



1

Generate a definition of systems.

Tell your partner about one system you work within.

1. What issue do you work on
2. Two groups or organizations that work in this area
3. One root cause

Your partner's role:

1. Ask a question: What is working in this system?
2. Why is it successful?



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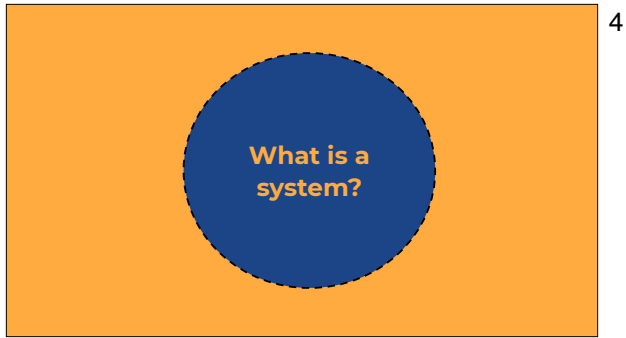
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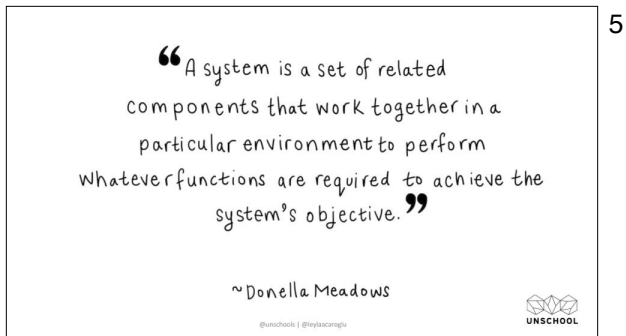
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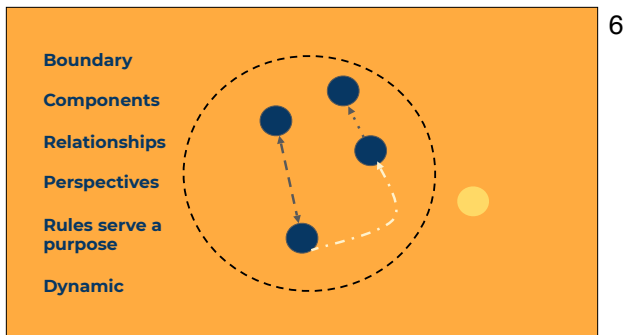
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Here's how you can tell you've gotten a handle on systems thinking:

- You're asking different kinds of questions than you asked before.
- You're hearing "catchphrases" that raise cautionary flags. For example, you find yourself refocusing the discussion when someone says, "The problem is we need more (sales staff, revenue)."
- You're beginning to detect the archetypes and balancing and reinforcing processes in stories you hear or read.
- You're surfacing mental models (both your own and those of others).
- You're recognizing the leverage points for the classic systems stories



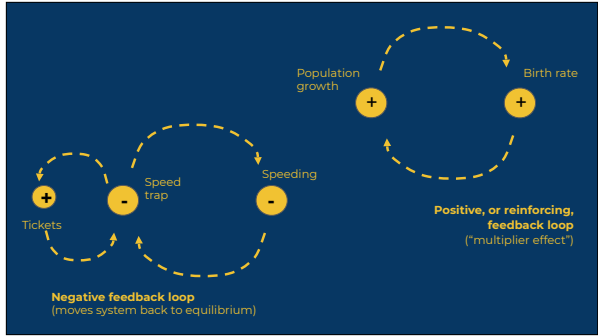
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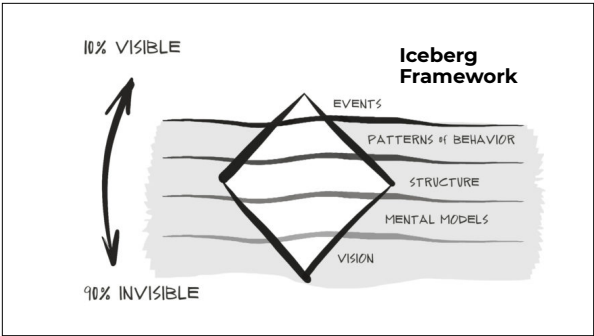


In 2015, nearly a third of all Dane County residents lived in housing they could not afford.

Paulsen K. Housing Needs Assessment, Dane County and Municipalities, Report to Dane County Health and Human Needs Committee, Dane County Department of Human Services and Dane County Planning and Development Department, January 2015.



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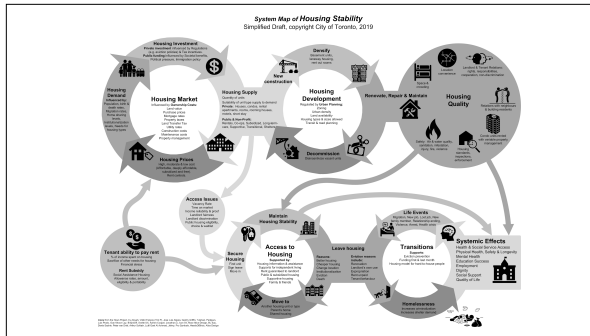


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<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/12/23/673444123/how-helping-patients-get-good-care-at-home-helps-rural-hospitals-survive>



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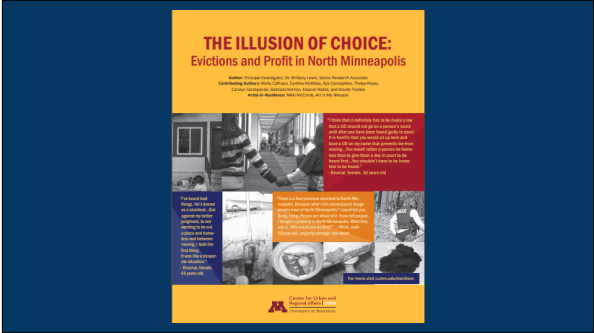
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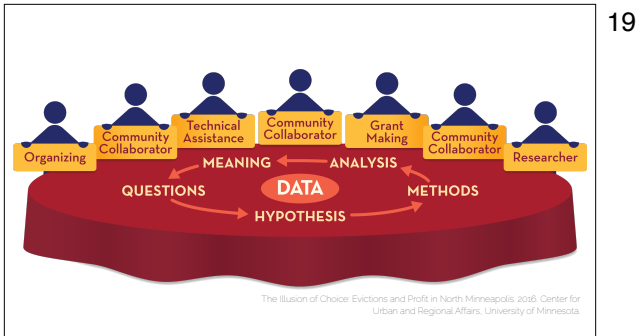
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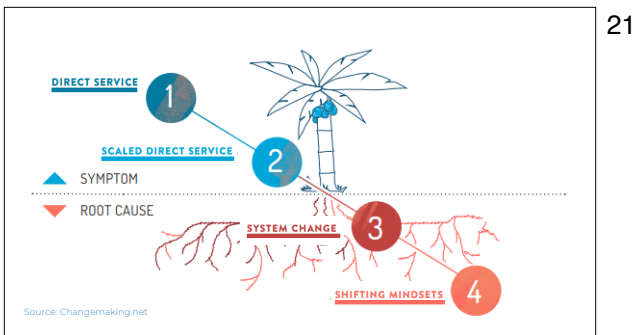
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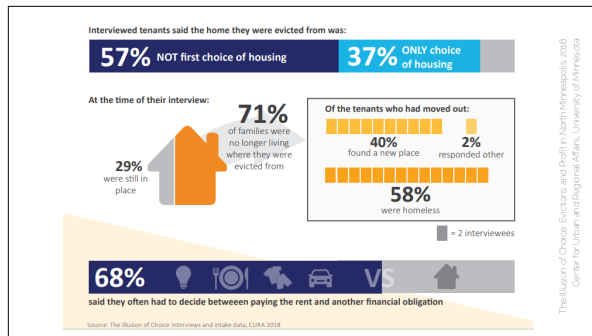
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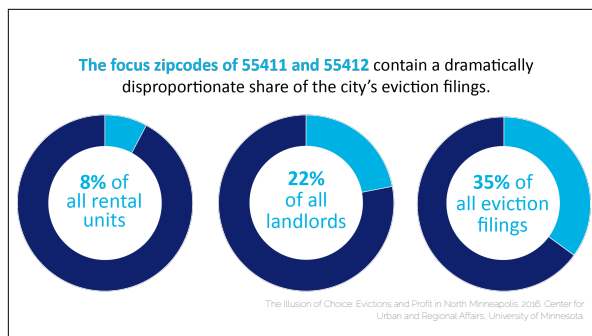
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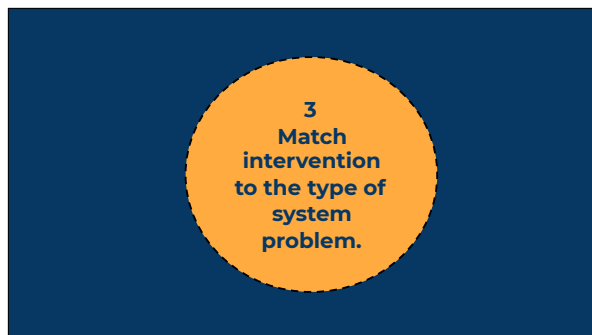




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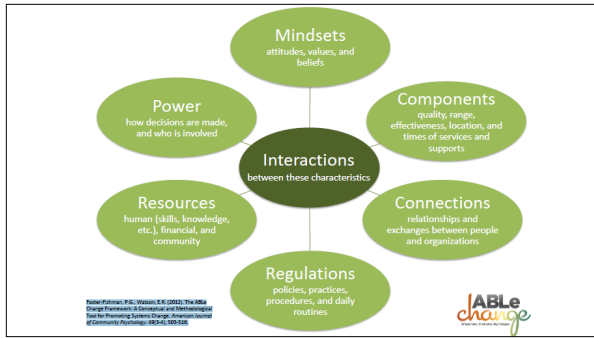
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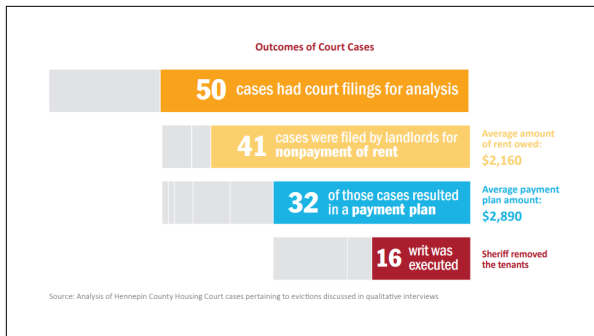
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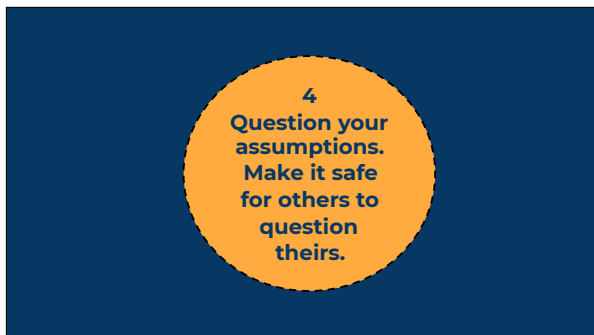
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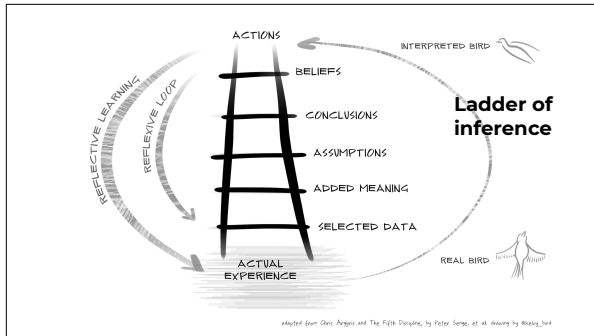
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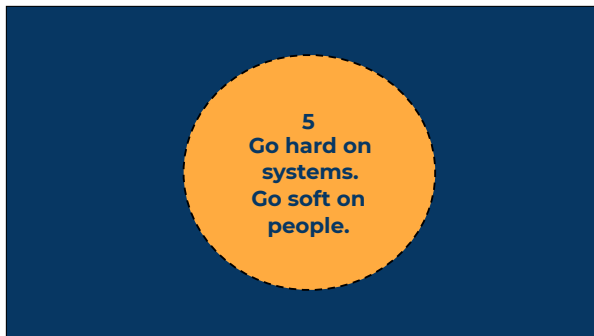
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Linear Thinkers	Systems Thinkers
Are concerned with assigning blame	Try to identify patterns
Try to control chaos to create order	Try to find patterns amid the chaos
Care only about the content of communication	Care about content but are more attentive to interactions and patterns of communication
Believe organizations are predictable and orderly	Believe organizations are unpredictable in a chaotic environment

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Linear Thinkers	Systems Thinkers
Break things into component pieces	Are concerned with the whole
Are concerned with content	Are concerned with process
Try to fix symptoms	Are concerned with the underlying dynamics

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Instead of . . .	Try . . .
Instead of blaming someone, ask . . .	"What are the influences on that person?"
Instead of saying, "I know the answer," say . . .	"I have another perspective on the issue."
Instead of thinking you know the answer . . .	Always be looking for evidence to confirm your theory, in addition to evidence to disconfirm it.
Instead of focusing on one item . . .	Look at all the variables that affect that item.

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Instead of . . .	Try . . .
Instead of looking at the content of what people say . . .	Look for the process of what they say. How are they saying it? What are they not saying? What are the common themes in the content?
Instead of focusing on negative behaviors . . .	Look at what is motivating these behaviors or if they are masking a deeper problem.
Instead of just looking at what individuals are doing . . .	Also look at the dynamics of the system—what forces are pushing individuals toward one thing or another?

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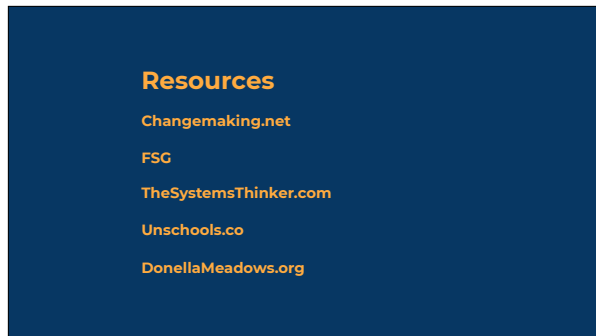
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