The messy business of Systems Change

Judy Harper, Community Partners, September 5, 2018
What’s Water?

...or why do government policies, societal norms and goals, market forces, incentives, power imbalances, knowledge gaps, embedded social narratives, etc., matter?!
Why should we care?

Address a Complex Problem

Recognize Limits of Current Strategies

Consider New Directions
Six Conditions of Systems Change

- Policies
- Practices
- Resource Flows
- Relationships & Connections
- Power Dynamics
- Mental Models

- **Structural Change** (explicit)
- (semi-explicit)
- **Transformative Change** (implicit)
FIGURE 1. SHIFTING THE CONDITIONS THAT HOLD THE PROBLEM IN PLACE

Six Conditions of Systems Change

- Policies
- Practices
- Resource Flows
- Relationships & Connections
- Power Dynamics
- Mental Models

Structural Change
(explicit)

Transformative Change
(implicit)

(Transformative Change
(semi-explicit)
Building Capacity to See the Water

Deep commitment, mentoring, and never-ending practice
Let's discuss.....

- How are the systems change conditions undermining our efforts to create truly healthy communities?

- What are some new strategies you might consider to address these conditions?

- Who are some of the new partners that should be involved to address the desired change?
The Waters of Systems Change: Action Learning Exercise

Try this in your community with key EXTERNAL and INTERNAL stakeholders!

• Schedule 3 – 4 hours
• Conduct EXTERNAL and INTERNAL assessments
• Consider “What to do next?”
“Real and equitable progress requires exceptional attention to the detailed and often mundane work of noticing what is invisible to many.”
THANK YOU