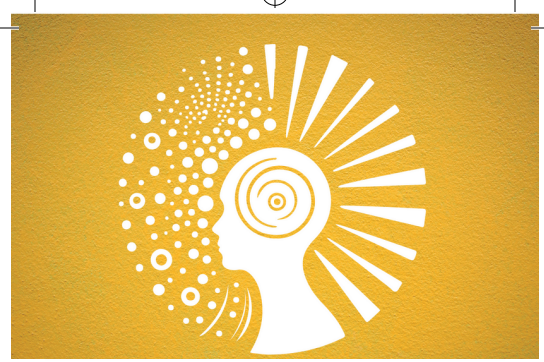




Seeks to Understand THE BIG PICTURE

A Systems Thinker focuses on the forest as well as the details of any one tree.



Makes Meaningful Connections

Within and Between Systems

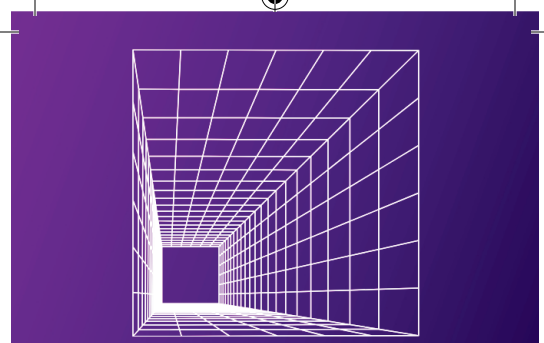
A Systems Thinker sees how concepts, facts and ideas link together, which can lend to new learning, discoveries and innovations.



Recognizes a System's Structure

Generates Its Behavior

A Systems Thinker focuses on system structure and avoids blaming when things go wrong.



Changes Perspective

To Increase Understanding

A Systems Thinker increases understanding by changing the way they view aspects of the system.

Questions to Ask

What are the relationships among the parts of the system and how do they affect the behavior of the system?

How can recognizing the many aspects of a system create a better understanding of the system as a whole?

How does understanding of one system transfer to understanding of another system?



Adapted From Waters Center For Systems Thinking.

Questions to Ask

How can I maintain balance between the big picture and important details?

What time frame should be considered as I view the system?

Am I keeping my focus on areas of influence, rather than on areas of concern that I cannot influence?



Adapted From Waters Center For Systems Thinking.

Questions to Ask

Am I open to other's points of view?

How do different points of view influence the way I understand the system?

Who should I approach to help me gain new perspectives on an issue?

As I learn about new perspectives, am I willing to change my mind?



Adapted From Waters Center For Systems Thinking.

Questions to Ask

How do parts affect one another?

How does the organization and interaction of the parts create the behavior that emerges?

When things go wrong, how can I focus on internal causes rather than dwell on external blame?



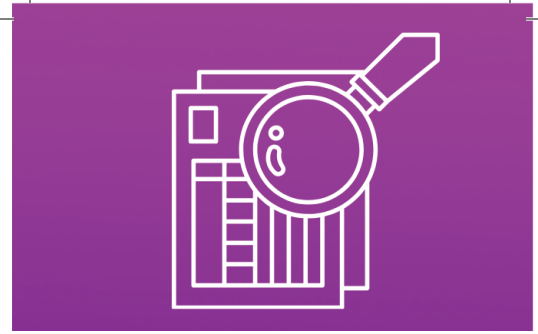
Adapted From Waters Center For Systems Thinking.



Considers Consequences

Short-Term, Long-Term, And
Unintended Actions

A Systems Thinker looks ahead and anticipates not only the immediate results of actions but also the effects down the road.



Surfaces and Tests

Assumptions

A Systems Thinker actively tests theories and surfaces assumptions, perhaps with others, in order to improve performance.



Considers an Issue Fully

Resists the Urge To Come to a Quick
Conclusion

A Systems Thinker takes the necessary time to understand the dynamics of a system before taking action.



Consider Mental Models

How They Affect Current Reality and
The Future

A Systems Thinker is aware of how beliefs and attitudes influence the way a system behaves.

Questions to Ask

How do my past experiences influence the development of my theories and assumptions?

How well does my theory or model match or differ from other views of the system?

When considering a possible action, do I and those I work with ask "What if" questions?



Adapted From Waters Center For Systems Thinking.

Questions to Ask

What are the unintended consequences of the proposed action and what trade-offs should we consider?

What are possible long and short-term consequences of the proposed actions?

Are we willing to accept short-term pain for long-term gain?



Adapted From Waters Center For Systems Thinking.

Questions to Ask

How are the current mental models (i.e. attitudes, beliefs) advancing or hindering our efforts to achieve desired results?

How am I helping others see the influence that mental models have on our decision making?

How could my own mental models be barriers to what I am trying to achieve?



Adapted From Waters Center For Systems Thinking.

Questions to Ask

How much time do we need to allow for consideration of this issue?

How can we manage the tension that exists when issues are not resolved immediately?

How can I help others be patient while living with unresolved issues?



Adapted From Waters Center For Systems Thinking.