

# Self-Organisation Play-by-Play

A practical step-by-step guide for communities forming resilience groups. The sequence matters. Work through these steps in order. Most groups that fail do so because they tried to solve everything at once or skipped foundational steps.

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## THE CORE IDEA

You are not trying to build a self-sufficient commune. You are trying to build enough organised capacity that your community can survive a disruption the wider system cannot immediately fix. The target is weeks and months, not years. That is a much more achievable goal — and achieving it makes the longer journey possible.

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## STEP 01

### Find your people first

Start with who you already trust, not who has the best resources. Five people who trust each other will outperform fifteen who don't every time. Your founding group should be people you'd call in an emergency without thinking twice. Resources can be acquired. Trust takes years.

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## STEP 02

### Map what you have before identifying gaps

Do an honest resource audit of your founding group before you look outward. Most communities discover they have significantly more than they assumed. List every skill, every piece of equipment, every resource category. You cannot identify gaps without first knowing what you have.

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## STEP 03

### Identify your single biggest vulnerability

Do not try to solve everything at once. Look at your resource map and zone score and find the one dimension where you are most exposed. Water before food. Communications before expansion. Fix the critical failure point first — everything else can wait.

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## STEP 04

### Establish your meeting rhythm

Regular meetings in normal times keep the group coherent and communication channels open. Monthly is the minimum. Pre-agree your emergency meeting trigger (what event calls an emergency meeting?) and your emergency meeting location that does not depend on power or internet.

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## STEP 05

**Assign roles, not tasks**

Roles create ownership and continuity. Tasks create dependency on whoever assigned them. When someone is the Waterbearer, they own water — they think about it, they improve it, they know the status without being asked. Use the guild role archetypes on Groundwork as a starting point.

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## STEP 06

**Build your physical record**

Document everything in a form that survives without power. A physical folder or binder containing: the group contact list with addresses, your resource inventory, meeting notes and decisions, your agreed protocols, and the zone map with meeting points marked. This is your group's memory. Keep it updated.

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## STEP 07

**Run a 72-hour tabletop drill**

Walk through a scenario as a group. It is Day 1 of a major grid failure. What do you do first? Who calls who? Where do you meet? Who has water? Nothing reveals gaps like simulating the crisis before it happens. Do this within the first three months of forming.

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## STEP 08

**Recruit the missing roles**

Once your founding group is functioning, look at what roles are unfilled. Use the Groundwork platform to find zone members who fill those gaps. Recruitment is most effective when you can offer a specific role and a functioning group to join — not just a vague invitation to prepare.

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## STEP 09

**Formalise inter-guild agreements**

Once your guild is stable, identify adjacent guilds with complementary strengths. A food-surplus guild and a medical-capacity guild are natural allies. Formalise what you will share, under what conditions, and how disputes will be resolved. Write it down.

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## GROUP MEETING — FIRST AGENDA

Use this template for your first community meeting. Designed to be run by someone with no facilitation experience.

### 5 min — Welcome and purpose

One person reads aloud: "We are here to understand what our community has, what it needs, and how we can start organising ourselves before a crisis makes organisation impossible."

### 15 min — Round of introductions

Each person states their name, suburb, and one skill or resource they have that might be useful to the group. No pressure to share more than they are comfortable with.

### 20 min — Zone score review

If available, show the Groundwork zone score for your area. Walk through each dimension. Ask: does this match what we know? What surprises us?

### 15 min — Identify the single biggest gap

Group discussion: based on what we know, what is the one thing most likely to cause serious harm if systems fail? Focus the group on one problem only.

### 10 min — Next steps and commitments

Each person states one thing they will do before the next meeting. Write them down. Set the date for the next meeting before anyone leaves.

### 5 min — Exchange contact details

Collect name, phone number, and suburb for every person present. This is the first entry in your physical group record.

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## CONTRIBUTION LEDGER — HOW IT WORKS

No money changes hands within a guild. But contribution is recorded. The ledger is not an enforcement mechanism — it is a transparency mechanism. Free riders become visible without accusation. Consistent contributors earn the group's trust over time.

Log: date, member name, type of contribution (hours/produce/skill/equipment), brief description, and quantity where applicable. Review the ledger every three months as a group.

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## KNOWING WHEN TO SPLIT

A guild that grows beyond 15 members begins to lose the trust and social accountability that makes it functional. When your guild approaches this size, split into two guilds rather than expand further. Split along natural lines — geography, existing friendship networks, or complementary skill sets. The two guilds then form an inter-guild alliance.