Essential Systems Thinking Leadership Skills to Achieve Global Health

Sara Horton-Deutsch, PhD, RN, PMHCNS, FAAN, ANEF
Caritas Coach

Professor and Director of the University of San Francisco & Kaiser Permanente Partnerships
University of San Francisco School of Nursing & Health Professions
2130 Fulton Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94117

shortondeutsch@usfca.edu
Complexity Leadership

...people, in relationships, coming together, from diverse mental models, moving toward transformation.
Systems Thinking

- Being AWARE
- Thinking about thinking
- Making thinking visible
- Information into knowledge
Complex Adaptive Systems

3 Simple Rules
Mental Models
4 Structures of Mental Models

DISTINCTIONS

SYSTEMS

RELATIONSHIPS

PERSPECTIVES
Distinctions:

SEEING in new ways.
Systems:
Relationships:
Perspectives:

We are all biased perspective-taking machines.
Value of Systems Thinking

• Patterns and structures
• Makes life more interesting
• Increases understanding
• Expands awareness
• The world becoming possible
In short, systems thinking skills…

• Help us to deconstruct a problem or issue
• Help us to think about things in a different way
• Help us to refine everyday thought, in order to solve wicked problems
WICKED PROBLEMS

Result from a mismatch how real-world systems work and how we think they work.
A systems thinker…
System Archetypes describe common patterns of behavior in organizations. As a Diagnostic Tool they provide insight into the underlying structures from which behavior over time and discreet events emerge. As a Prospective Tool, they alert leaders to future unintended consequences. Collectively, they challenge leaders to consider the merits of fundamental solutions by making time to explicit variable in decision making.

-William Braun
In essence, system archetypes

• Describes and depicts specific patterns

• Reveals underlying system structure and associated problems and mental models

• Facilitates addressing the underlying causes of behavior

• Common across many organizations
# Archetypes and System Dynamics

## Classic Systems Archetypes

- **Drifting Goals**
- Escalation
- Fixes that Fail
- Growth and Underinvestment
- Limits to Success
- **Shifting the Burden/Addiction**
- Success to the Successful
- Tragedy of the Commons
- Accidental Adversaries
- Attractiveness Principle

## Positive Systems Archetypes

- Plan for limits
- Strut your Stuff
- **Collective Agreement**
- Invest for Success
- **Fixes that Work**
- Bite the Bullet
- Stay on Track
- **Cooperative Partners**
- Win/Win
- Be Your Best

Systems Thinking Tools
References


References


Resources

https://www.crlab.us/
https://waterscenterst.org/event/systems-thinking-institute/
https://thesystemsthinker.com/positive-systems-archetypes/