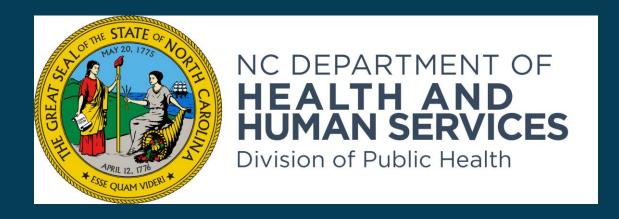# LEVERAGING A SYSTEMS THINKING APPROACH FOR ACES AND SUICIDE PREVENTION IN A REMOTE ENVIRONMENT

Webinar
September 28, 2020

Funders

Project Activities

- Webinar Series
- Collaborative Learning Institute

Project Materials

- 3 Handouts
- Supplement Packet

Evaluation

50 participants who respond to the webinar evaluation will be chosen at random to each receive a $10 gift card!

✓ Describe the Shared Risk and Protective Factor approach

✓ Describe a process for prioritizing Shared Risk and Protective Factors based on stakeholder priorities

✓ Describe a method that can be used to examine the roles, relationships, and resources available to leverage within a system

✓ Demonstrate principles for effectively facilitating systems thinking application in a remote environment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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Health Policy and Management,
University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill

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Co-Founder,
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Alliance Director,
ROC the Future

Presenters

Poll Questions

How familiar are you with the concept of systems thinking?

- Very familiar
- Sort of familiar
- I've heard of the term, but have never learned about it
- Not at all

How open would you be to organizing an IVP initiative around a Shared Risk and Protective Factor approach?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Not Likely
- I would like to, but there is a barrier that would prevent me from doing so

SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS (SRPF)

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "SHARED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS"?

WHY USE SRPF?

Once we better understand connections between multiple forms of violence , we can:

PREVENT
multiple forms of violence simultaneosly

DEVELOP
new partnerships

LEVERAGE
resources & funding streams

CONSIDER
a larger pool of prevention strategies

Shared Risk Factors Across suicide & ACEs

	Factor	Suicide	Child Maltreatment	Intimate Partner Violence	Sexual Violence	Teen Dating Violence	Youth Violence	Bullying
Society	Societal income inequality		X	X			X	X
Community	Diminished economic opportunities / high unemployment rates	X	X	X	X		X	
	Neighborhood poverty	X	X	X	X		X	
	Poor neighborhood support & cohesion	X	X	X		X	X	
	Barriers to healthcare	X						
Relationship	Social isolation & lack of social support	X	X	X		X	X	X
	Economic stress	X	X	X			X	
	Family conflict		X	X	X	X	X	X
	Financial & work stress	X						
Individual	Witnessing violence	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	History of violent victimization	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Psychological / mental health problems	X	X	X		X	X	
	Substance use	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

* Red indicates factors that are highlighted throughout the webinar

Shared Protective Factors
Across suicide & ACEs

	Factor	Suicide	Child Maltreatment	Intimate Partner Violence	Sexual Violence	Teen Dating Violence	Youth Violence	Bullying
Society	Strong health, educational, economic, & social policy/law	X	X	X	X			
Society	Gender equitable norms		X	X	X	X	X	X
Community	Community support & connectedness	X	X	X	X		X	
Community	Coordination of resources & services among community agencies	X	X	X				
Community	Access to mental health & substance abuse services	X	X					
Community	High quality childcare, primary care, & afterschool programs		X	X	X	X	X	X
Relationship	Family support & connectedness	X	X			X	X	X
Relationship	Connection/commitment to school	X			X	X	X	X
Relationship	Strong parent-child relationships	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Relationship	Connection to a caring adult	X				X	X	
Relationship	Association with pro-social peers					X	X	X
Individual	Strong non-violent social problem-solving skills	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

* Red indicates factors that are highlighted throughout the webinar

DEFINING "SYSTEM" AND "SYSTEMS THINKING"
&
UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

WHAT IS A SYSTEM?

A collection of parts that interact with each other to form an interdependent whole

A system is...

✓ A set of interconnected components

✓ with a definable boundary (open or closed)

✓ that interact

✓ by accepting inputs, collectively, and producing outputs/outcomes

✓ through a transformation process

Systems can create hard problems. They can be overwhelming, wicked, and messy.

Wicked Problems

Problem in which stakeholders do not agree on what the problem is, or even if there is a problem – threatening collective impact
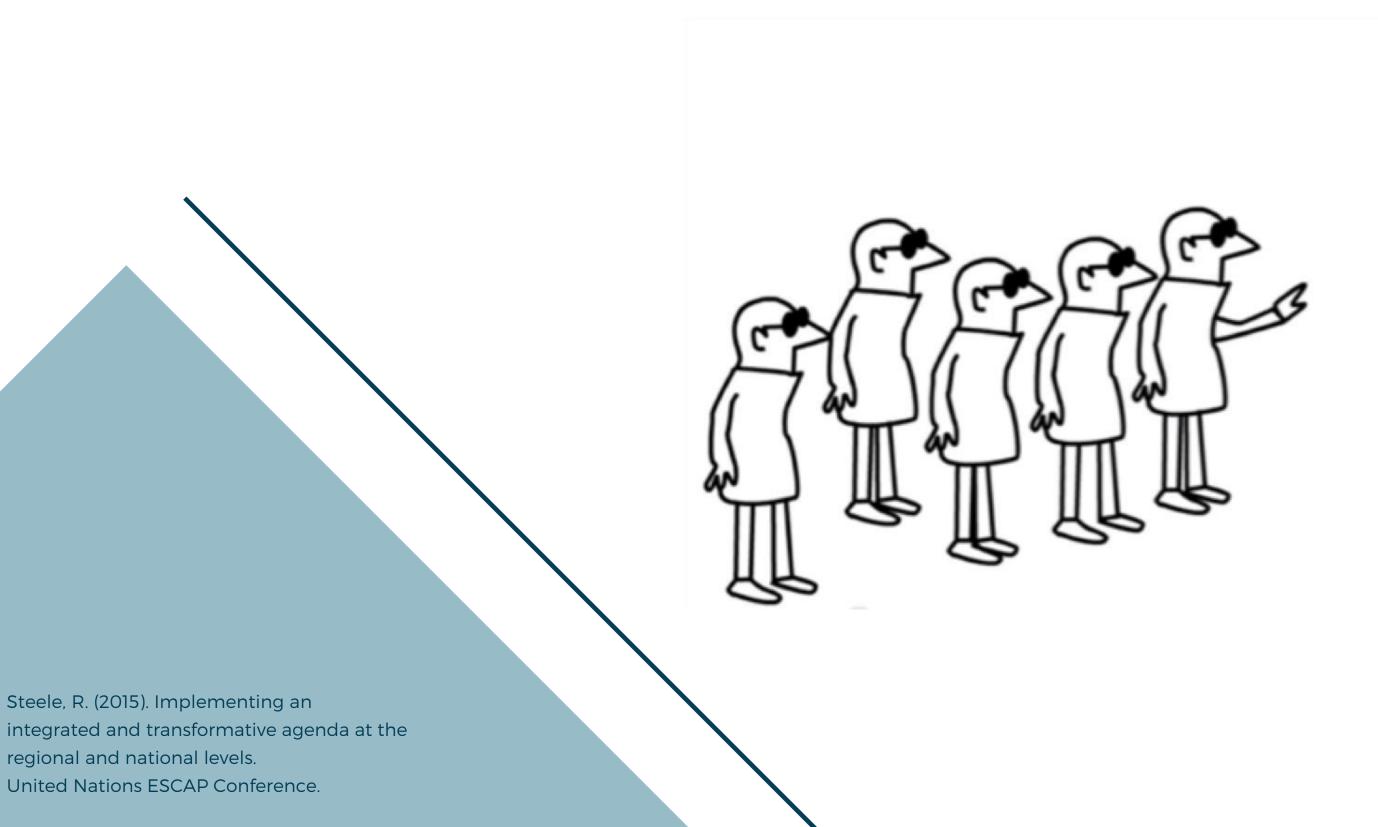-Vennix, 1999

Messy Problems

"actually consist of multiple smaller problems that cannot be solved independently, and which often involve 'socio-political' or 'moral-spiritual' issues"
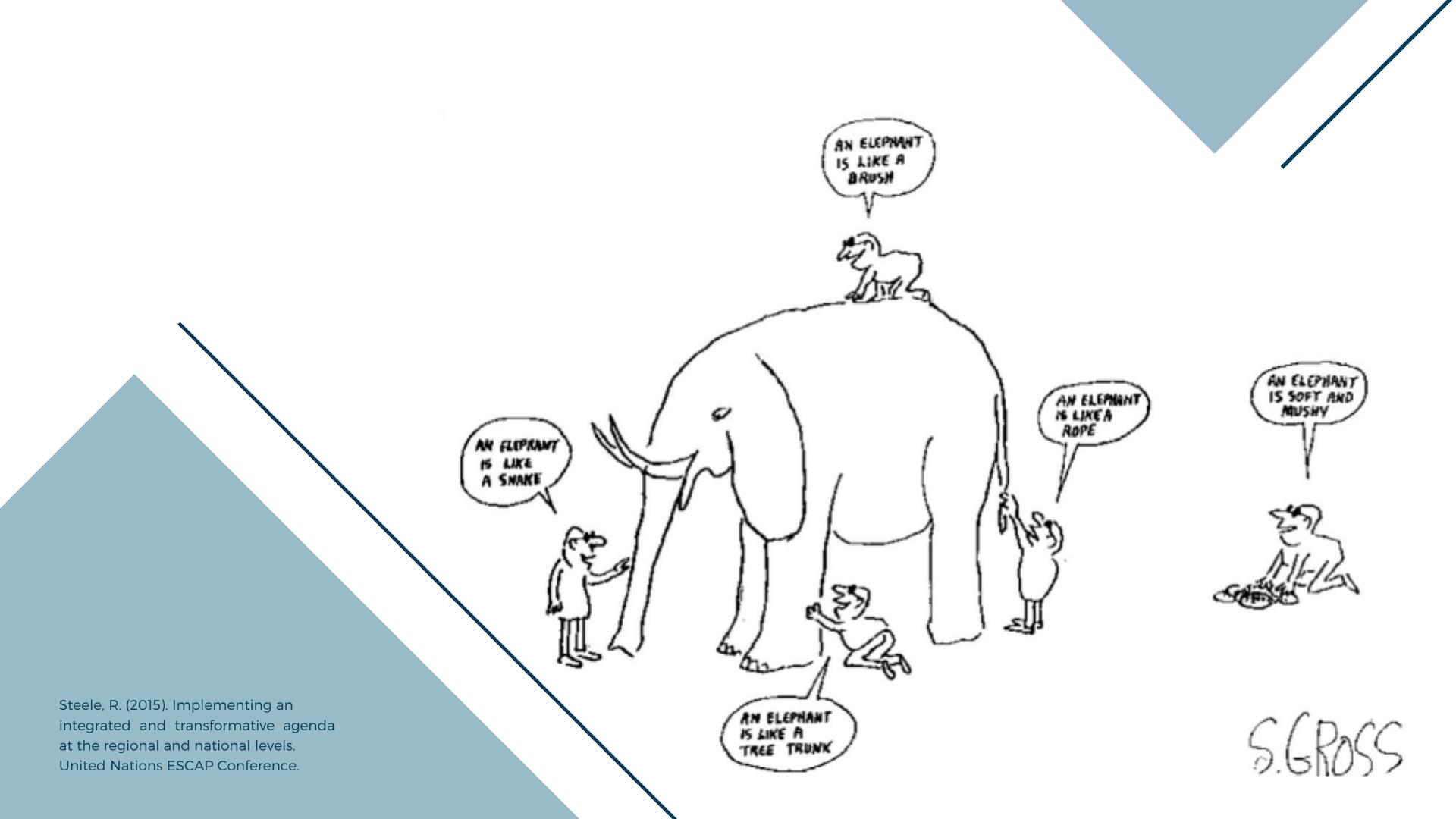-Gary and Gill, 2009

"Systems thinking is a discipline for **seeing wholes**. It is a framework for seeing **interrelationships** rather than things, for seeing **patterns of change** rather than static 'snapshots'.... Today systems thinking is needed more than ever because we are becoming overwhelmed by complexity. Perhaps for the first time in history, humankind has the capacity to create **far more information** than anyone can absorb, to foster **far greater interdependency** than anyone can manage, and to **accelerate change far faster** than anyone's ability to keep pace."

PETER SENGE,
THE FIFTH DISCIPLINE

Steele, R. (2015). Implementing an integrated and transformative agenda at the regional and national levels. United Nations ESCAP Conference.

Steele, R. (2015). Implementing an integrated and transformative agenda at the regional and national levels. United Nations ESCAP Conference.

Complex Systems as Icebergs

The Iceberg

Events

What happened?
- Headlines in a newspaper
- Urgent emails
- Fires to put out

The Iceberg

Events

Patterns of Events

What's been happening?

- Past events over time
- Anticipated future events
- By race? By geography? By...

The Iceberg

Events

Patterns of Events

Systemic Structures

What structures generate the patterns of events?
- Roles and responsibilities
- Rules, norms, policies, incentives
- Relationships between the parts
- Dynamics reinforcing/resisting change

The Iceberg

Events

Patterns of Events

Systemic Structures

Mental Models

What drives individuals' actions?

- Vary based on experience, training
- Our simplified rules about how the world works
- Reflect norms, biases, gaps in experiences

What systems thinking is all about...

"The system is broken!"

NO! "Every system is perfectly designed to achieve exactly the results it gets."- Don Berwick

The system is producing exactly what it is designed to produce. Let's uncover and re-wire the system's structure to get the outcomes we want!

Supporting trauma-informed and resilient communities

Our Mission:

- **Unjust systems cause trauma**. We support people's healing process by educating, reshaping systemic practices, and fostering deep-rooted connections. We know people are not to blame for the trauma and stress that impacts them. Resilience is an inner strength in all humans, regardless of background, and we as people are wired for connection and healing.

Our Vision:

- Investing in community leaders and public agencies, we envision reimagined worlds of healing and justice: healthier, safer, and self-determined futures for current and future generations in rural communities. We are based in Edgecombe County, North Carolina; we hope to share what we learn with other areas in the rural South.

Our Engagement Processes

- 10+ community meetings
- 100+ interviews & workshops

Law Enforcement — TARBORO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Local Government — Edgecombe County North Carolina, Town of Tarboro

K-12 Education — Edgecombe County Public SCHOOLS

Community College — Edgecombe COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Local Business — Golden LEAF FOUNDATION, TBC

Hospital — VIDANT Medical Center

Mental Health Providers — EASTPOINTE

Parents — Edgecombe County Public SCHOOLS
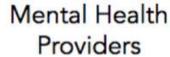
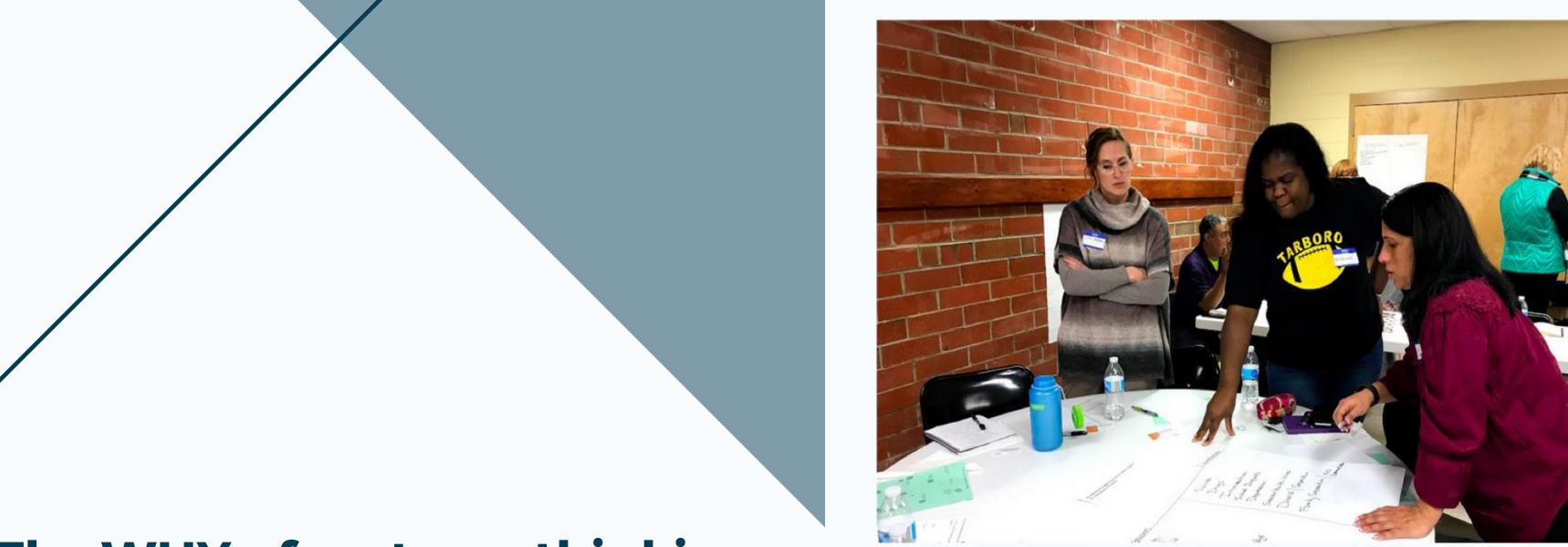Systems Thinking — ENGAGING INQUIRY

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The vision is born

A cross-sector collaboration that improves rates of many interrelated and intergenerational health and social problems in East Tarboro by investing in the people most at risk and reducing and preventing the root cause of these problems: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Framing Question:

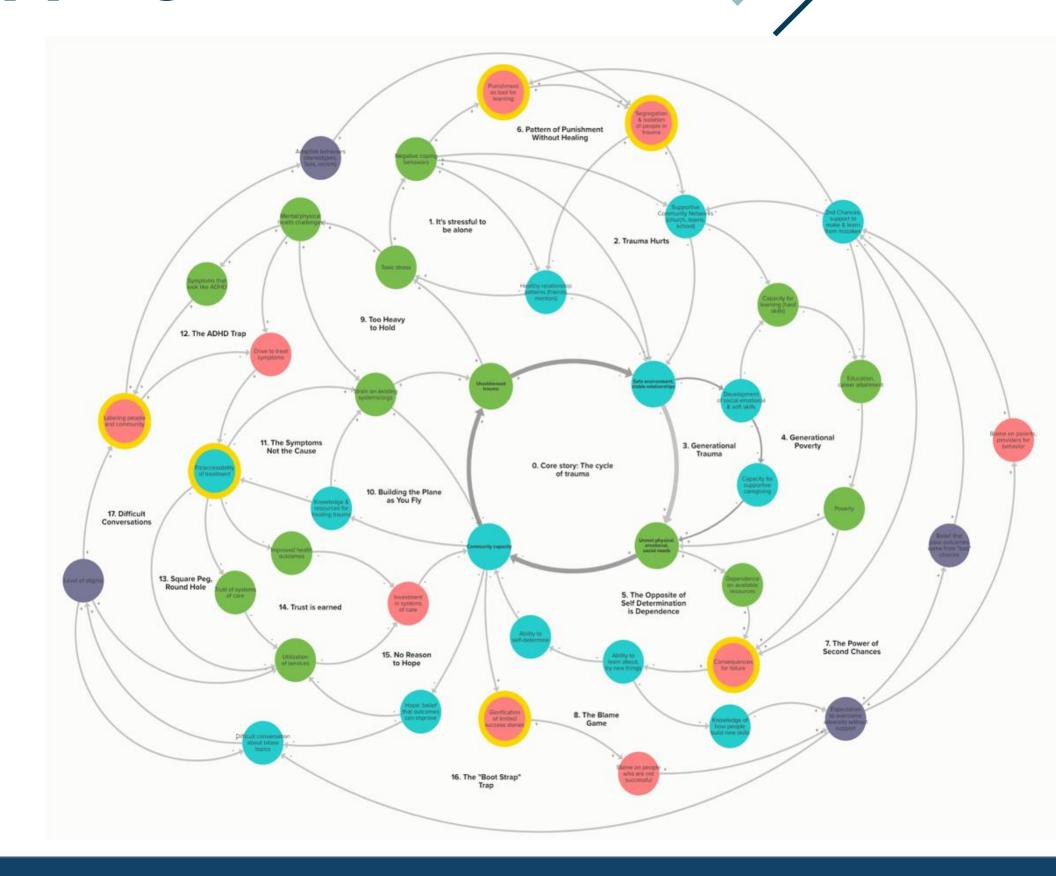What forces account for the current levels of trauma/ACES in East Tarboro?

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The WHY of systems thinking: Remove individual blame, move to shared opportunity

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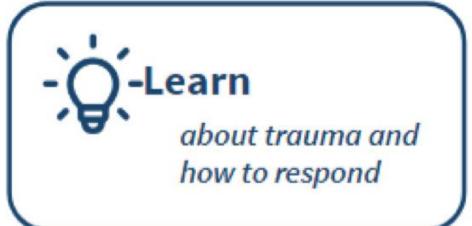institute

Themes for Systems Mapping

- Generational trauma & generational poverty stem from underdeveloped "soft skills"
- Coping behaviors lead to punishment & isolation from healthy relationships
- Systems of care misdiagnose and then apply poor fit treatments
- No hope = blame, few 2nd chances, less difficult conversations

Strategy for Becoming Trauma-Informed

Long Term: people who have experienced trauma and have healed are best positioned to provide healing for others
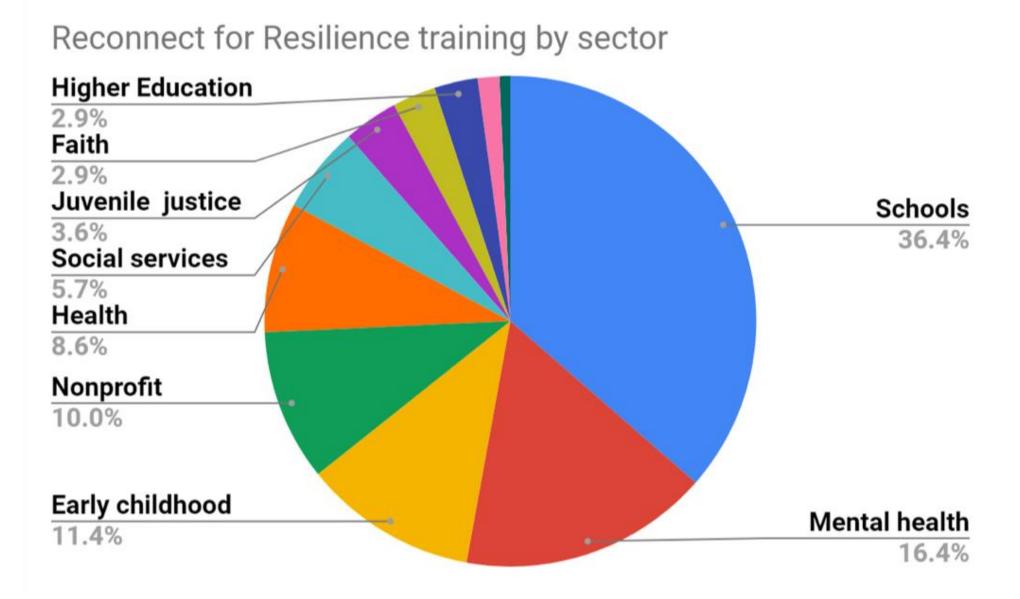
-ᄋ̣ᄋ̣- **Learn**
about trauma and how to respond

Heal
through new practices & habits

Connect
to economic & leadership opportunities

Cross-sector impact

- 120+ workshops and trainings
- 4500+ people

Reconnect for Resilience training by sector

Higher Education
2.9%
Faith
2.9%
Juvenile justice
3.6%
Social services
5.7%
Health
8.6%
Nonprofit
10.0%
Early childhood
11.4%
Mental health
16.4%
Schools
36.4%

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Biofeedback breathing in a middle school & county jail

- Students who did biofeedback breathing saw their anxiety symptoms reduce by 57%
- 100% of students said their ability to calm down has improved since beginning biofeedback and want to continue the program

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Takeaways

- Systems mapping helps visualize a complex problem, and then find ways that individuals can have impact
- Engaging in the process is just as important as the outcome
- What people say and what they do often contradict - we need tools and structures to draw out the truth
- Systems mapping removes blame and allows us to find shared truth and move forward together

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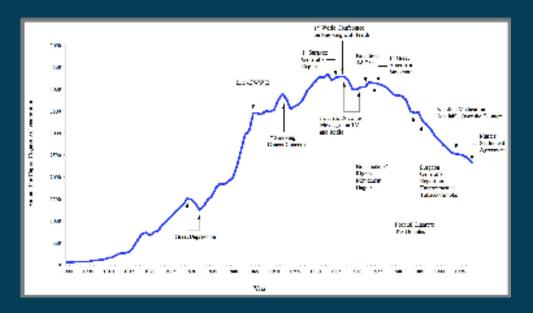opportunity
institute

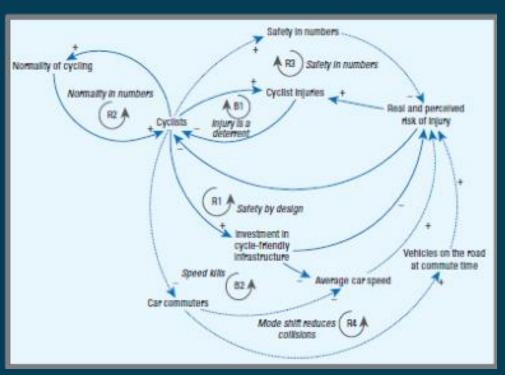# PRACTICAL SYSTEMS THINKING TOOLS

Systems tools:
Adding to our toolbox

Qualitative

- 5 R's
- Causal loop diagramming
- Conversation map for priority and resource alignment
- System support mapping
- AcciMap

Quantitative

- System dynamics simulation (stock and flow simulation)
- Agent-based models & microsimulation
- Social network analysis
- Discrete event analysis

The Five R's:
Why do we do it?

- To understand the broad "system" around an area of work

- **Efficient way to brainstorm as a group** and describe key features of the system that will help:
    - define meaningful measures,
    - ensure engagement of all relevant stakeholders,
    - and design action that mindful of available resources, rules (constraints, norms, etc.), and key relationships

The Five R's: What is it?

A five-question framework used to guide individual brainstorming, idea synthesis, and group discussion. The questions uncover:

- the **RESULTS**/outcomes that matter
- the set of stakeholders or actors with a **ROLE** (affecting or affected by changes in these outcomes)
- the **RESOURCES** available to support change
- the **RULES** (formal and informal) that shape these roles, resources, and relationships
- the most critical **RELATIONSHIPS** between those with a role in the system that affects results/outcomes of interest

The Five R's:
How do we do it?

- **Ask individuals to brainstorm (quickly) for each of the "R" questions**
  - Can be done through a survey (google forms, Qualtrics, surveymonkey, etc) or on stickies in a live (or virtual!) meeting
  - TIP: Consider starting with "Results" - to scope the project
- **Sharing of individual responses can be done "live" or "offline"**
  - Live – Share one idea at a time while facilitators cluster themes
  - Offline – Support team synthesizes individual responses and reports back to the group
  - TIP: Keep stakeholder language, but make it easy to see themes emerging within each "R"
  - TIP: Make sure any missing stakeholders (with a Role!) join/add their voice
- **Discuss consolidated results- what is missing, prioritize results to focus on, identify/prioritize resources, relationships, rules to change**
  - TIP: Make sure to keep good notes and update/build from early work!

The Five R's: Key Strengths

- It's a simple framework (easy to describe)...... yet it generates rich and important conversation

- Can take as little as 1-2 hours

- Documentation can be readily reviewed and updated over time

- Used ~100 times on a variety of collaborative projects and recurring feedback very positive - "easy to use," "helped us scope our project," "uncovered rocks we wouldn't have turned over"

PRACTICAL SYSTEMS THINKING TOOLS: CONVERSATION MAP FOR PRIORITY AND RESOURCE ALIGNMENT

Conversation Map for Priority and Resource Alignment: What is it?

- A mapping tool that **allows people to see** *how* **they are embedded within a larger system that includes SRPFs**, illuminates less direct win-wins between themselves and partners, and can help motivate action and change.

- Can help organizers learn how to **better approach different types of stakeholders** when engaging and proposing a SRPF approach.

Conversation Map for Priority and Resource Alignment: Why do we do it?

We know there are several challenges stakeholders face in adopting a SRPF approach:

- Hard to engage a wide range of stakeholders unless stakeholders have a better understanding of why they should care

- Hard for any one stakeholder to know what is relevant to another partner/stakeholder

- SRPF action potential comes with collaboration. Alignment work is needed!

- Generating an understanding of connections between SRPFs and outcomes, and clearly communicating and displaying these, is imperative.

Conversation Map for Priority and Resource Alignment: How we do it?

- Decide which SRPFs you want to work on in your community
- Identify potential partners and set up interviews
- Ask each partner to describe:
  - What they do – about 3 of their most mission-critical objectives
  - What keeps them up at night – up to 3 "pain points"
  - Connections or stories about how a risk or protective factor affects their work
  - Connections or stories about how their work could affect a risk or protective factor
  - Prioritize up to 3 connections going each way (SRPF ---> objectives or pain points AND objectives ---> SRPFs)
- Overlay partner maps, discuss the system of values and action potential, and use insights to support future engagement and investment

Conversation Map for Priority and Resource Alignment: Key Strengths and Example

- Structured guide to help us understand:
  - What motivates partners to work with us
  - Doesn't require everyone to care about the same thing
  - Helps us learn to connect better in potentially powerful ways
- Our illustration of this tool was centered around several key SRPFs for suicide and ACEs

Map each stakeholder's mission critical objectives and pain points.

Mental health
service organization

Strong mental
health & substance
abuse services

Social support &
community
connectedness

Provide social &
emotional wellness
supports

Enhance capacity of
staff to identify &
support kids with
behavioral health
needs

Emotional
fatigue of
faculty &
students

Challenges
connecting with
parents

Map each stakeholder's mission critical objectives and pain points.

K–12 community education
achievement alliance

Social support &
community
connectedness

Economic
opportunity &
Housing stability

Teacher
recruitment &
preparation

Address the
digital
divide

Feeling unsafe to
physically be in
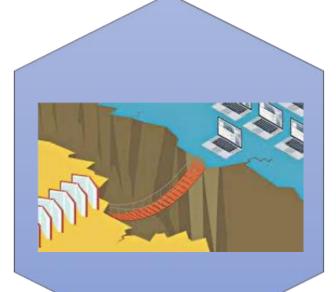schools

ROC the Future!

- Launched in 2011, Rochester's community-wide initiative to tackle improving academic outcomes for all children, from cradle to career
- One of 69 communities in the national STRIVE Together collective impact network, working to improve student outcomes
- Focus: School Readiness, Early Grade Literacy, and High School Graduation

Strive — Every child. Cradle to career.

Framework for Building a Cradle to Career Civic Infrastructure

Shared Community Vision	Cross-Sector Stakeholder Engagement	Partnership Accountability Structure	Strategic Communications
Evidence Based Decision Making	Community Level Outcomes	Priority Outcomes & Strategies	Comprehensive Data Management System
Collaborative Action	Collaborative Action Networks	Continuous Improvement Approach	Plan to Scale Practices
Investment & Sustainability	Community Engagement	Funding for Collaborative Action	Support for Anchor Entity

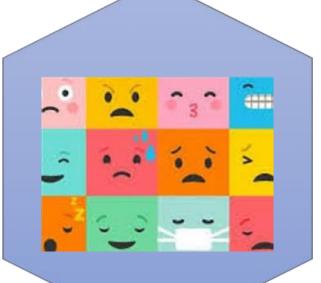# Systems thinking and system strengthing work

- **ROC the Future** — **objectives, pain points, relationships to shared risk and protective factors**

- **Systems thinking tools to support these conversations**
  - Experience as an interviewee
  - Motivation as an interviewer

- **Importance of and support for cross-sector collaboration**

- **Working in a dynamic system and need for iterative conversations and tools to support regular touch points and conversations**

Systems thinking and system strengthing work

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GET READY TO GROW
SUPPORTING KIDS' HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

I'm a healthy learner

DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKS FOR KIDS AND MORE...

children's institute
STRENGTHENING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

ROC THE FUTURE

Slide developed by AM White, Children's Institute

Systems thinking and system strengthing work

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Mitigating the Interplay of Culture and Context: Internal and External Factors

Public contracts (state, local) & Federal funds

Private philanthropic support

Fundraising & Earned Revenue

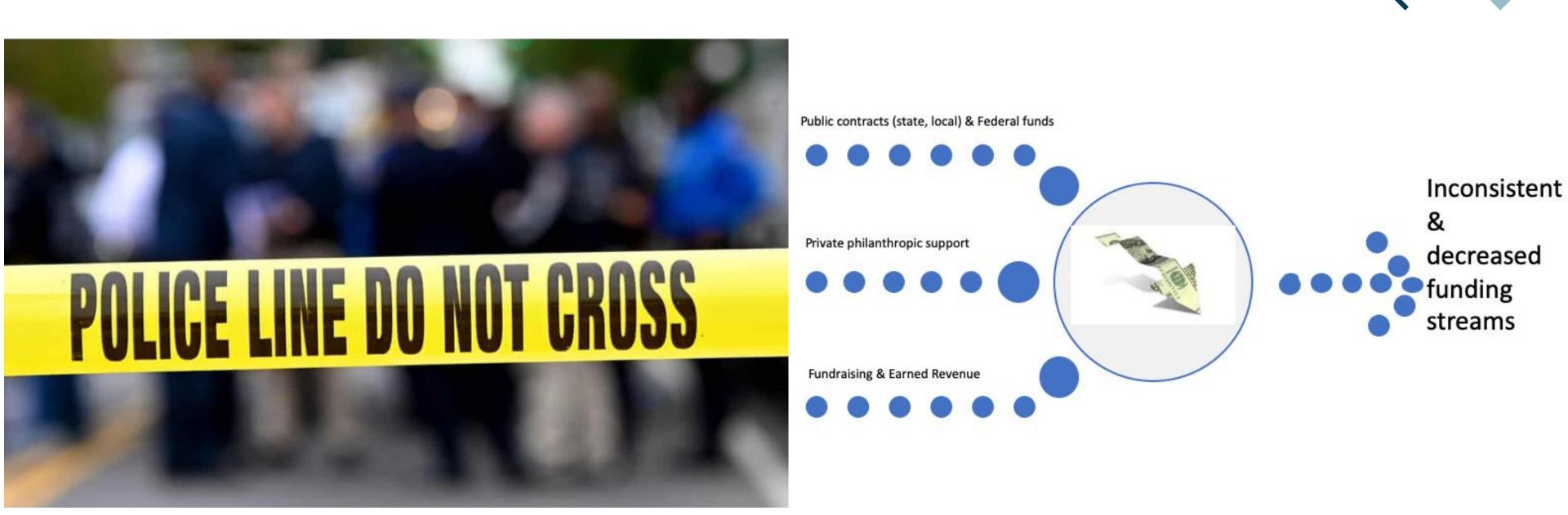Inconsistent & decreased funding streams

Image from https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/sep/19/two-dead-mass-shooting-party-rochester-new-york

Poll Question

Which of these software or tools are you using in remote, collaborative meetings?

- Jamboard
- Mural
- Miro
- Kumu
- Zoom Whiteboard
- Visio
- None of the above
- We do not use remote collaborative software

COLLABORATING IN A REMOTE ENVIRONMENT

✓ Adults are autonomous and self-directed

✓ Adults are goal-oriented

✓ Adults bring knowledge and experience to each learning activity

✓ Adults are problem-oriented and want to apply what they've learned

✓ Adults need learning to be relevant and practical

✓ Adults, as with all learners, should be shown respect

ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES IN A REMOTE ENVIRONMENT

Adult Learning Principles in a Remote Environment

We retain approximately:
10 percent of what we see;
30-40 percent of what we see and hear; and
90 percent of what we see, hear, and do.

- Visual: videos, slides, flip charts, readings
- Auditory: lectures, group discussions, informal conversations, brainstorms
- Kinesthetic: group mapping/ diagramming, writing/ note-taking, simulations, activities/ exercises

Adult Learning Principles in a Remote Environment

TOOL	ADULT LEARNING APPROACH	TOOL FUNCTIONALITY	COST
MURAL	VISUAL & KINESTHETIC	Sticky notes, Flow charts, Diagrams, Frameworks, Drawings, etc	$12-20/month
MIRO	VISUAL & KINESTHETIC	Sticky notes, Flow charts, Diagrams, Frameworks, Drawings, etc	$0/month for 3 canvas; $8/month for unlimited canvas
JAMBOARD	VISUAL & KINESTHETIC	Whiteboard with sticky notes, and ability to draw (flow charts, diagrams, frameworks)	Included with GSuite - $6/month
ZOOM	VISUAL, AUDITORY, & KINESTHETIC	Whiteboard, Breakout rooms	$12-16/month
KUMU	VISUAL & KINESTHETIC	Systems thinking visualizations	$30+/month

Collaborative Learning Institute (CLI)

November 2020-April 2021

Free opportunity for multi-sector teams to gain hands on experience practically applying systems thinking tools to their work while receiving technical assistance from SMEs

Eligibility Criteria

- Team of 3-5 individuals
- Working in ACEs or Suicide prevention in some capacity
- Able to commit to entire 6-month program

- **Applications close Oct 15th at 11:59pm**
- Accepted teams notified by Oct 26th
- **Kick Off Meeting**: Nov 2nd
- Teams must be available for Session dates

Application and additional details available at https://remotepublichealth.org/aspire-project/collaborative-learning-institute/

Webinar Series

Webinar #2 – Coming Soon!

- The next ASPIRE Project webinar will be hosted in May 2021

- Part two will follow up from several points discussed during today's webinar and provide an update on best practices/lessons learned for implementation of these systems tools and utilizing them in a remote environment

Poll Question

How open would you be to organize an IVP initiative around a Shared Risk and Protective Factor approach?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Not likely
- I would like to, but there is a barrier that would prevent me from doing so

WHAT BARRIERS OR CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN DOING YOUR WORK VIRTUALLY?

ENTER YOUR RESPONSE IN THE CHAT BOX

Get in Touch

PRESENTERS

- Kristen Hassmiller-Lich: klich@unc.edu
- Vichi Jagannathan: vichi@email.unc.edu
- Becky Naumann: rnaumann@email.unc.edu
- Jackie Campbell: jackie@thechildrensagenda.org

ASPIRE PROJECT

- Belinda-Rose Young - Project Director: belindayoung@unc.edu
- Siarra Scott - Project Manager: siscott@email.unc.edu

Resources

SYSTEMS THINKING RESOURCES

- https://thesystemsthinker.com/

- Meadows DH. Thinking in systems : a primer. London; Sterling, VA : Earthscan, 2009.

- Sterman J. Learning from evidence in a complex world. Am J Public Health. 2006; 96(3): 505-514. doi: 10.2105/ajph.2005.066043.

SRPF RESOURCES

- Wilkins, N., Tsao, B., Hertz, M., Davis, R., Klevens, J. (2014). Connecting the Dots: An Overview of the Links Among Multiple Forms of Violence. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Oakland, CA: Prevention Institute. Available: https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/connecting_the_dots-a.pdf

- CDC Connecting the Dots online training: https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/connecting-the-dots/

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN ASPIRE PROJECT SUPPLEMENT