

## Example Questions: Habits of Systems Thinker ©2017 Waters Foundation

<b>Big Picture</b>	How can I maintain balance between the big picture and important details? Am I keeping my focus on areas of influence, rather than on areas of concern that I cannot influence?
<b>Change Over Time</b>	How have the elements changed over time? What patterns or trends have emerged over time?
<b>System Structure</b>	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?
<b>Interdependencies</b>	Where does circular causality/feedback emerge? Is one feedback loop more influential over time than another? If yes, how?
<b>Connections</b>	What are the relationships among pieces of the system and how do they affect understanding of the whole? How does understanding of one system transfer to understanding of another system?
<b>Changes Perspectives</b>	How do different points of view influence the way I understand the system? As I learn about new perspectives, am I willing to change my mind?
<b>Assumptions</b>	How do my past experiences influence the development of my theories and assumptions? When considering a possible action, do I and those I work with ask 'What if' questions?
<b>Considers Issue Fully</b>	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 problems?
<b>Mental Models</b>	How are the current mental models hindering our efforts in this area? How am I helping others see the influence that mental models have on our decision-making?
<b>Leverage</b>	Where might a small change have a long-lasting, desired effect? How can we use what we know about the system to identify possible leverage actions?
<b>Consequences</b>	Are there unintended consequences that could lead to new actions? Are we willing to accept short-term pain for long-term gain?
<b>Accumulations</b>	What elements in a system can I see, feel, count or measure as amounts that change over time? How does an accumulation impact other elements in a system?
<b>Time Delays</b>	If we make a change to the system, how long before we see the results that we desire? How can we identify the role of time delays in the effects we expect to see?
<b>Successive Approximation</b>	What indicators will we expect to see as we look for progress? Have we scheduled time to pause, assess the effects of our current plan and take necessary action?