

# Applying systems thinking to a public health issue



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Applying Systems Thinking to a Public Health Issue The communicable disease control program aims at promoting and supporting the control of communicable diseases. The program also surveys and investigates cases of communicable diseases as well as managing the outbreak of such diseases. Additionally the communicable disease control program provides community and patient education and further conducts consultations for practitioners and institutions engaged in the program. This program focuses on diseases with infectious causes, those with human-to-human transmission characteristics, diseases that are community acquired and those reportable under communicable disease legislation. Communicable disease control and prevention comprises quarantine and isolation, preventive measures, immunization, early interventions, which include public health education, antimicrobial treatment, and other measures. Effective efforts in the control, and prevention of communicable diseases rely on the understanding of the agent causing the disease within the population. This includes the reservoirs, the characteristics, the method of departure of the agent from the sources, the transmission mode of the agent, the method of entry of the agent into the host and the vulnerability of the host to the agent.

The use of systems thinking in this program would assist in breaking down barriers between different departments by providing effective ways of solving problems. In order to solve problems effectively, it is critical to identify the real cause of the problem along with the means of solving this problem. Systems thinking emphasizes on the need to focus on the large picture or the systems and structures that cause the occurrence of the problem rather than the behaviors and events related to the problem (Scott, 2006, p. 404). This approach of systems thinking ensures effective solving of

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problems. Systems' thinking also supports effective communication between the departments thereby integrating the roles between these departments and improves the functionality of the whole organization. It is also imperative that systems thinking provide a more effective leadership platform within the organization as well as the different departments. Effective leadership implies that authority within the organization and in extension; the different departments within the organization are well defined. This helps in providing directions to the individuals within departments and setting out clear departmental rules. Moreover, systems thinking support a more effective planning process that provides predefined roles for the various departments and help in reducing conflicts between these departments. Planning also identifies and defines funding sources for the program to ensure sufficient and planned resources. Additionally systems' thinking establishes effective communication with the programs funding sources to ensure that funds are available when they are required; furthermore, this ensures the development of the program is effective.

The system can be tested and validated in various ways and these tests and validations focus on its effectiveness. The primary method of testing the effectiveness of the system is checking the success of the undertaken program, which in this case is the effectiveness of the control program (Lenaway et al, 2006, p. 412). This is because systems thinking are focused on understanding how the different systems work within an organization in order to improve its general performance. This, therefore, implies that a system that attains its target goals and objectives is considered effective and valid. A system can also be tested on manner it deals with the challenges and shortcomings encountered putting into consideration the fact

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that systems thinking provides effective problem solving techniques (Lawrence, 2006, p. 408). Interdepartmental relations are another factor that can assist in testing the effectiveness of a system with a primary focus on the transition from one department to the other.

#### Reference list

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