Applying Systems Change: Practice & Strategies

Friday, September 20, 2024

Before we start…

- Si necesita ayuda en Español, mándenos un correo a conversemos@vitalysthealth.org .

- Closed Captioning available.

- All lines muted upon entering the webinar.

- Please use the chat to ask questions throughout the session.

- Slides and more information at: https://vitalysthealth.org/partnering-with-vitalyst/.

Vitalyst
HEALTH FOUNDATION

Today's Presenters

Jennifer Splansky Juster
Executive Director
Collective Impact Forum, FSG
Pronouns: she/her/hers

Courtney W. Robertson
Director of Programs and Partnerships
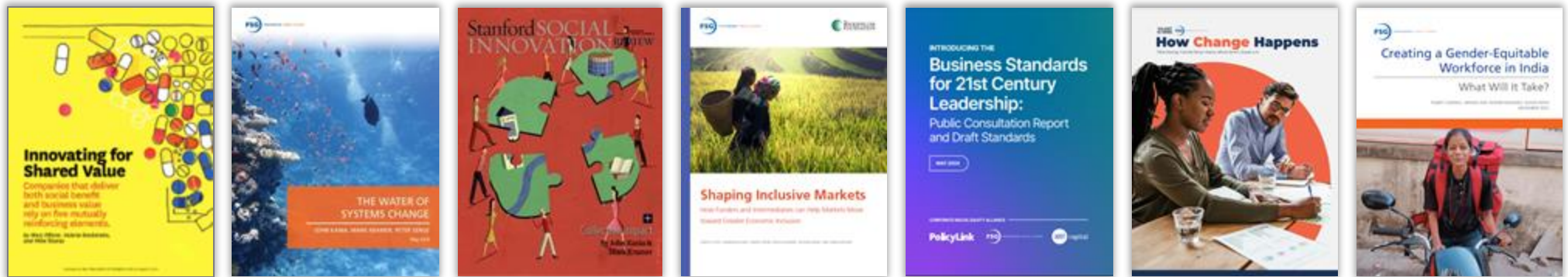Collective Impact Forum, FSG
Pronouns: He/Him/His

Applying a Systems Change Lens: Practice and Strategies

VITALYST HEALTH FOUNDATION
SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

FSG

FSG is a global social impact firm seeking to advance **health equity**, **economic mobility**, and **climate justice**. We work across sectors and across issues, guiding leaders to unlock transformation and create a more equitable world.

Our ideas and insights **– shared value, collective impact, equitable systems change, and inclusive markets** – continue to support changemakers across the globe.

Objectives for this session

- Deepen participants understanding of **systems thinking and systems change** as a tool for driving lasting and sustainable social change, and how it differs from programmatic work

- Explore the **central role of collaboration** to drive any systems change effort
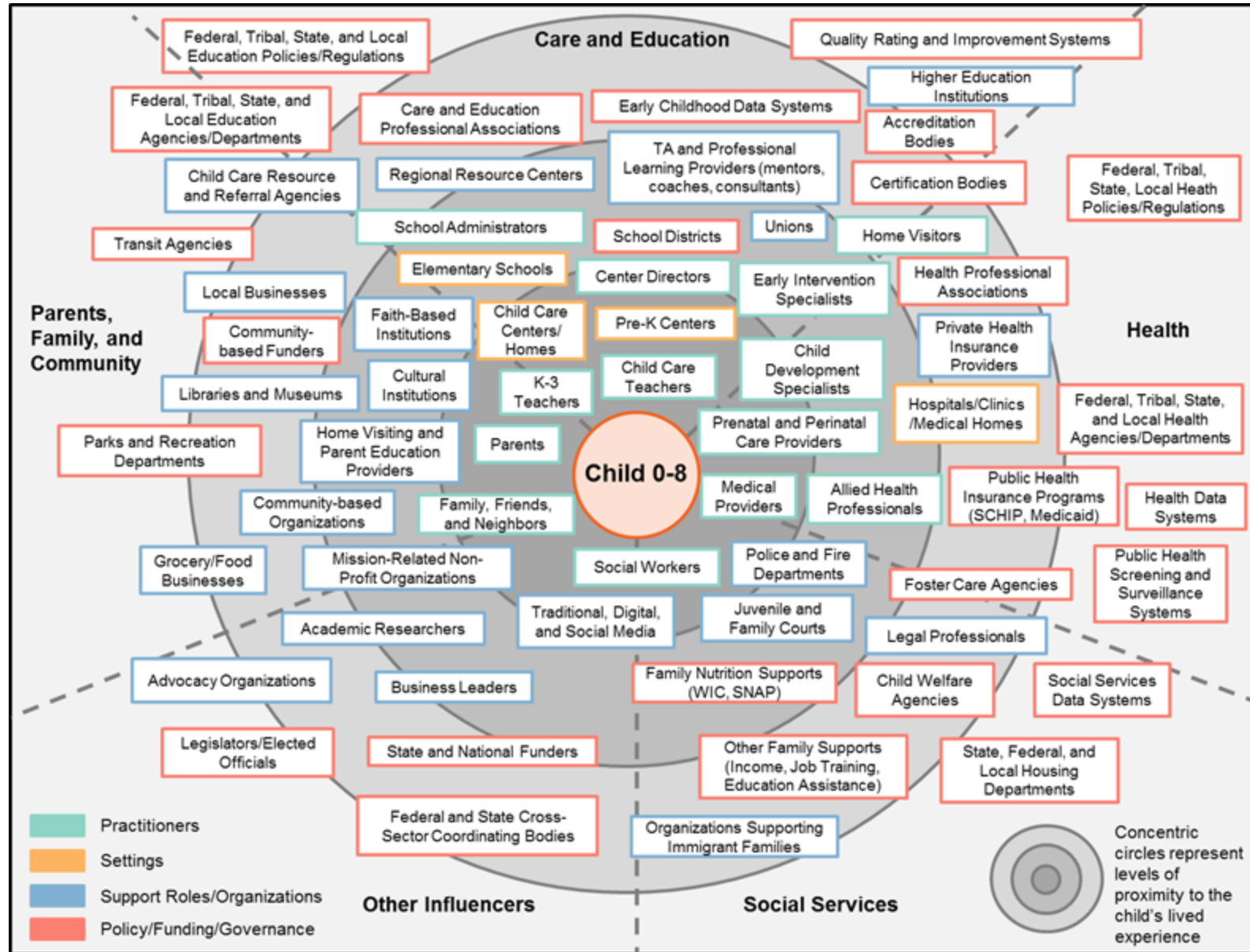
What is a system?

*A system is a set of **interconnected, interdependent and interacting parts** that form a complex, unified whole*

<u>More simply: A system is a set of parts working together to form a more complex whole</u>.

Source(s): *A Framework for Evaluating Systems Change Initiatives*, *Julia Coffman, 2007.*

Characteristics of a System

- A unified whole whose goals and results emerge from the interaction of its components (which could be people, organizations, ideas, resources, policies, etc.)

- Nonlinear and often counterintuitive behavior

- Dynamic and constantly evolving

- Decentralized control with results emerging from the bottom-up as well as the top down

Illustrative Systems Map

Care and Education

Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Education Policies/Regulations

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Education Agencies/Departments

Care and Education Professional Associations

Early Childhood Data Systems

Higher Education Institutions

Accreditation Bodies

Federal, Tribal, State, Local Heath Policies/Regulations

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Regional Resource Centers

TA and Professional Learning Providers (mentors, coaches, consultants)

Certification Bodies

Transit Agencies

School Administrators

School Districts

Unions

Home Visitors

Health Professional Associations

Elementary Schools

Center Directors

Early Intervention Specialists

Local Businesses

Faith-Based Institutions

Child Care Centers/ Homes

Pre-K Centers

Private Health Insurance Providers

Health

Community-based Funders

Child Care Teachers

Child Development Specialists

Libraries and Museums

Cultural Institutions

K-3 Teachers

Hospitals/Clinics /Medical Homes

Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Health Agencies/Departments

Parents, Family, and Community

Parks and Recreation Departments

Home Visiting and Parent Education Providers

Parents

Prenatal and Perinatal Care Providers

Child 0-8

Medical Providers

Allied Health Professionals

Public Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP, Medicaid)

Health Data Systems

Community-based Organizations

Family, Friends, and Neighbors

Public Health Screening and Surveillance Systems

Grocery/Food Businesses

Mission-Related Non-Profit Organizations

Social Workers

Police and Fire Departments

Foster Care Agencies

Academic Researchers

Traditional, Digital, and Social Media

Juvenile and Family Courts

Legal Professionals

Advocacy Organizations

Business Leaders

Family Nutrition Supports (WIC, SNAP)

Child Welfare Agencies

Social Services Data Systems

Legislators/Elected Officials

State and National Funders

Other Family Supports (Income, Job Training, Education Assistance)

State, Federal, and Local Housing Departments

Federal and State Cross-Sector Coordinating Bodies

Organizations Supporting Immigrant Families

Other Influencers

Social Services

Legend

- Practitioners
- Settings
- Support Roles/Organizations
- Policy/Funding/Governance

Concentric circles represent levels of proximity to the child's lived experience

Source(s): A Framework for Evaluating Systems Change Initiatives, Julia Coff Man, 2007.

Systems *Change*

Systems Change: "Shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place." - Social Innovation Generation in Canada

Systems change is an approach that influences root cause factors to create large-scale, long-term impacts on how these systems function and the outcomes they generate.

More simply: Systems change involves influencing how the parts of a system interact to alter the system's outcomes.

Systems Change Can Be Applied to Systems Impacting Every Element of a Healthy Community

Join at **https://www.menti.com/al3tieqgrn9i**

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Help & Feedback

To shift systems, **cross-sector leaders can influence** the **conditions for systems change**

Systems Change Conditions

Policy

Practices

Resource Flows

Structural Change *(explicit)*

Relationships & Connections

Power Dynamics

(*semi-explicit*)

Mental Models

Transformative Change *(implicit)*
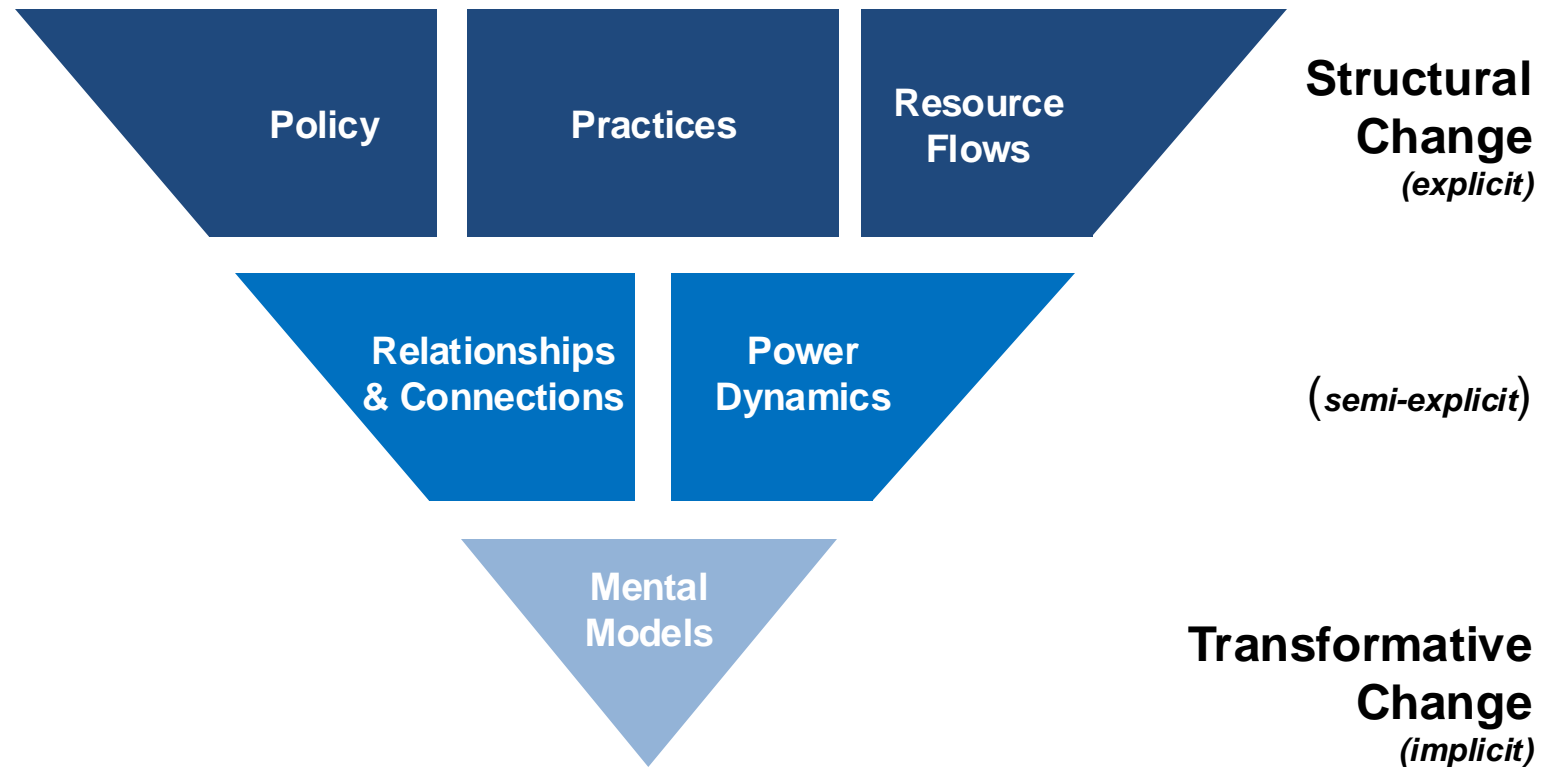
These conditions represent **leverage points** in the system, some of which are more explicit than others

STRUCTURAL CHANGE

explicit

RELATIONAL CHANGE

semi-explicit

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

implicit

Policies
Government rules, regulations and priorities that guide its and others' actions

Practices
Organizational and practitioner activities that reflect their values and priorities

Resource Flows
How money, people, knowledge and information are allocated and distributed

Relationships & Connections
Quality of connections and communication occurring between system players

Power Dynamics
Which individuals and organizations hold decision-making power, authority, influence

Mental Models
Deeply held beliefs and assumptions that influence one's actions

most explicit

most implicit

*Source(s): "The Water of Systems Change", FSG 2018*

Six Conditions of Systems Change
Framework in Action: Diagnosing the Problem

THE CHALLENGE

BIPOC students do not graduate high school college & career ready

DIAGNOSING STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS
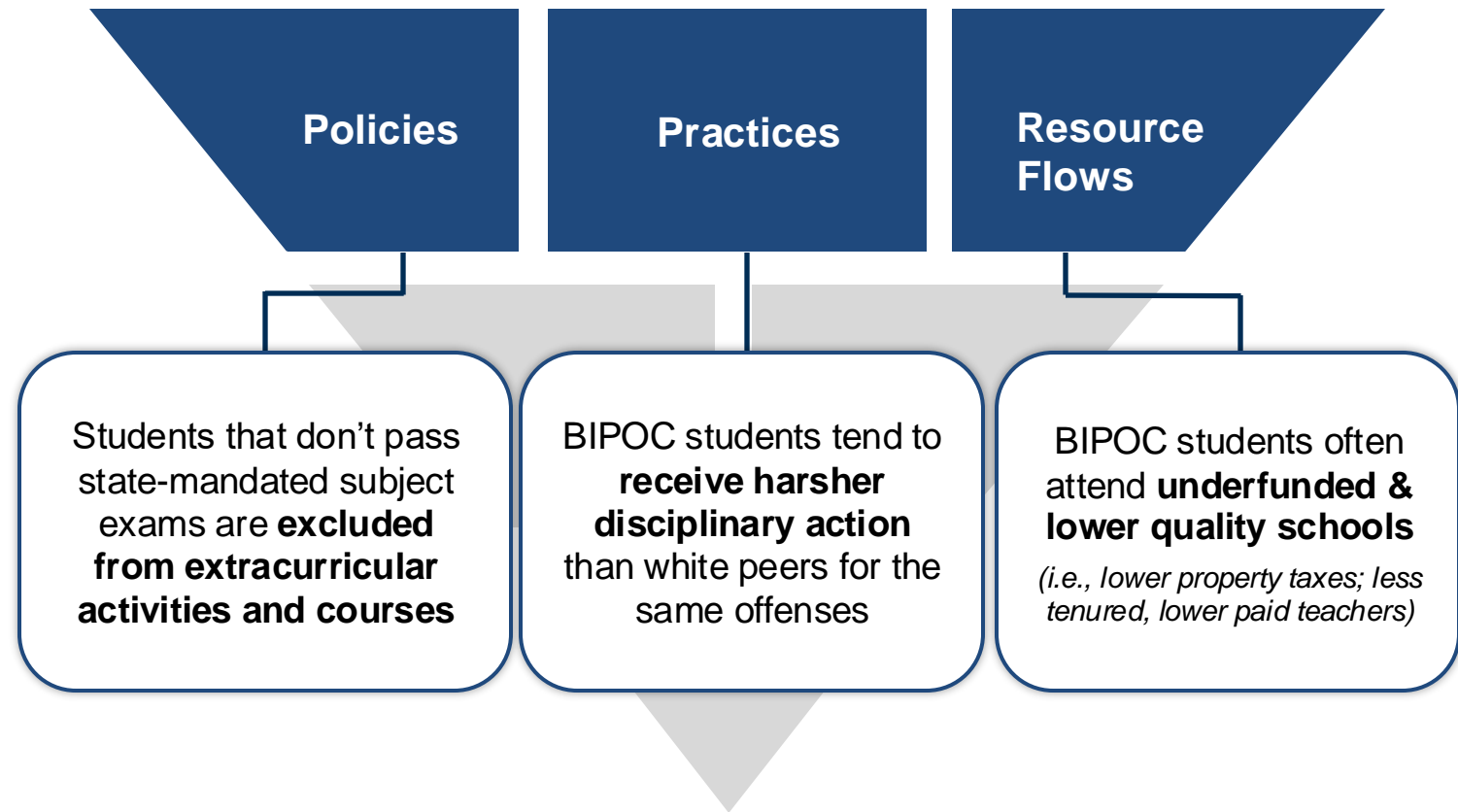
Policies

Practices

Resource Flows

Students that don't pass state-mandated subject exams are **excluded from extracurricular activities and courses**

BIPOC students tend to **receive harsher disciplinary action** than white peers for the same offenses

BIPOC students often attend **underfunded & lower quality schools**
(i.e., lower property taxes; less tenured, lower paid teachers)

Illustrative Only

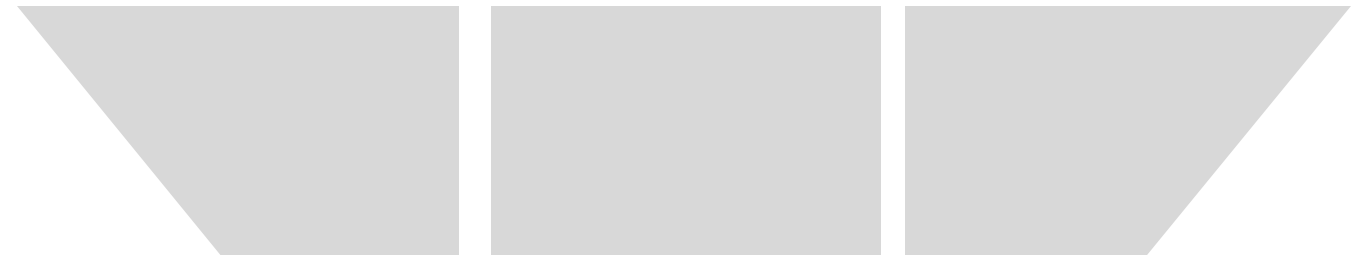Source: FSG, *The Water of Systems Change*, 2018

Six Conditions of Systems Change
Framework in Action: Developing Strategies

THE AMBITION

Students graduate high school college & career ready

STRATEGIES FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE
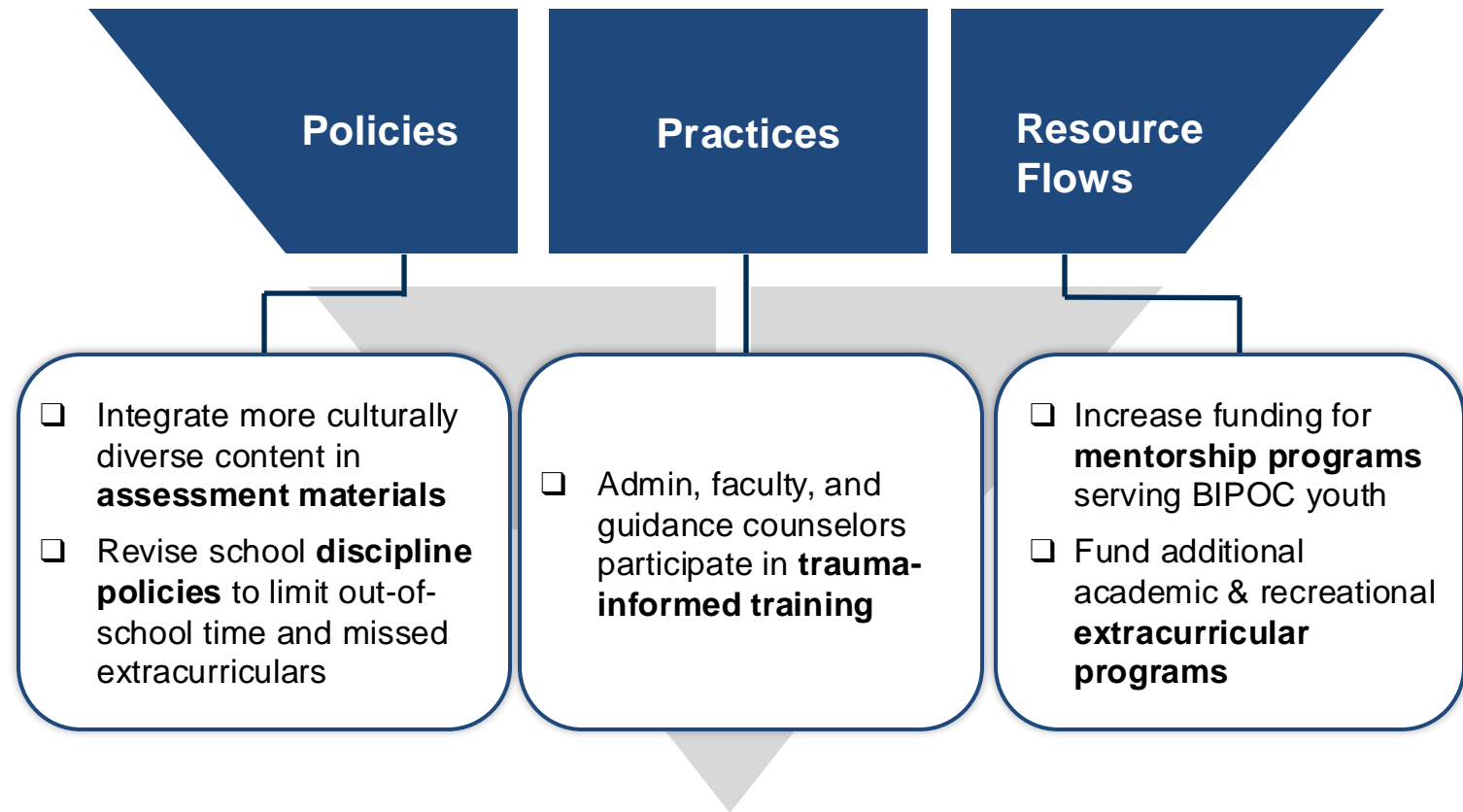
Policies

Practices

Resource Flows

- ❑ Integrate more culturally diverse content in **assessment materials**
- ❑ Revise school **discipline policies** to limit out-of-school time and missed extracurriculars

- ❑ Admin, faculty, and guidance counselors participate in **trauma-informed training**

- ❑ Increase funding for **mentorship programs** serving BIPOC youth
- ❑ Fund additional academic & recreational **extracurricular programs**

Illustrative Only

Source: FSG, *The Water of Systems Change*, 2018

Six Conditions of Systems Change
Framework in Action: Diagnosing the Problem

THE CHALLENGE

BIPOC students do not graduate high school college & career ready

DIAGNOSING RELATIONAL CONDITIONS
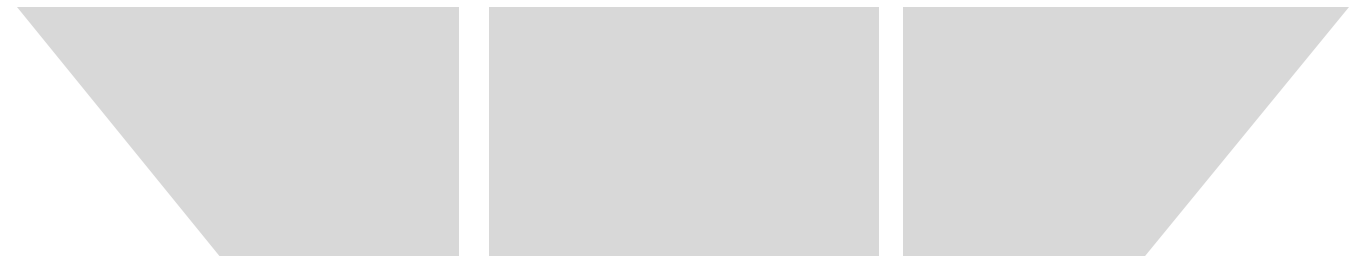
Relationships

Power Dynamics

College and career advisors lack capacity to engage every HS senior, let alone underclassmen

Schools have **few connections with potential employers**, making HS **internships rare**

Students and families are not engaged in decisions related to the child's school

Teachers, administrators and guidance counselors are not involved in determining HS graduation requirements

Illustrative Only

Source: FSG, The Water of Systems Change, 2018

Six Conditions of Systems Change
Framework in Action: Developing Strategies

THE AMBITION

Students graduate high school college & career ready

STRATEGIES FOR RELATIONAL CHANGE

Relationships

Power Dynamics

❑ Create **cooperative education programs at universities** to provide students with in-depth work experience and early connections to potential employers after graduation

❑ Invite and prepare students, parents, and business leaders to participate in **decision making bodies** and **advisory boards**

Illustrative Only

Source: FSG, *The Water of Systems Change*, 2018

Six Conditions of Systems Change
Framework in Action: Diagnosing the Problem

THE CHALLENGE

BIPOC students do not graduate high school college & career ready

DIAGNOSING MENTAL MODELS

BIPOC students and their families **feel unable to afford higher education**, and therefore do not plan on applying

BIPOC students and their families **do not feel represented** by their school's leadership, faculty, or curriculum and are therefore less engaged

Non-BIPOC **teachers often have negative mental models about BIPOC students'** capacity for achievement

Mental Models

Illustrative Only

Six Conditions of Systems Change
Framework in Action: Developing Strategies

THE AMBITION

Students graduate high school college & career ready

STRATEGIES FOR SHIFTING MINDSETS

- ❑ **Increase awareness of available financial support** for college tuition among students, families, and the collective community
- ❑ **Mandate implicit bias training** for principals, assistant principals, teachers, and guidance counselors

Mental Models

Illustrative Only

Source: FSG, *The Water of Systems Change*, 2018

Systems Change Is Different than Programmatic Work

Systems Change Efforts Often Include:

- A collaborative, unified effort whose bold goals and strategies are achieved by each partner playing its specific role

- A focus on addressing the root causes of social challenges, not just symptoms

- Inclusion of impacted communities and understanding of how current systems create unjust outcomes

- Shared leadership with community engagement and solutions at the core of the work

- Continuous improvement and learning in an ever-changing environment

Systems Change Efforts Do Not Include:

- Only addressing the "symptoms" of social challenges

- (e.g., subsidizing healthcare costs, distributing food boxes)

- Deliver programs through a single organization without coordinating with or influencing others in the system

- Only pursue "outputs" and incremental progress

Source: Understanding Systems Change: An Approach to Impact Outcomes in Arizona

Pop Quiz!

- Systems Change or Program Change?

  - A coalition collaborates to design and execute an awareness campaign to destigmatize depression for adolescents

  - A city partners with a mobile home provider to offer temporary, low barrier shelter for unhoused individuals

  - Prenatal service providers implement a one-stop-shop referral system to better coordinate services and supports for pregnant mothers

Common pitfalls associated with applying the systems change triangle

You Don't Need to Do It All

One actor is unlikely to meaningfully impact all six conditions; the triangle can help pinpoint persisting gaps to inform and advance new targeted action and/or strengthen the impact of existing activities

Don't Demonize the Top Row or Programmatic Work

Efforts focused on policies, practices, and resources flows (top row) help meet immediate needs in a community and are deeply important to continue supporting on the path to systems change

Remember that Systems Change Is Nonlinear

Change does not unfold linearly; the prioritization of efforts to shift systemic conditions should be informed by an external (opportunities/needs) and internal assessment (assets/capabilities) of the current reality

Always Look Around the Table

It is critically important to have a diverse group of stakeholders involved, especially as personal dimensions (e.g., positional authority, lived experience) impact one's ability to see certain aspects of the system

Collaboration is central to any systems change effort

Engaging in systems transformation requires **getting comfortable with different ways of working together:**

- Finding new ways to **align disparate views**

- Working at the **intersection of issues** to solve problems beyond one's own spheres of influence

- Adopting a **co-creation mindset** vs "driving" solutions

- Shift from static, pre-defined outcomes to **emergent approaches** to respond to evolving circumstances

- **Long-term orientation** and comfort with different measurement approaches

- Shifting from transactional approaches to **relationship-oriented** work based on trust

Collective impact principles are applicable across all social change collaboration efforts

WHAT IS COLLECTIVE IMPACT?

Collective impact is a network of community members, organizations, and institutions that advance equity by learning together, aligning, and integrating their actions to achieve population and systems-level change.

Key Principles of Practice:

1. Design and implement the initiative with a priority placed on equity

2. Center community members in the collaborative

3. Recruit and co-create with cross-sector partners

4. Use data to continuously learn, adapt, and improve

5. Cultivate leaders with unique system leadership skills

6. Focus on program *and* system strategies

7. Build a culture that fosters relationships, trust, and respect across participants

8. Customize for local context

Reflection: Applying Systems Thinking to Your Work

We will walk through the three steps outlined below to evaluate a social change issue relevant to your work

1

DEFINE YOUR AMBITIONS

Jot down a social problem or challenge your work aims to address (i.e., your problem of practice) and your aspirations for addressing that challenge.

2

DIAGNOSE THE PROBLEM

Across the six conditions of systems change, list known or suspected factors holding your defined problem in place.

Consider both internal and external factors.

3

EXPLORE STRATEGIES

Brainstorm strategies (new and ones you already use) that can shift the conditions you identified and unlock the potential for change.

Consider who needs to be involved in bringing your identified strategies to life.

Reflection Activity Worksheet

Systems Change Condition	What existing elements are reinforcing the current conditions and hindering our progress?	What strategies can help advance our systems change efforts? Who would need to be involved?
Policies		
Practices		
Resource Flows		
Relationships & Connections		
Power Dynamics		
Mental Models		

Quick Engagement

- For which of the six conditions is it easiest to think about strategies that could shift conditions and unlock the potential for change?

- For which of the six conditions is it most difficult to think about strategies that could shift conditions and unlock the potential for change?

Final Reflection

- **What's going on in the system** you seek to shift? What **systemic conditions** might be holding problems in place?

- **Who is connected in your system?** Where might **strengthening relationships** enhance your transformation effort?

- **Who are your collaborators?** How do you maintain a **shared vision** for change?

Resources

- Understanding Systems Change: An Approach to Impact Outcomes in Arizona

  - https://vitalysthealth.org/understanding-systems-change/

- Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System, Donella Meadows: A landmark article on systems change that goes deeper on the different conditions in systems and how they are related.

  - https://donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system

- Habits of a Systems Thinker, Waters Center for Systems Thinking: An illustrated guide of important systems thinking practices.

  - https://ttsfilestore.blob.core.windows.net/ttsfiles/habits-single-page-2020.pdf

- The Groundwater Approach, Racial Equity Institute: A tool that illustrates how structural racism shows up across systems.

  - https://racialequityinstitute.org/groundwater-approach

- The Relational Work of Systems Change, Katherine Milligan, Juanita Zerda & John Kania: A recent article by one of the authors of the Water of Systems Change article emphasizing the role of relationships in systems change.

  - https://ssir.org/articles/entry/the_relational_work_of_systems_change

FSG: *For Social Good*

Stay Connected and Learn More

The Water of Systems Change

White Paper

Read more about FSG's actionable model for social sector institutions interested in creating systems change

Action Learning Exercise

Conduct this activity to explore how you and your organization can pursue large-scale change in a disciplined and holistic manner
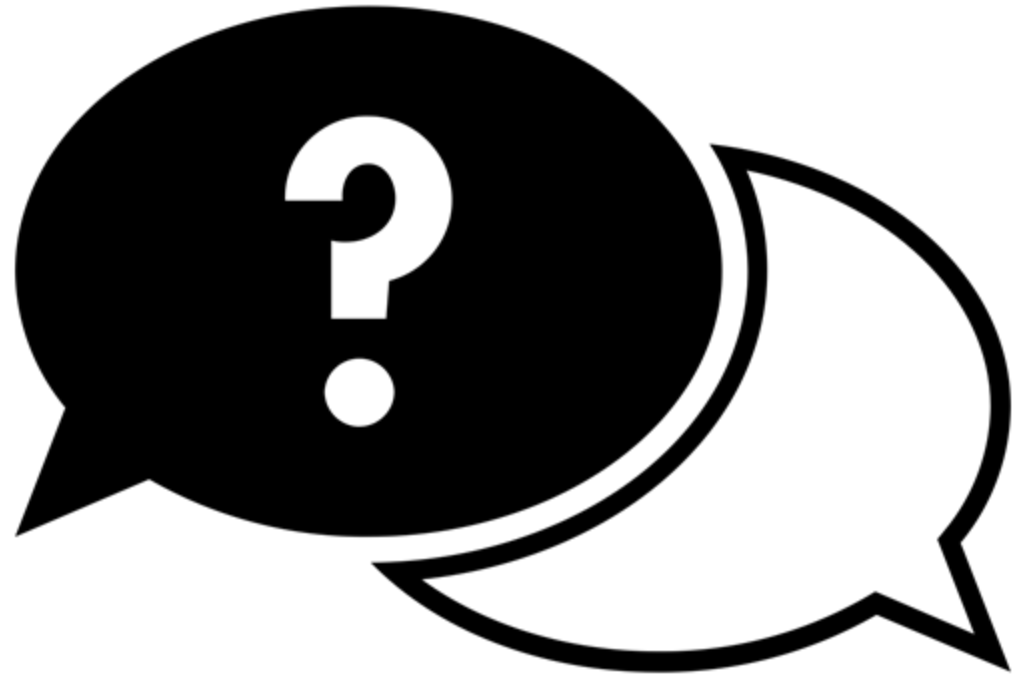
Systems Thinking Toolkit

Explore our toolkit for putting systems thinking into practice in your organization

Collective Impact Forum

Connect with CIF for resources, learning events, and coaching that can help advance your collective impact work

David Martinez III – Systems Change in Action

Welcome to
Jaclyn Pederson, CEO of Feeding Matters

feeding matters

FEEDING MATTERS' SYSTEMS CHANGE CASE STUDY

Pediatric Feeding Disorder: From Advocacy to Identity

Jaclyn Pederson, MHI
CEO of Feeding Matters

INTRODUCTION

WHO IS FEEDING MATTERS?

Feeding Matters is dedicated to supporting families and children affected by Pediatric Feeding Disorder (PFD). With Vitalyst's generous funding, we were able to push systemic change by creating PFD as an identity and securing a diagnosis code.

THIS IS OUR 'WHY'

STRUCTURAL CHANGE: ICD-10 CODE FOR PEDIATRIC FEEDING DISORDER

▶ **IDENTIFYING ROOT CAUSE**
The path to a code

▶ **STRUCTURAL CHANGE**
Policies, practices, resource flow

▶ **BARRIERS**
The challenges we experienced

PEDIATRIC FEEDING DISORDER (PFD)

Impaired oral intake that is not age-appropriate and is associated with medical, nutritional, feeding skill, and/or psychosocial dysfunction

▶ **PREVALENCE**

1 in 37 children under the age of 5

▶ **ECONOMIC TOLL**

$1,200 per month on PFD-related expenses

▶ **IMPACT**

When children are unable to eat they cannot thrive cognitively, physically, or emotionally

RELATIONAL CHANGE: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

▶ **RELATIONSHIPS & CONNECTIONS**
Did not go it alone

▶ **POWER DYNAMICS**
Awareness is key

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE: PFD AS A RECOGNIZED IDENTITY

▶ **RESEARCH**
The medical community embracing PFD

▶ **GENERAL PUBLIC**
Inclusive of PFD

▶ **BARRIERS**
To transformational change

History of ARFID and PFD

2019, Multi-Disciplinary Consensus Conference for "Feeding Problems" published

2021, PFD integrated as a new diagnostic code in the US ICD

Literature Descriptions: "food refusal", "dysphagia", "inappropriate mealtime behaviors", "selective intake"

"Infantile Anorexia"

1945

1990s

2000s

2006: Feeding Matters

2010s

Bring fields together. Clarification on diagnostic, assessment, and management practices

"Organic/Non-Organic Failure to Thrive"

Literature first describes infants struggling to eat: Maternal Deprivation as reason for growth faltering

Diagnostic Attempts: "Feeding Problems" (R63.3) in ICD

Diagnostic Attempts: "Feeding Disorder of Infancy and Early Childhood" in DSM-IV

2013, DSM Expands Feeding Disorder of Infancy and Early Childhood to Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)

ARFID awareness takes off with multi-million dollar funding towards mental health research and popular social campaigns

Estrem et al, 2023 (Chapter 10, Pediatric Psychogastroenterology Handbook)
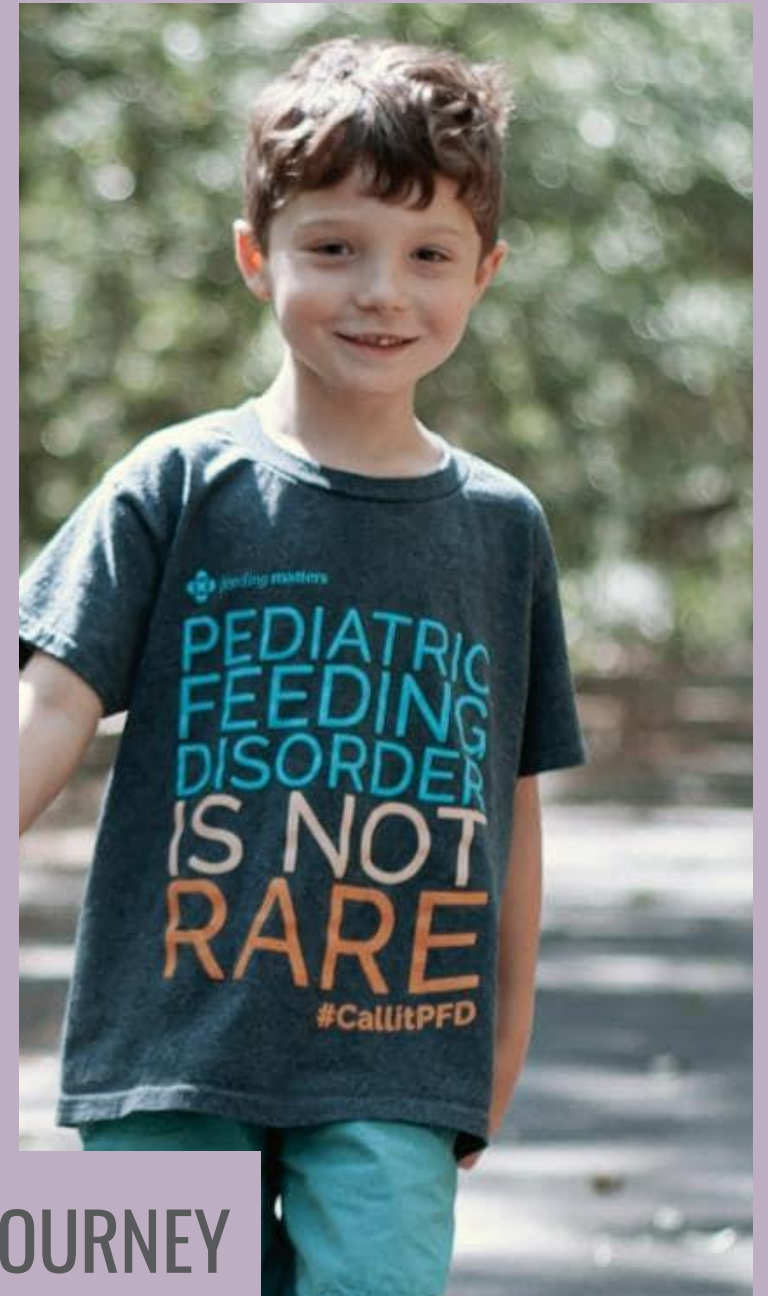
PFD ⟲ ARFID

2023 CONSENSUS MEETING

- We can't change what exists, but we can provide clarity

- Both fields need to be working together

2024 CONSENSUS MEETING

- We are doing similar types of treatments

- Main difference is in age and cognitive status of a patient

THE WORK CONTINUES

FUTURE VISION: CONTINUING THE JOURNEY

feeding matters

THANK YOU

Jaclyn Pederson, CEO
jpederson@feedingmatters.org

SUPPORT THROUGH RESPONSIVE GRANTS

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

SPARK

SYSTEMS CHANGE

DISCOVERY

THE DISCOVERY PROCESS WAS CREATED TO HELP CONNECT PARTNERS WITH APPROPRIATE SUPPORT.

Vitalyst Systems Change Grants

Vitalyst's Systems Change Grants support coalition building to plan & implement their desired systems change.

- **Technical Assistance Grants**:
  - Up to 1 year; up to $20,000
  - Ongoing review & awards
- **Spark Grants**:
  - 1 year; $25,000
  - Ongoing review, Fall deadline (10/11) & Spring deadline (5/9)
- **Systems Change Grants**:
  - 3 years; $175,000
  - **Information Session**: 9/25 from 1-2pm
  - **Submission Portal Opens**: 10/1
  - **Submissions Due**: 11/15

Vitalyst
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