Engineering greater human resilience

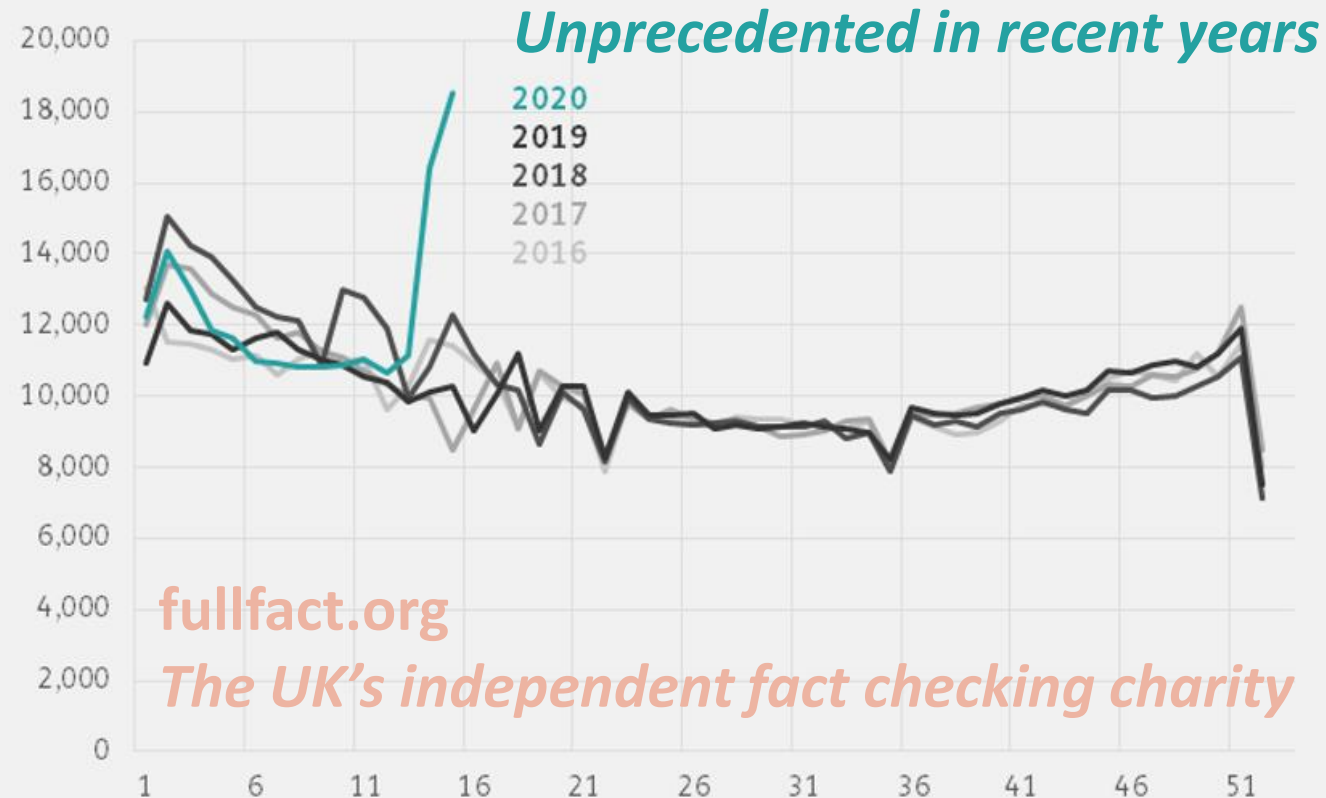| Strengthening...	...to be more resistant to
Biological immune systems	Biological infection
Critical thinking skills	Deception and fake news
Emotional intelligence	Bursts of anger or despair
A sense of human solidarity	Tribalism and partisanship
A spirit of inner mastery	Consumerist pressures
Human resilience	*Distortion and corruption*

But asking in each case, beforehand:

Which interventions to apply at the individual level and which at a societal level?
What unintended drawbacks might arise from the envisioned greater resilience?

Claim:

There were fewer deaths recorded in the first 15 weeks of 2020 than in the first 15 weeks of 2018.

Weekly deaths by year

Weekly deaths registered in England and Wales 2016-2020

Unprecedented in recent years

20,000

18,000   2020

16,000   2019
          2018
14,000   2017
          2016

12,000

10,000

8,000

6,000

fullfact.org
4,000
The UK's independent fact checking charity

2,000

0

1   6   11   16   21   26   31   36   41   46   51

Date of graph creation: 24 April 2020
Source: Office for National Statistics, deaths registered in England and Wales, provisional

Coronavirus
fullfact.org/online/ons-2020-covid-death-totals

Full Fact

Conclusion:

Correct – but...

We can be misled by facts

- **Out of context**
- **Lack perspective**
- **Single datum**

Covid-19: What's the worst that could happen?

Economic depression worse than 1930s?

Population ravaged: 100s of millions dead?

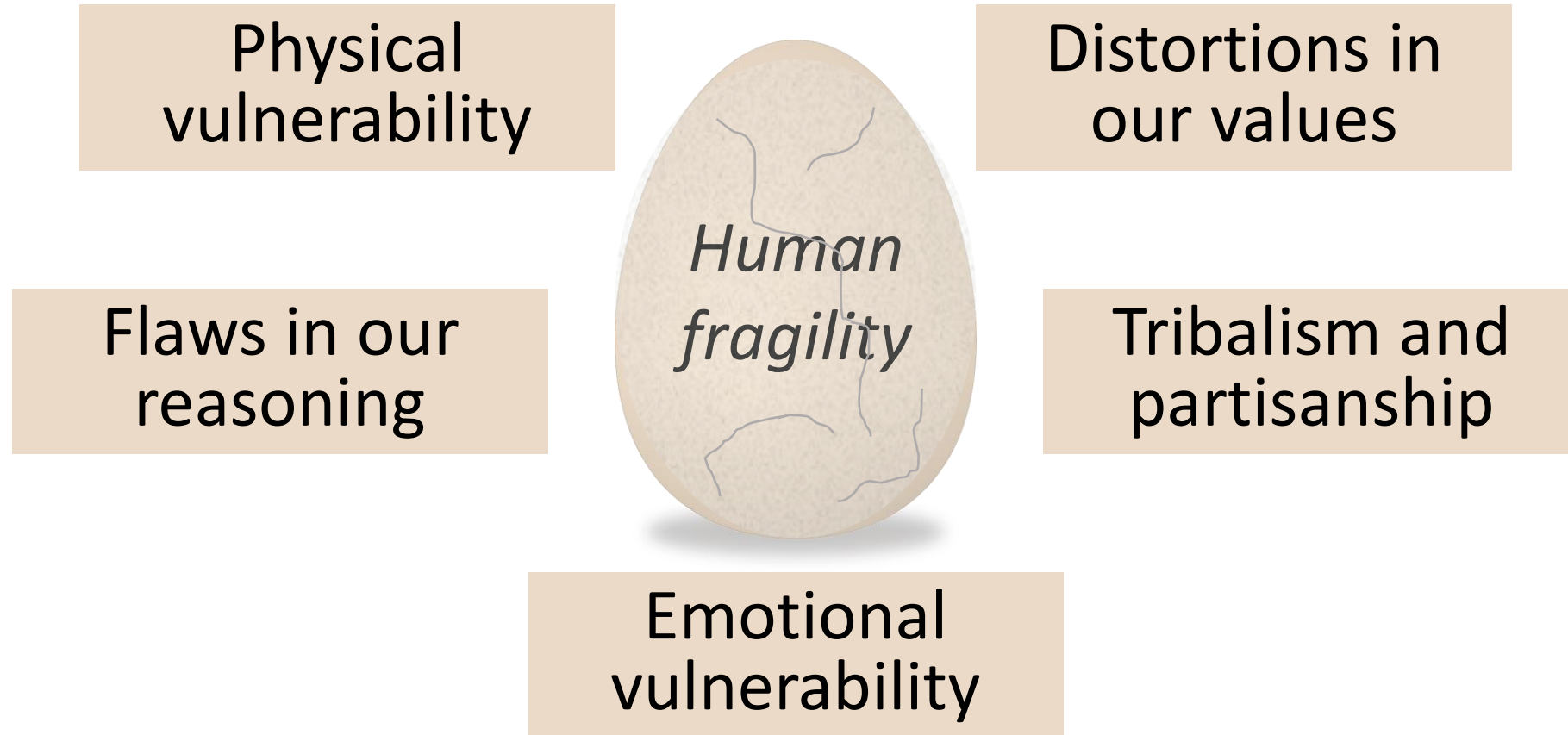Political leaders take actions to deflect blame?

1914: Sarajevo...

2020: Iran, North Korea...?

How to reduce risks of human fragility?

https://pixabay.com/photos/armageddon-disaster-destruction-war-2721568/

In a world of ever-greater connectivity and weaponry

Physical vulnerability

Distortions in our values

Flaws in our reasoning

Human fragility

Tribalism and partisanship

Emotional vulnerability

1. Re-engineer individual humans and/or human society?
2. Strengthen resilience without losing our essential humanity?
3. Priorities? Most practical? Most urgent? Least risky?