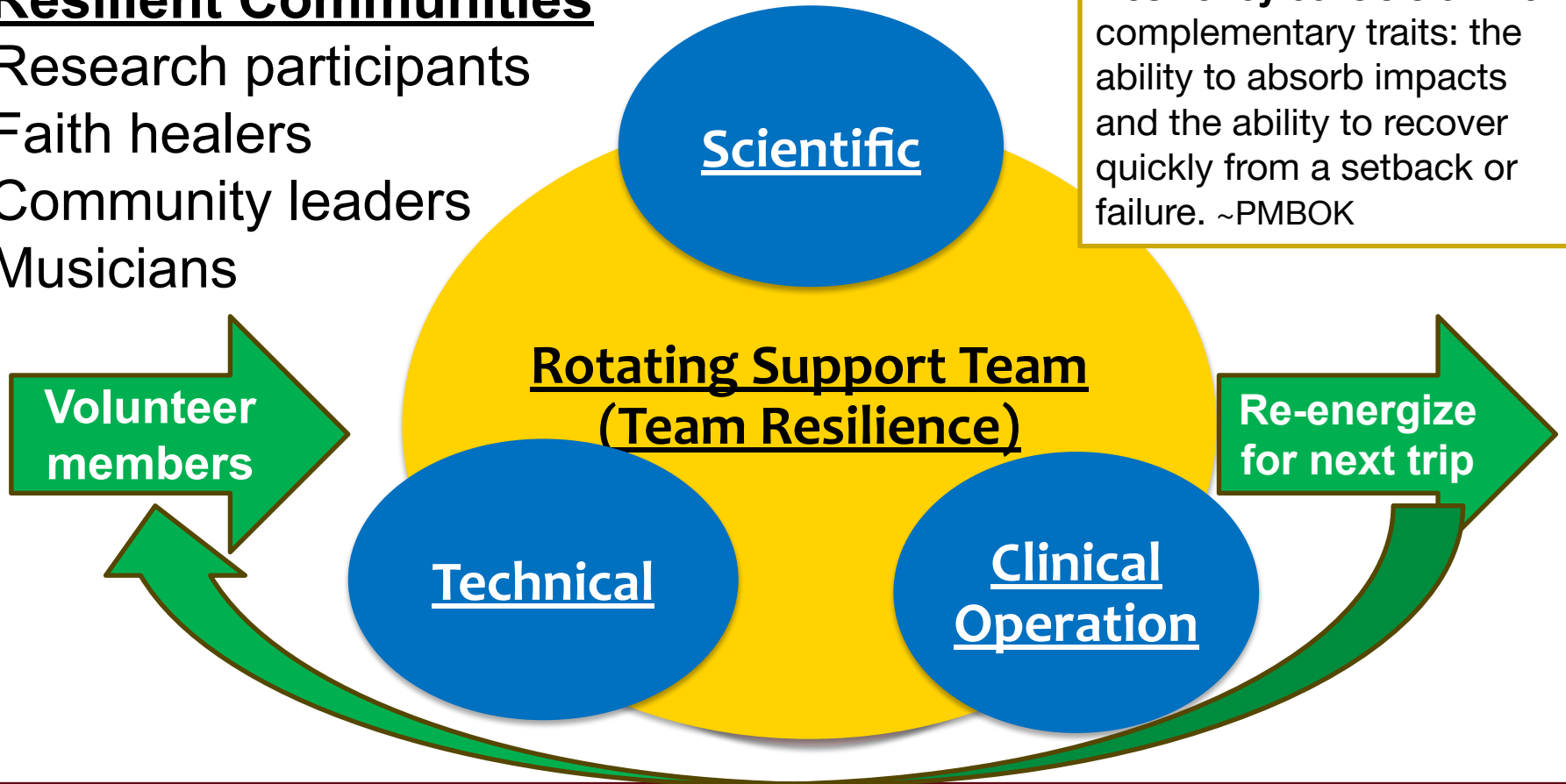


# Defining Team Resilience in Clinical Research Context

## Resilient Communities

Research participants  
Faith healers  
Community leaders  
Musicians

**Resiliency** consists of two complementary traits: the ability to absorb impacts and the ability to recover quickly from a setback or failure. ~PMBOK



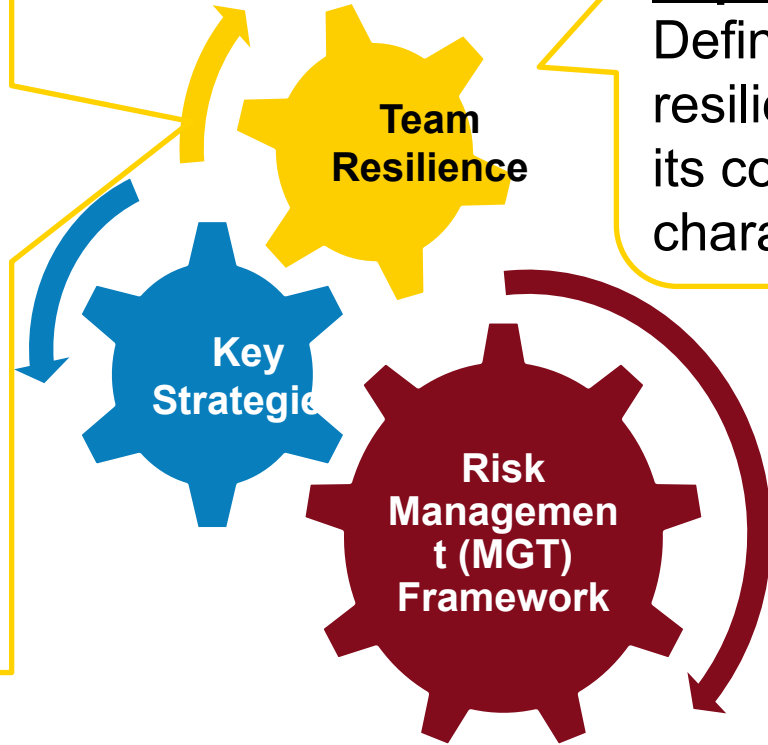
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# Definition of Resilience and Team Resilience

- **Resilience** is defined as “the capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure or even positive events, progress and increased responsibility” (Luthans 2002b, p. 702).
- **Team Resilience** is the capacity of a group of people to respond:
  - to change and disruption in a flexible and innovative manner.
  - to effectively confront and navigate challenges, overcome obstacles, and withstand the pressure of adverse situations.

# Core Characteristics of Team Resilience

- Promoting open and transparent communication/collaboration
- Fostering adaptability and flexibility
- Prioritizing well-being and support
- Integrating risk management across all functions
- Embracing continuous learning and innovation

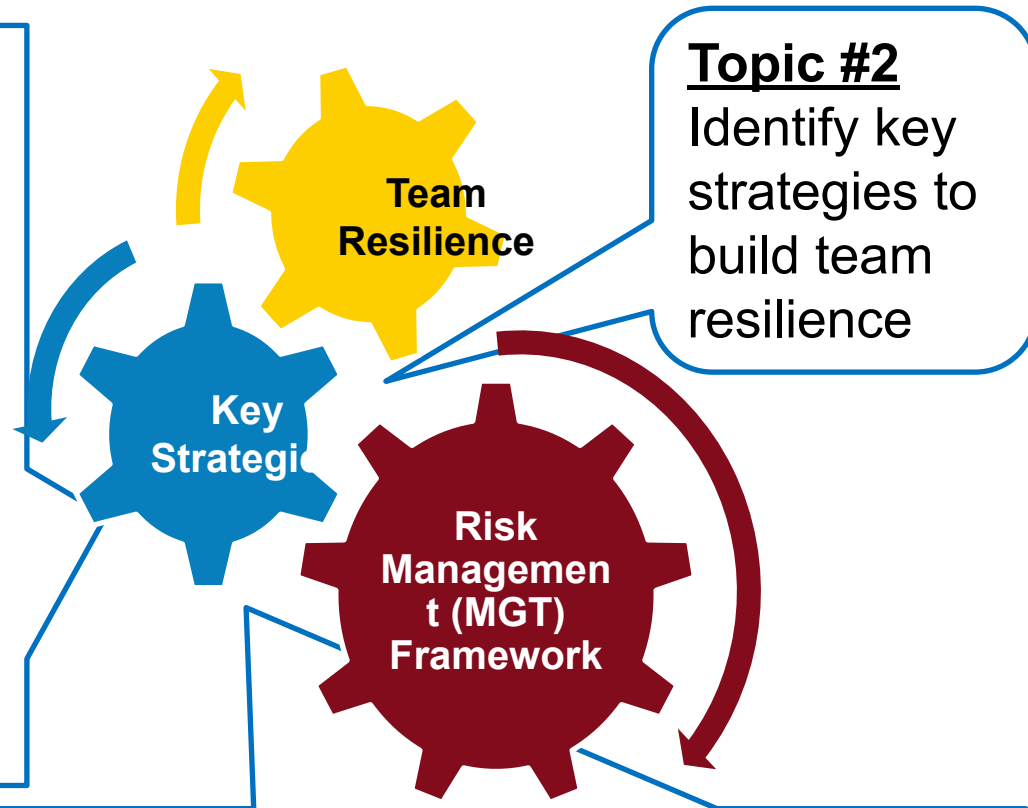


**Topic # 1**  
Define team resilience and its core characteristics

- Positive mindset, problem solving, survival mentality, self-awareness, and compassion

# Key Strategies to Build Team Resilience

- Engaged leadership agreed upon how it governs
- Community engagement through social mobilization and communication (SMC)
- Cross-cultural understanding and integration
- Leveraging experienced SMEs
- Promote continuous training and learning
- Foster adaptability, proactivity
- Comprehensive risk MGT

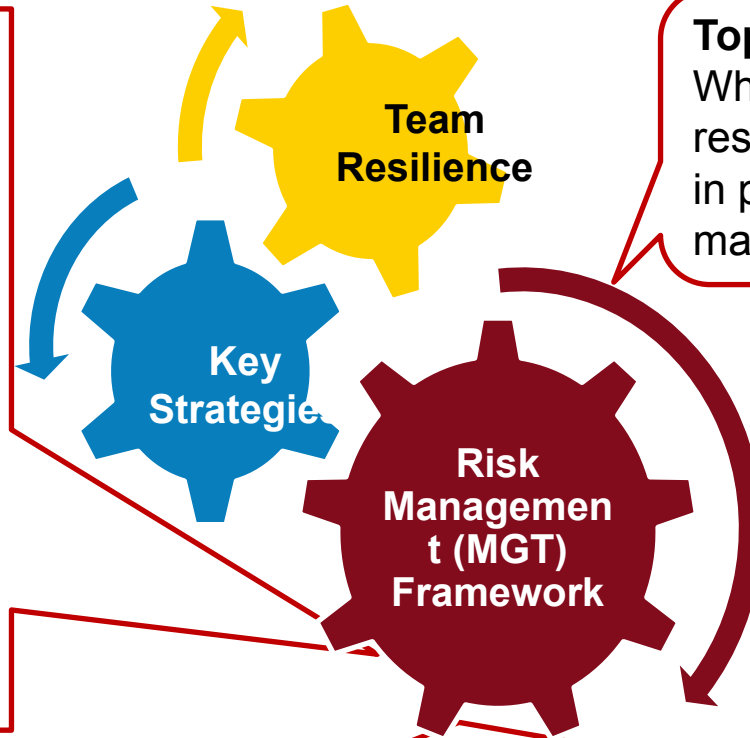


- Enhance team resilience by promoting/engaging with resilient staff members and community leaders through SMC strategies.



# The Role of Team Resilience in Promoting Risk Management

- Promotes effective communication
- Adapts to proactive risk MGT
- Maintains the well-being of support team
- Ensures the safety of research participants and integrity of the research data
- Enhances the quality of research outcomes
- Expedites the approval of treatments



## Topic # 3

What role does a resilient team play in promoting risk management?

- Place communication/collaboration first and empower resilient people
- Leverage tailored and integrated risk management approach

# CMRPD's Tailored Risk MGT Framework: Risk Case Example

**Request:** Support a high-priority clinical research project

**Summary:**  
International  
Four sites  
n = 500

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# CMRPD's Tailored Risk MGT Framework: Risk Case Example

Identify aspects that could impact the project

**Request:** Support a high-priority clinical research project

**Summary:**  
International  
Four sites  
n = 500



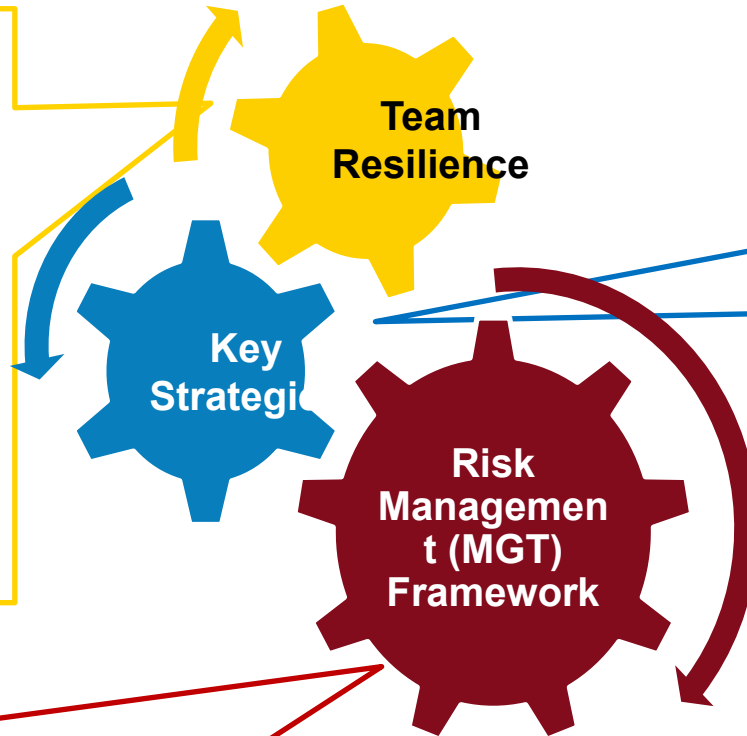
1. Analyze the importance of a risk in comparison to the project
2. Consider the probability of the risk occurring
3. Determine the seriousness of the risk

# CMRPD's Tailored Risk MGT Framework: Risk Case Example



## Messages

- Be resilient and support resilient team members in a team
- Recognize the core characteristics and core value of team resilience



Understand the key strategies that help build and cultivate team resilience.

- Prioritize communication/collaboration first and empower resilient people
- Leverage tailored and integrated risk management approaches

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# Summary

**It takes a village** to conduct clinical research.

Insights from working with resilient teams on the ground:

- All projects are risky – not all risks are bad
- Risk identification is an iterative process
- Have tailored risk mitigation strategies across all functions
- Promote and build team resilience throughout the project lifecycle
- All hands on deck approach: empower the research team
- Team resilience and risk management = project success

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# Questions

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# Evaluate Session

