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# Thinking Like a Systems Thinker. Say What?



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# Intended outcomes of today's presentation

- Define system(s) and systems thinking.
- Identify opportunities to use systems thinking in our public health work.
- Differentiate between the various types of “systems work” identified in your work plans
  - Systems (organizations of focus for policy change)
  - Systems (internal county and tribal processes)



# Thoughts on Systems

- Buzz Groups (3 minutes)
  - Share your experiences
    - What does systems mean to your work?
    - What is challenging about working for system change?
    - What limitations do you experience when working for system change?



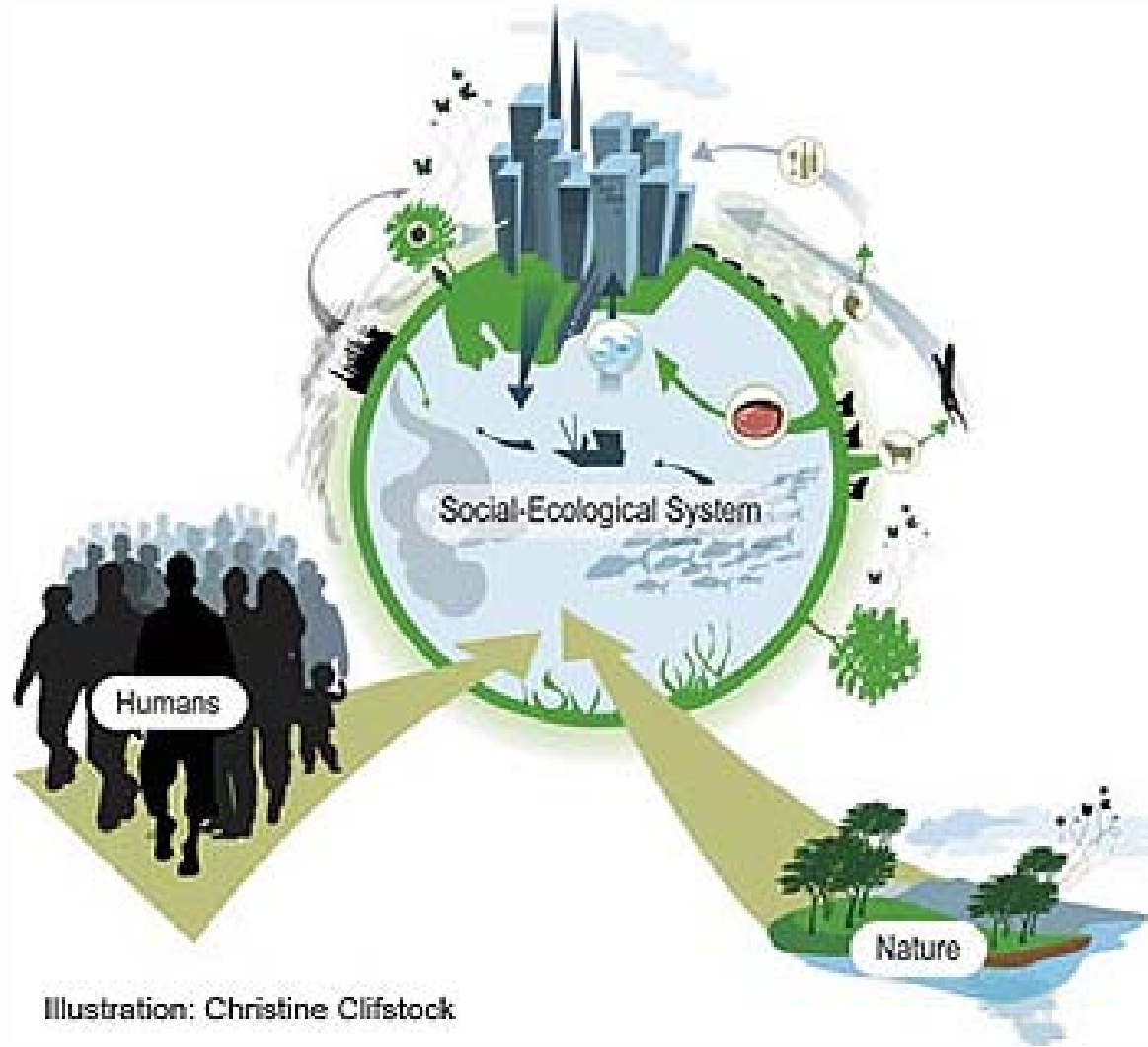


Illustration: Christine Clifstock

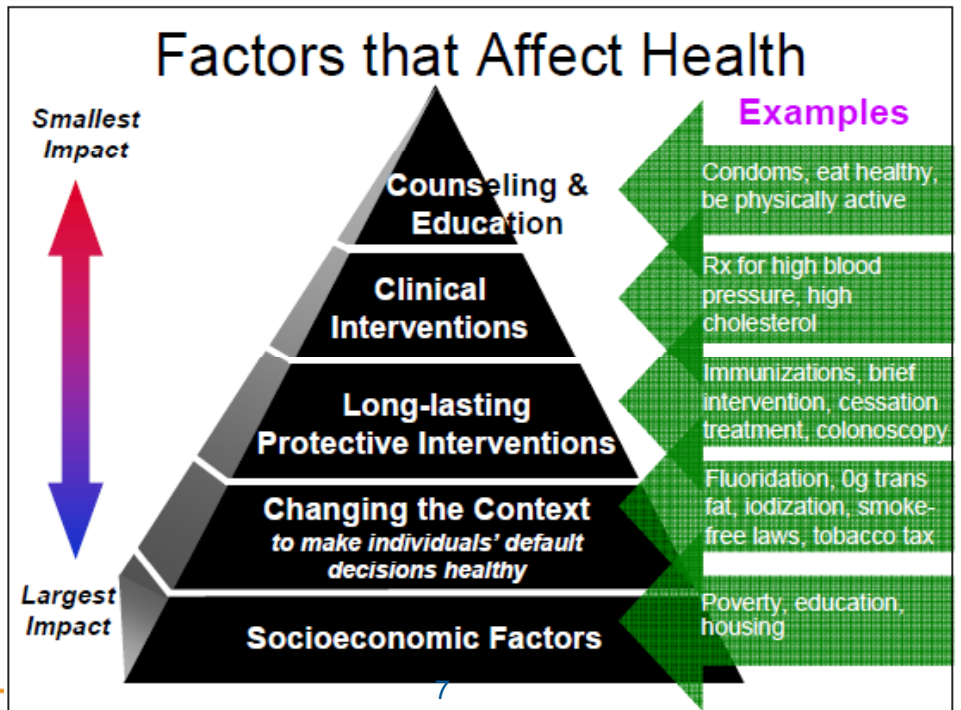
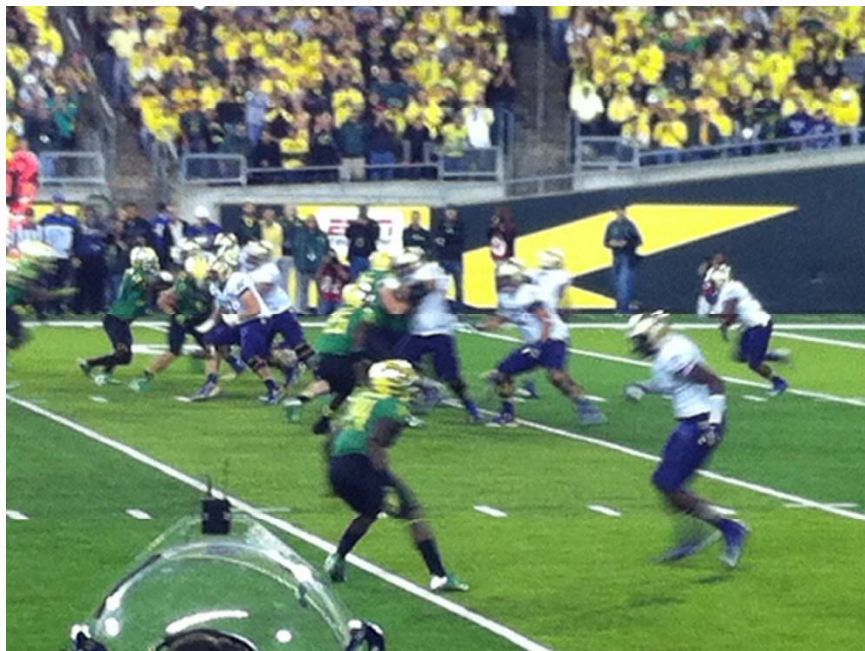




## Definition: System

- A regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole.
- An organized set of doctrines, ideas, or principles usually intended to explain the arrangement or working of a whole
- An organized or established procedure

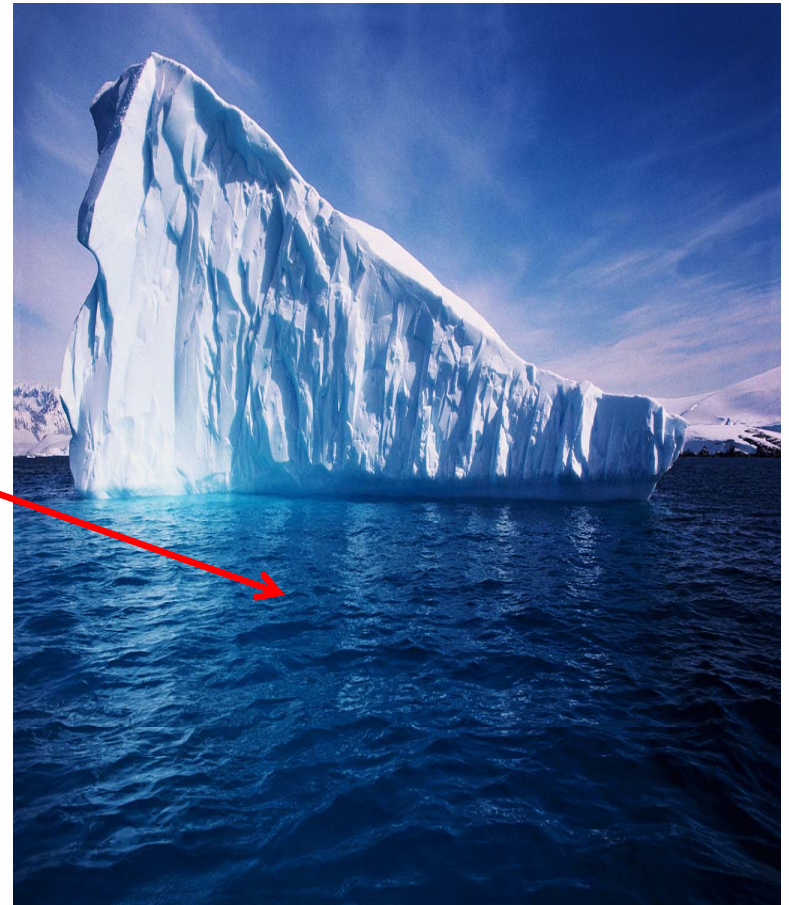




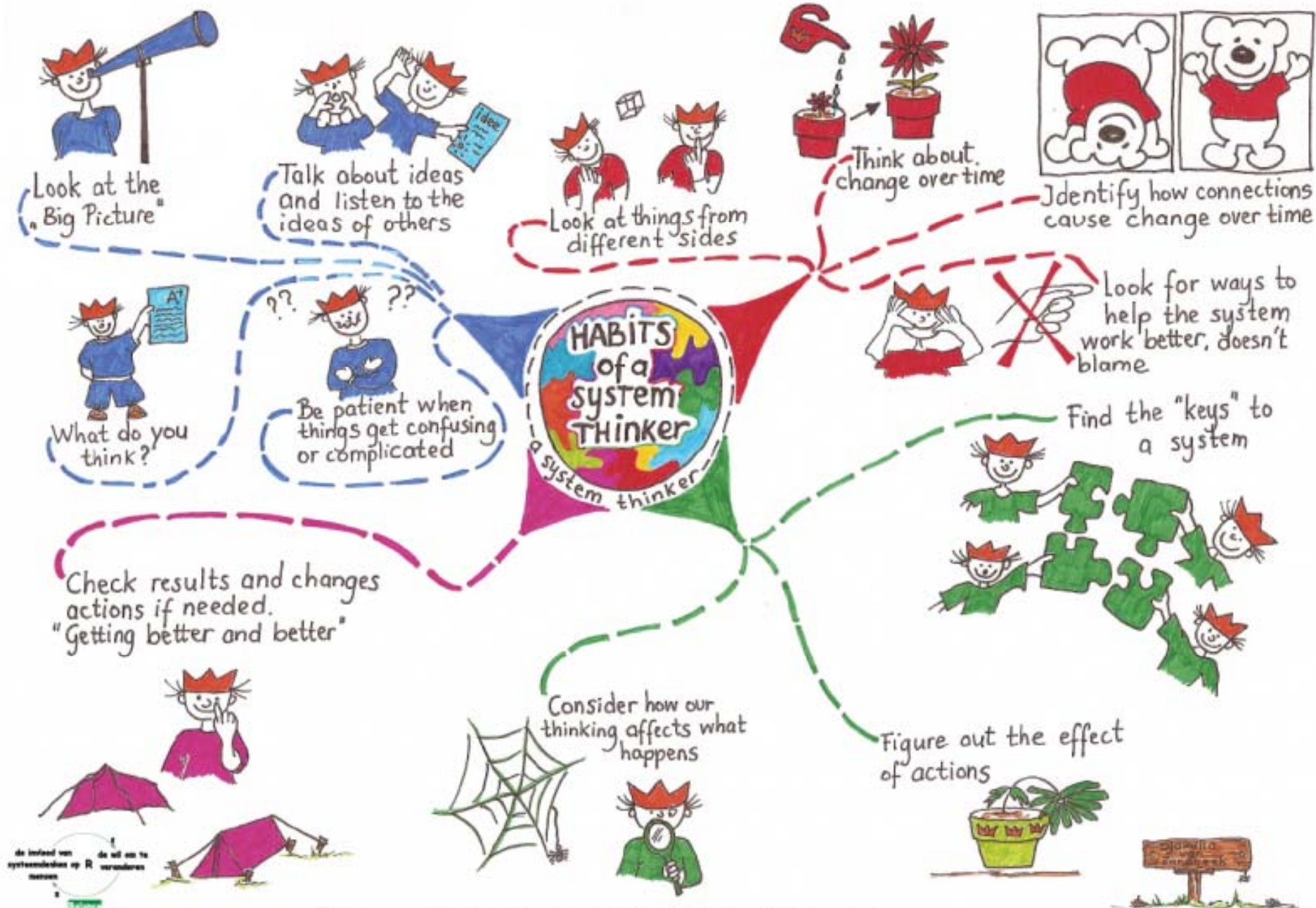
# Definition: Systems Thinking

**Systems thinking is not a panacea.**

- The World Health Organization defines systems thinking as looking at, analyzing or unveiling the underlining characteristics of a system.







# Successful use of Systems Thinking

- The more often people within a system, (the components) can talk to each other using a common framework of communication, sharing, and problem solving, the better chance the system has for improving outcomes.



# Thoughts on System Thinking for Policy

- Buzz Groups (3 minutes)
  - Share your experiences
    - What policy objective is your community prioritizing that could benefit from a systems thinking approach?
    - What policy objectives do you not think would benefit from a systems lens?





Oregon  
**Health**  
 Authority

# Organized Set of Ideas

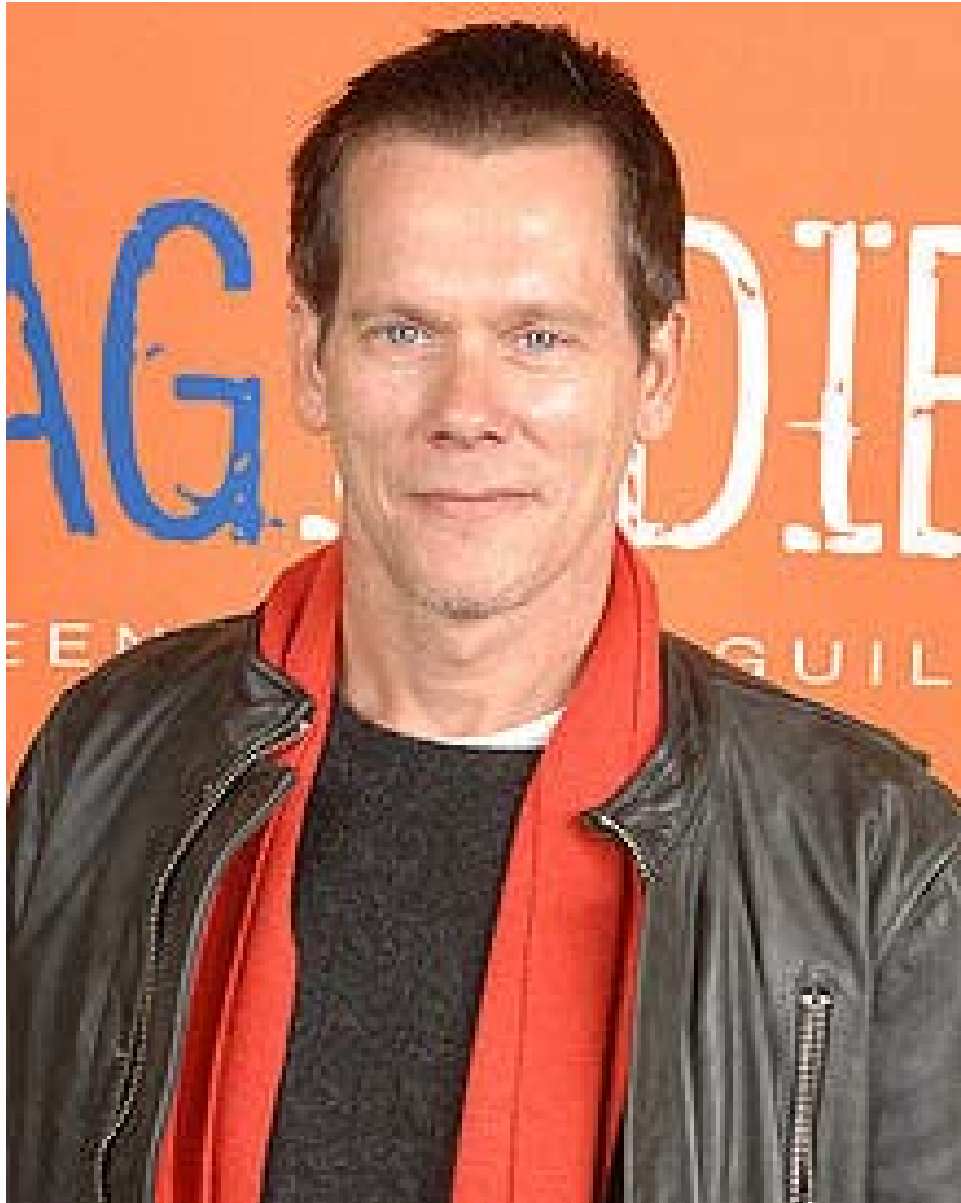
<b>M</b>	Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies.
<b>P</b>	Protect people from exposure to secondhand smoke.
<b>O</b>	Offer help to quit tobacco use.
<b>W</b>	Warn about the dangers of tobacco.
<b>E</b>	Enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship.
<b>R</b>	Raise the price of tobacco.



# System (Process) Sample Objectives

- [Grantee X] will have a system in place to discuss tobacco prevention and education and to prioritize local community needs for tobacco prevention with elected, appointed and perceived local leaders.
- [Grantee X] understands department approvals necessary to work with media and to seek earned media.
- [County or city] will have a system in place to prioritize local community-wide evidence-based policy and environmental change initiatives to reduce the number of tobacco-retail outlets, advertising and promotions.





# Where Do I fit?

## Your Personal Systems Map

Purpose of exercise:

- Identify people at work you interact with.
- Construct a visual way to look at yourself in your work system- you in relation to other people that make up your work world.
- Identify your role and why it is important to accomplishing the agency's mission.





# So What, Now What?

- We live in a world of systems.
- Using a systems thinking approach will be helpful in collaborating with internal and external partners to improve the places where we live, work, play and learn and support an optimal quality of life for people living in Oregon.



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