

# Systems Thinking

## Assessment and Resources

### for TPP Program Staff



All Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) program staff are encouraged to incorporate systems thinking into their daily work. Complete this assessment to learn how accustomed you are to systems thinking. Then reference the related resources and work with your TPP team to build upon your systems thinking knowledge and daily practices.

#### Instructions for completing this systems thinking assessment

Seventeen essential systems thinking practices—ordered from simple to complex—are in the left-hand column with scaled responses to the question, “How often do I...” to the right. This assessment will give you an opportunity to reflect on how you approach your work and on the beliefs and values that may (or may not) shape your work to be oriented around systems thinking.

Consider your day-to-day activities in your TPP program work when filling out this assessment. Make a check mark in the appropriate column next to each practice throughout. **There are no right or wrong answers.**

For any systems thinking practices that you don’t implement often, check out the related resource in the right-hand column or discuss opportunities to strengthen those practices with your TPP program director. Note that some resources relate to multiple practices and therefore appear multiple times.

SYSTEMS THINKING PRACTICES					
How often do I...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Related Resource
Consider both short-and long-term consequences of my actions					<a href="#">System Support Mapping</a>
Look at multiple perspectives of an issue or see other points of view					<a href="#">Cause and Effect (Fishbone Diagram)</a>
Look at the “big picture”					<a href="#">Appreciative Inquiry</a>
Think recurring patterns are more important than any one specific event					<a href="#">Appreciative Inquiry</a>
Look for trends over time					<a href="#">Scenario Planning Tool</a>
Feel comfortable with ambiguity					<a href="#">Scenario Planning Tool</a>
Check results and change actions if needed					<a href="#">Plan Do Study Act Worksheet</a>
Look for interconnected issues					<a href="#">System Support Mapping</a>

How often do I...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Related Resource
Think small changes can produce important results					<a href="#">Improvement Boards</a>
Consider the impacts of accumulations (little things that build up) over time					<a href="#">System Support Mapping</a>
Feel comfortable with questioning my deep assumptions					<a href="#">Improvement Boards</a>
Feel aware of personal boundaries					<a href="#">System Support Mapping</a>
Think critically about correlation, not just causation					<a href="#">Cause and Effect (Fishbone Diagram)</a>
Feel cautious of adopting a win/lose attitude					<a href="#">Appreciative Inquiry</a>
Consider unintended consequences					<a href="#">Scenario Planning Tool</a>
See myself as part of the system under study					<a href="#">System Support Mapping</a>
Recognize that a system's structure drives its behavior					<a href="#">Appreciative Inquiry</a>

Thank you for completing this assessment. Confirm with your TPP leader where to submit it.

## RESOURCES

Linder, N. & Frakes, J. (2018). *A New Path to Understanding Systems Thinking*. The Systems Thinker. <https://thesystemsthinker.com/%EF%BB%B-Fa-new-path-to-understanding-systems-thinking/>

Sweeney L. (n.d.) *Thinking About Systems: 12 Habits of Mind*. <https://www.lindaboothsweeney.net/index.php/thinking/habits/habits.html>

Waters Center for Systems Thinking. (2021). *What is ST: Habits of a Systems Thinker*. <https://waterscenterst.org/systems-thinking-tools-and-strategies/habits-of-a-systems-thinker/>

Richmond, B. (2000). *The "Thinking" in Systems Thinking: Seven Essential Skills (Toolbox Reprint Series)*. Pegasus Communications.

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