



 **TAMARACK**
INSTITUTE

**COMMUNITY CHANGE
FESTIVAL**

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**Achieving Systems Change
Advanced Session 1
Monday, September 30
3:00 – 4:30 pm**

1. Be introduced to different approaches to systems level change
2. Share the opportunities and dilemmas in shifting systems
3. Engage in eco-system mapping



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Our Agenda

- Making Connections
 - Why is it important that I am here?
- What do we mean by Systems Change?
- Models and Approaches
- Eco-System Mapping and Uncovering Opportunities
- Looking Forward



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Defining Systems

'A system is a configuration of interaction, interdependent parts that are connected through a web of relationships, forming a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.'

'Systems are overlapping, nested, and networked; they have subsystems and operate within broader systems.'

'A system is an interconnected and interdependent series of entities, where decisions and actions in one entity are consequential to other neighbouring entities.'

'A system is a set of things—people, cells, molecules or whatever—interconnected in such a way that they produce their own patterns of behaviour over time.'



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Systemic or Complex Problems

Examples of systemic problems include, for example:

- poor life chances for children in care;
- very high re-offending rates for female prisoners with substance misuse problems;
- high rates of homelessness amongst veterans.

These problems involve individuals whose capabilities, beliefs and attitudes may play a part in the difficulties they experience. However—and more importantly—their problems are also a function of how institutions behave, of policy decisions, of the way markets operate, and even of public attitudes and cultural norms.



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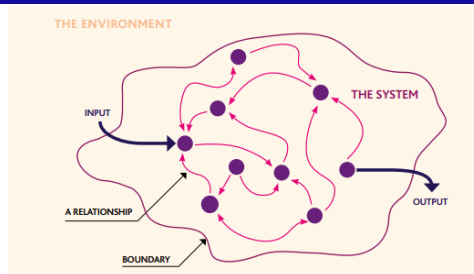
Complex Problems

Complex problems are difficult to frame	The cause and effect relationships are unclear
There are diverse stakeholders	Each experience is unique
The characteristics and dynamics of the issue evolve	There is no obvious right or wrong set of solutions
There is no single measure of success	The community is also evolving and changing



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System Characteristics




Systems contain multiple components both tangible and intangible. They include, people, resources and services, as well as relationships, values, and perceptions.

Systems exist in an environment, have boundaries, exhibit behaviours, and are made up of both interdependent and connected parts, causes and effects.

Social systems are often complex and involve intractable, or 'wicked', problems.



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Draw your System

What are the tangible and intangible components?



- People - Relationships
- Resources - Values
- Services - Perceptions


What are the boundaries and behaviours of your system?



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Systems Change Perspectives

<p>PRACTITIONERS</p> <p>PEOPLE DELIVERING SERVICES Social workers, prison officers, local politicians etc</p>	<p>ADVOCATES</p> <p>CHAMPIONS OF CHANGE Consultants, think tanks, sector leaders, spokespeople, commentators etc</p>	<p> GROUNDED IN PRACTICE</p>   <p> GROUNDED IN THEORY</p>
<p>OPERATIONAL RESEARCHERS</p> <p>SYSTEMS THEORISTS 'Hard': systems are real-world entities 'Soft': systems are intangible social constructs</p>	<p>SERVICE REFORMERS</p> <p>PRACTICAL CHANGE-AGENTS Focus on the needs and experiences of end-users</p>	
<p>LEARNERS</p> <p>CHAMPIONS OF FLEXIBILITY & RESPONSIVENESS Systems, and the people in them, must learn and adapt to changing circumstances</p>	<p>LIVING SYSTEMS</p> <p>FOCUS ON 'ORGANIC' INTERCONNECTEDNESS Systems are living, self-organising and react to their environment</p>	



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Systems Change Perspectives

PRACTITIONERS

- Helps avoid an ivory tower approach
- Those at the coal face have an invaluable perspective
- Reticence to discuss implicit assumptions may limit what can be accomplished from inside a system

ADVOCATES

- Often brings a multi-disciplinary perspective
- Passionate and inspiring
- May lack practical methodology in how to change systems, with results not always matching-up to rhetoric

OPERATIONAL RESEARCHERS

- Brings academic discipline and methodology
- 'Soft' approaches can help untangle complex problems and 'hard' approaches can help make sense of concrete problems
- May be hard to grasp for people on the ground

SERVICE REFORMERS

- Helps keep end-user needs firmly in sight
- Helps bring practical solutions to problems
- May be inappropriate for complex 'messy' systems

LEARNERS

- Emphasis on flexibility and adaptability as a powerful change agent
- Empowers staff at all levels to learn and adapt
- May be a challenge to extend learning beyond organisational boundaries

LIVING SYSTEMS

- Helps to highlight key aspects of complex social systems
- A useful multi-level approach
- May be seen as an over-complicated approach which focuses on theory rather than practically bringing about change



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Six Key Principles for Systems Change

PLANNING FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

PRINCIPLE 1:

Understand needs and assets

PRINCIPLE 2:

Engage multiple actors

PRINCIPLE 3:

Map the systems

DOING SYSTEMS CHANGE

PRINCIPLE 4:

Do it together

PRINCIPLE 5:

Distribute leadership

PRINCIPLE 6:

Foster a learning culture

Source: **Systems Change. A Guide to What it is and How to do it.**

[file:///C:/Users/liz/Downloads/https://www.thinknpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018_07_NPC_Systems-Change_Final%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/liz/Downloads/https://www.thinknpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018_07_NPC_Systems-Change_Final%20(1).pdf)



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The Ways of a Systems Thinker

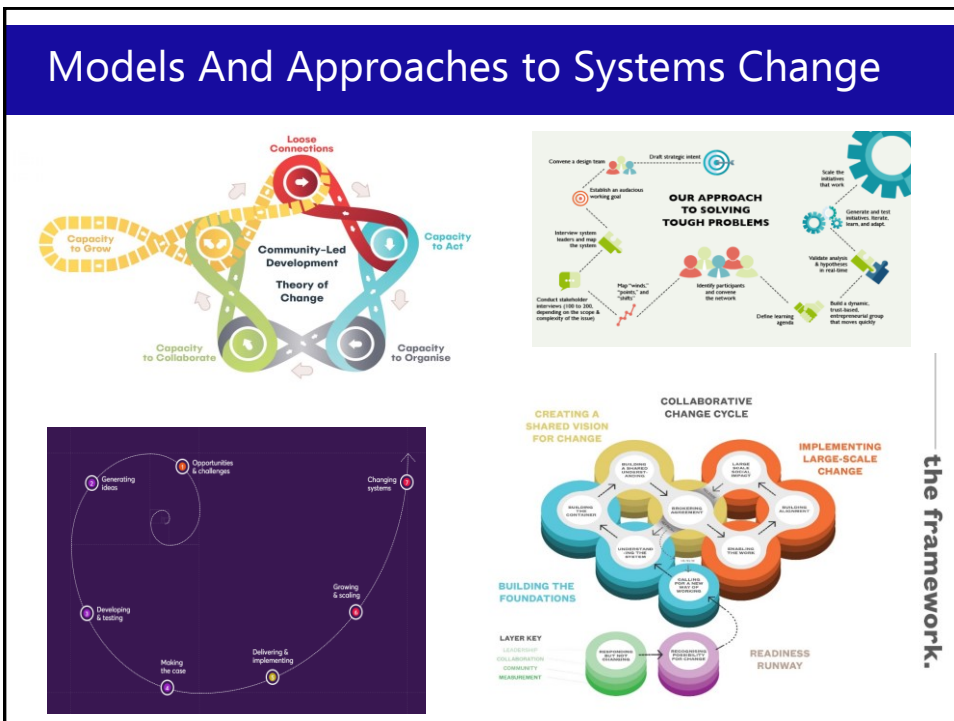
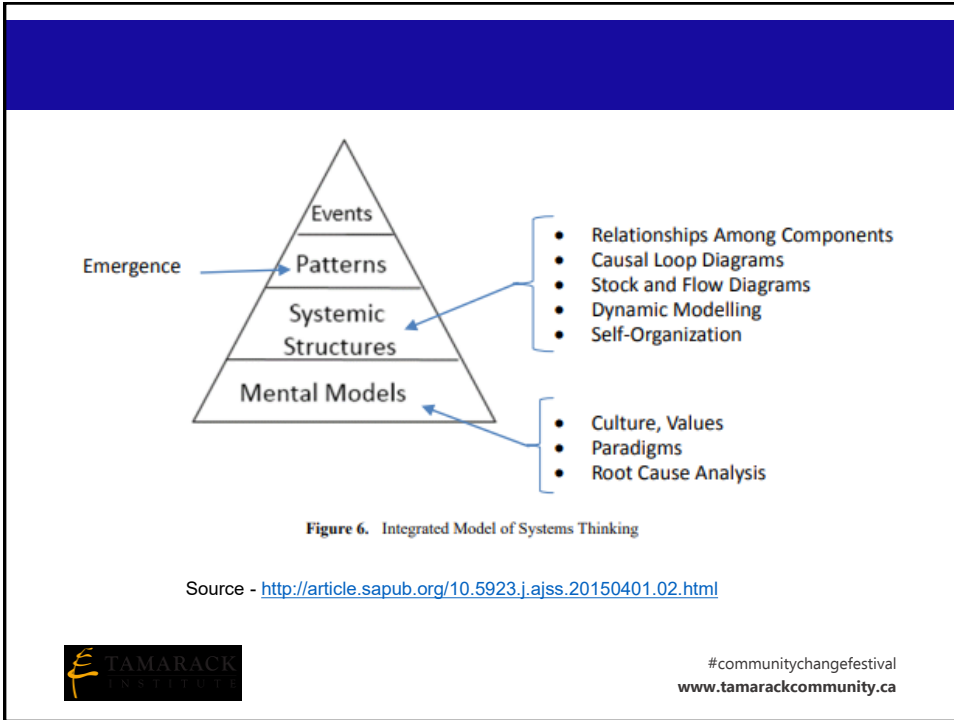
- Sees the whole picture and makes the system visible
- Changes perspectives to see new leverage points
- Looks for interdependencies
- Considers how mental models create our futures
- Pays attention to and gives voice to the long term
- Goes wide to see complex cause and effect relationships
- Finds where unanticipated consequences might emerge
- Focuses on structures not blame
- Holds the tension of paradox and controversy without trying to resolve them quickly
- Sees oneself as part of the system not outside of it



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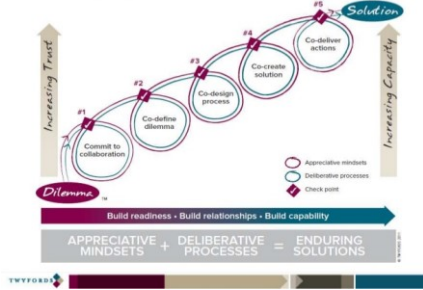


Approaches and Models



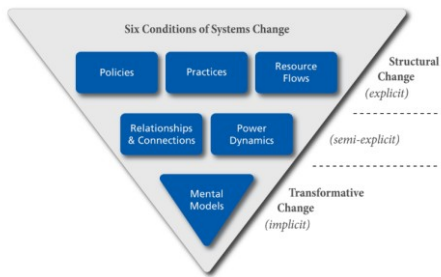
Models and Approaches to Systems Change

Collaborative Governance



The 5 Conditions of Collective Impact

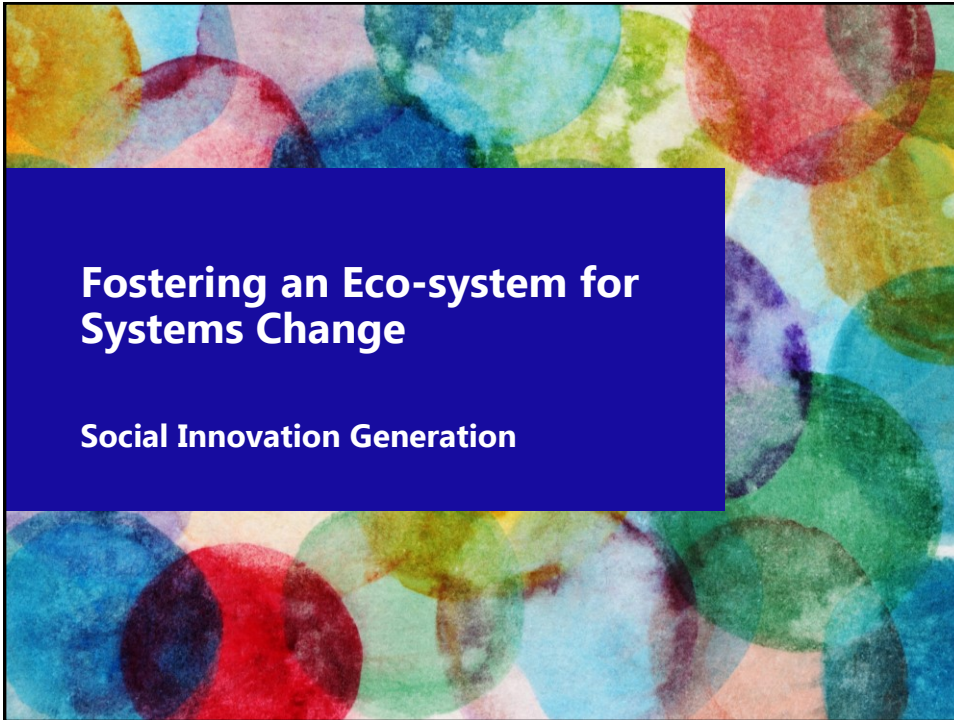
- 1 **Common Agenda**
 - Common understanding of the problem
 - Shared vision for change
- 2 **Shared Measurement**
 - Collecting data and measuring results
 - Focus on performance management
 - Shared accountability
- 3 **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**
 - Differentiated approaches
 - Coordination through joint plan of action
- 4 **Continuous Communication**
 - Consistent and open communication
 - Focus on building trust
- 5 **Backbone Support**
 - Separate organization(s) with staff
 - Resources and skills to convene and coordinate participating organizations



Models and Approaches to Systems Change

	Inspiring Communities	Collaboration for Impact	The Power of Co	Co-Creative Consulting	NESTA	Collective Impact
Readiness and Context	Capacity to grow	Readiness Runway	Commit to Collaborate	Aligning	Identifying Opportunities and Challenges	Pre-conditions
Define and Connect	Loose Connections	Building the Foundation	Co-define the Dilemma	Connecting	Generating Ideas	Common agenda
Action	Capacity to Act	Creating a Shared Vision for Change	Co-Design the Process	Learning	Developing and Testing	Shared Measurement
	Capacity to Organize		Co-Creat the Solution	Designing	Making the Case	Mutually Reinforcing Activities
Implementation	Capacity to Collaborate	Implementing Large Scale Change	Co-Deliver Actions	Making	Delivering and implementing	Backbone Infrastructure
				Scaling	Growing and scaling	





Seed. Grow. Flourish. Release.

- From systems to culture to ecosystems for systems change
- Mindsets
- Capacity building
- Leveraging new and different resources
- Stimulating shared strategies
- Narrative
- Building a movement

Source: Social Innovation Generation




Building an Eco-System

The diagram illustrates the lifecycle of an idea through four quadrants:

- Top-Left (Alpha):** "The idea is developed" (Stored potential).
- Top-Right (Kappa):** "An 'established' innovation" (Conservation).
- Bottom-Right (Omega):** "An idea is born" (Release).
- Bottom-Left (Rho):** "The idea is launched as a product, process or organization" (Exploitation).

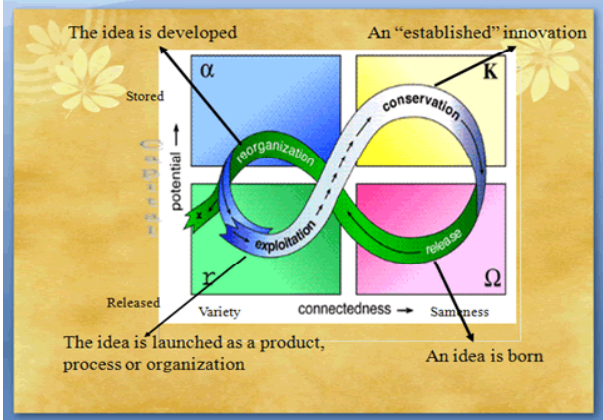
Processes connecting the quadrants are: reorganization (Alpha to Rho), exploitation (Rho to Omega), release (Omega to Kappa), and conservation (Kappa to Alpha). A central loop also shows reorganization (Alpha to Omega) and release (Omega to Alpha).

Vertical axis: potential (↑). Horizontal axis: Variety (left) to connectedness (middle) to Sameness (right). Diagonal axis: Released (bottom-left) to Stored (top-left).




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Mapping our Eco-System



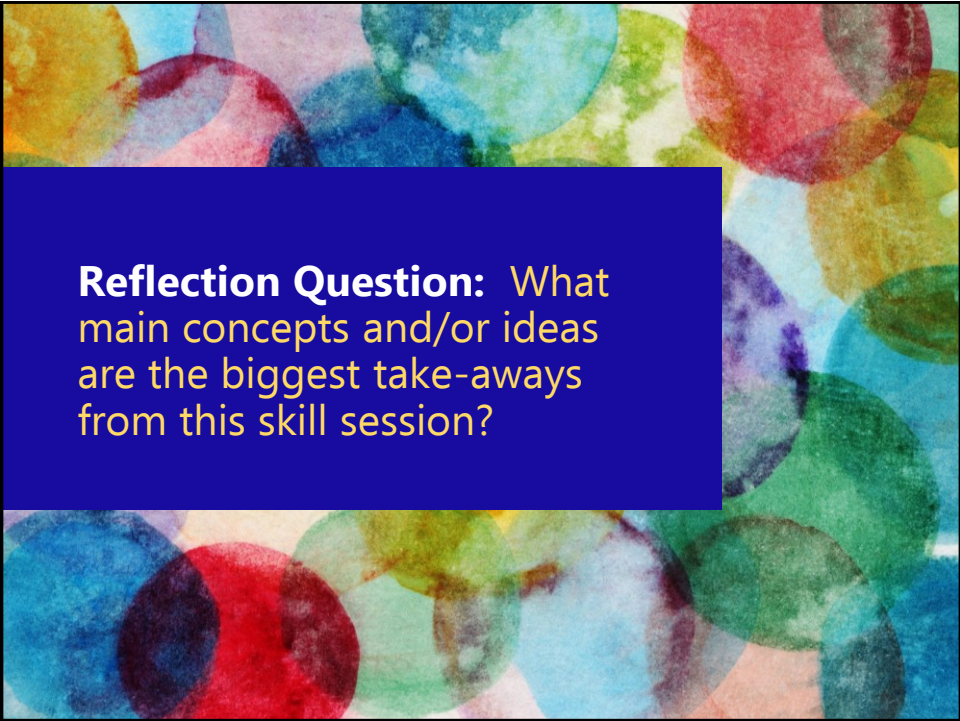
- On post it notes, map your systems-change work on the eco-system.
 - Release
 - Reorganization
 - Exploitation
 - Conservation
- What do we see?



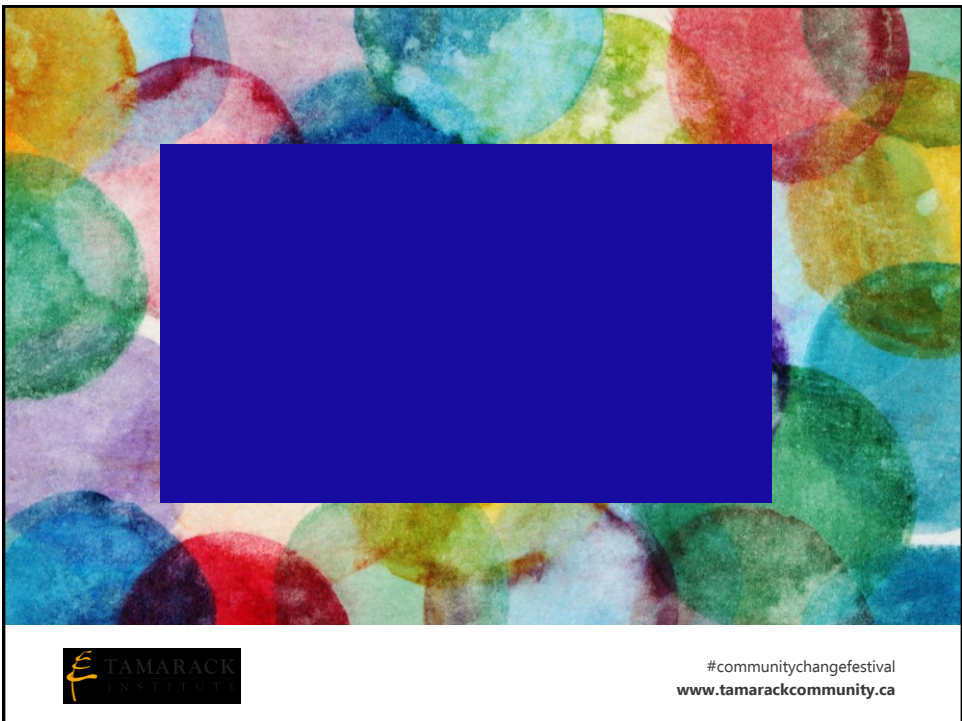
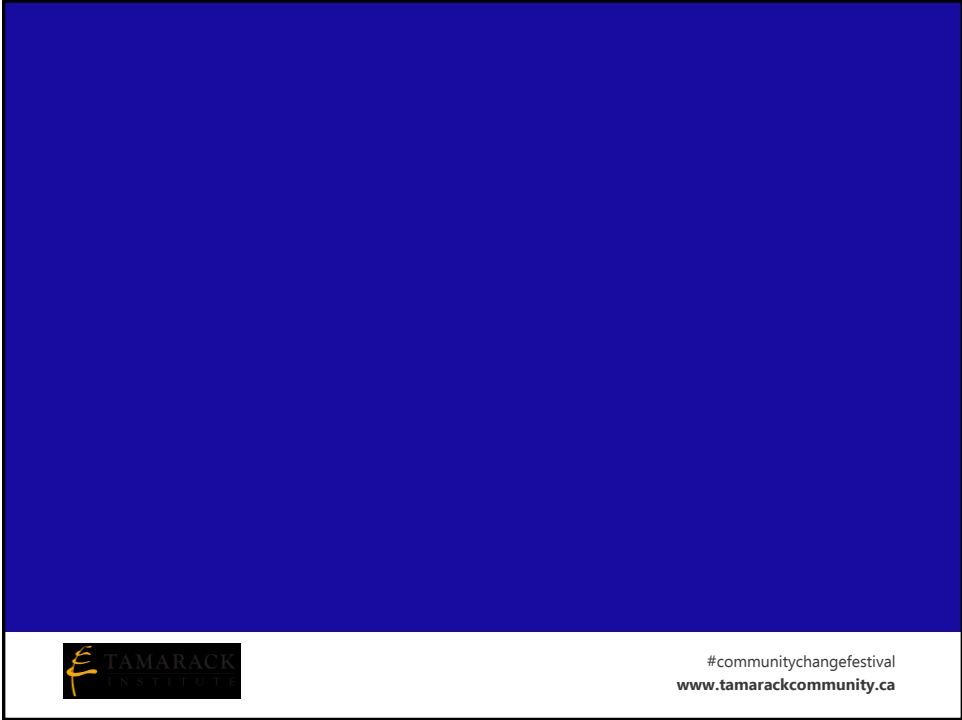
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**How can we collectively
seed and grow an eco-
system for systems change?**




Reflection Question: What
main concepts and/or ideas
are the biggest take-aways
from this skill session?

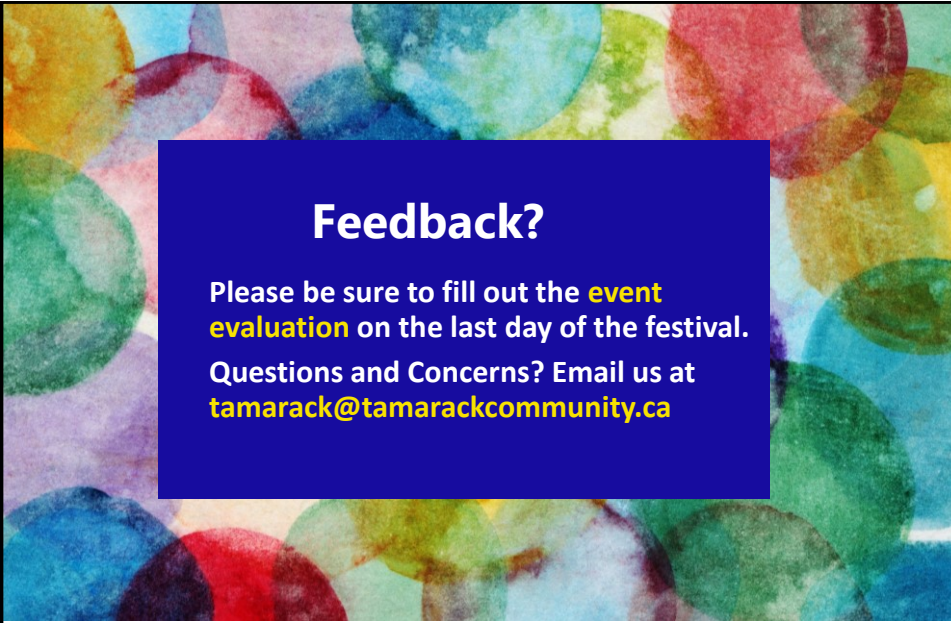





In the Tamarack **Learning Centre** we support our learners in the **five interconnected practices** that we believe lead to impactful **community change**.




In **Vibrant Communities** we support **cities and local leaders** to implement large-scale change initiatives to **reduce poverty** and **deepen community**.



Feedback?

Please be sure to fill out the **event evaluation** on the last day of the festival.

Questions and Concerns? Email us at tamarack@tamarackcommunity.ca



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