



NATIONAL QUALITY CENTER

Systems Thinking

The Quality Academy

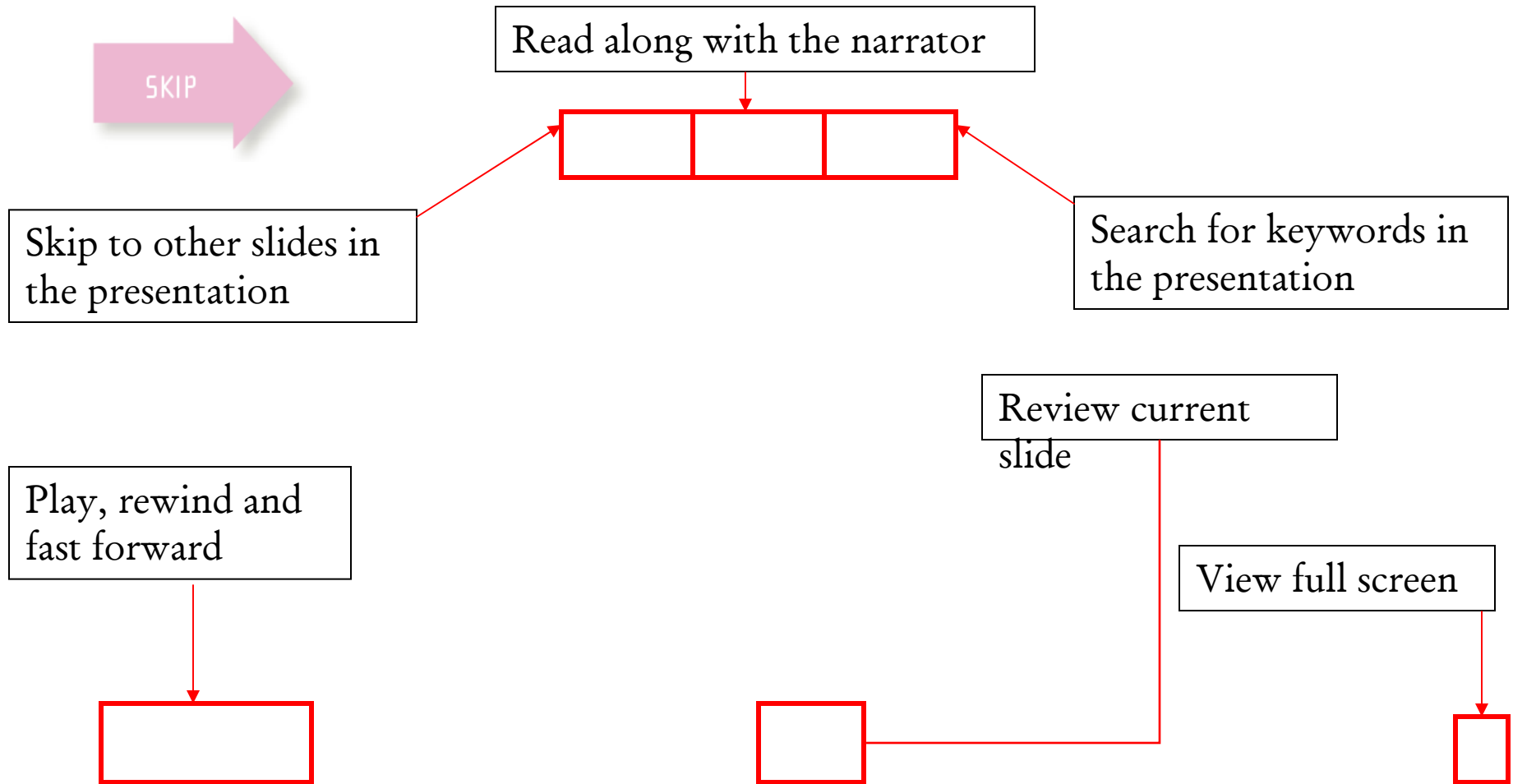
Tutorial 18



Learning Objectives: You Will Learn About...

- What a system is
- Importance of system change in HIV care
- Transforming systems with the help of quality improvement tools

Tips for Viewing This Presentation



Key Question

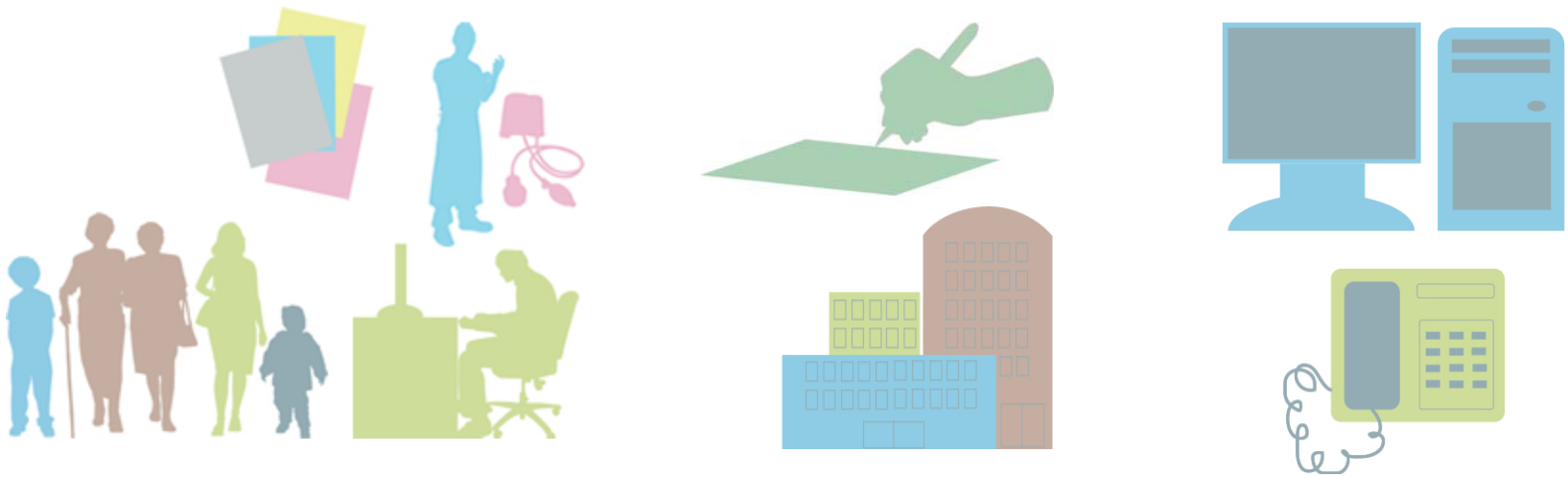


How do I account for the complexity of my organization in my program's quality improvement work?

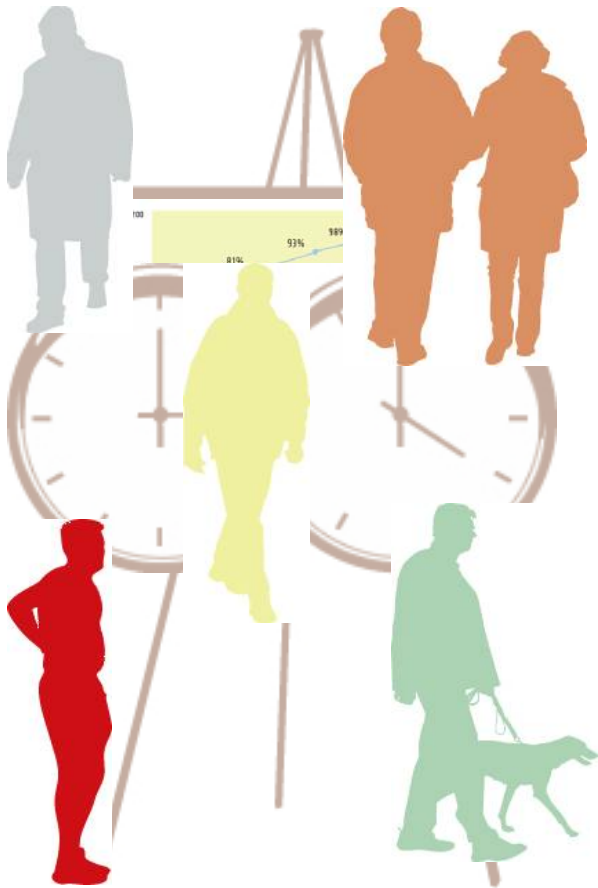
A System is....

“...an interdependent group of items, people or processes with a common purpose.”

Langley et. al., *The Improvement Guide*



Lack of a System Can Show Up As...



- Lost lab results
- Delays in specialty appointments
- More cases of HIV infection

A Few Important Principles for Improving Systems

- A system needs a purpose to aid people in managing their interdependencies
- The structure of a system significantly determines the performance of the system

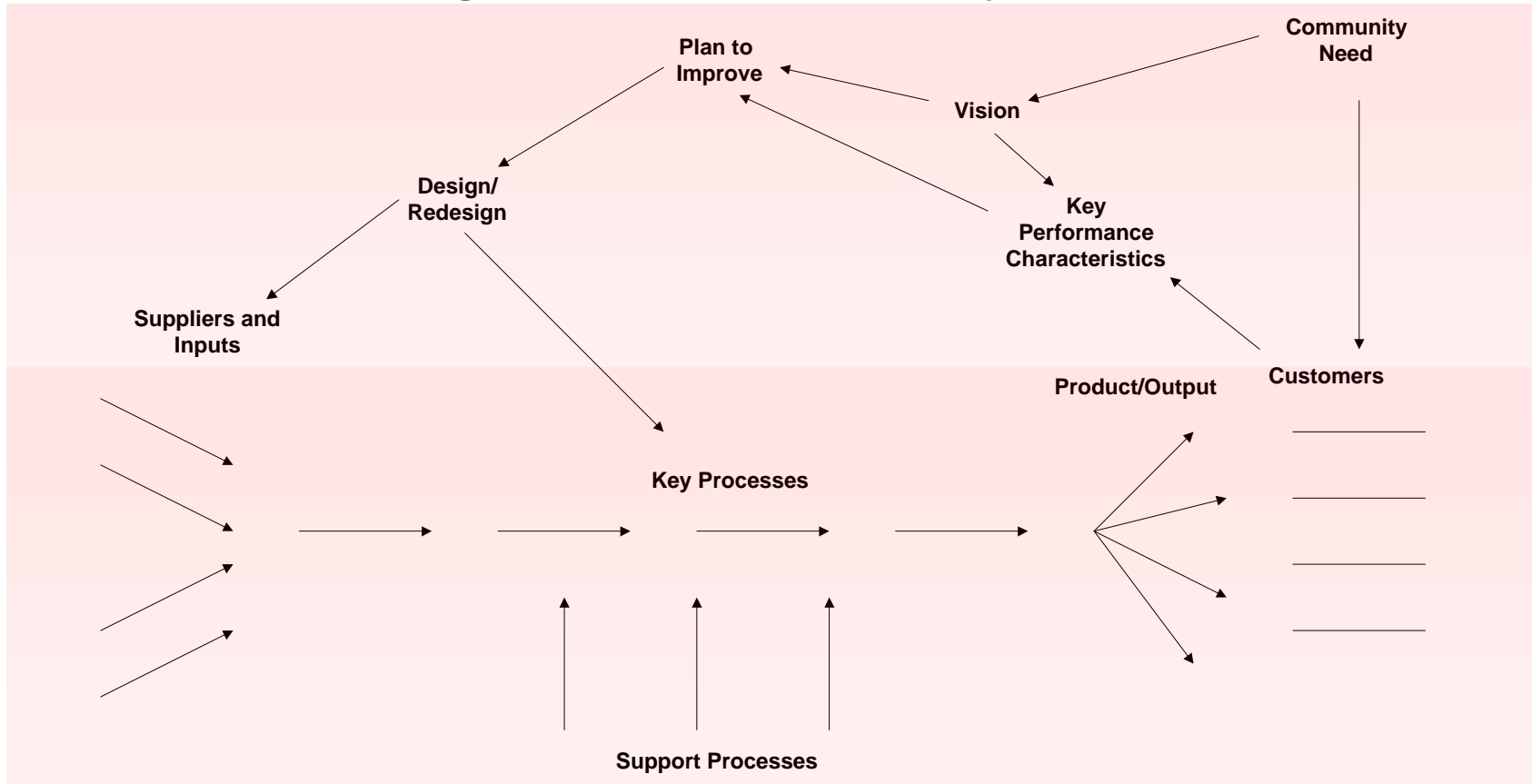
Thomas W. Nolan, Ph.D.

Test Question

To function, a system must:

- A) Have a common purpose
- B) Make a profit
- C) Meet regulatory requirements
- D) Keep patients happy
- E) Employ lots of staff
- F) All of the above
- G) None of the above

Organization Viewed As a System



Adapted from The New Economics by W. Edwards Deming
and
"Organizing Hospital Care as a System: An Annotated Guide" by HCA Resource Group

Questions to Understand Your System

- What product(s) do we make? What service(s) do we provide?
- Who uses or receives these products or services?
- What is the underlying, core need that those customers have for what you make?
- What measures or characteristics do customers use when they assess and judge the goodness or quality of what you make?

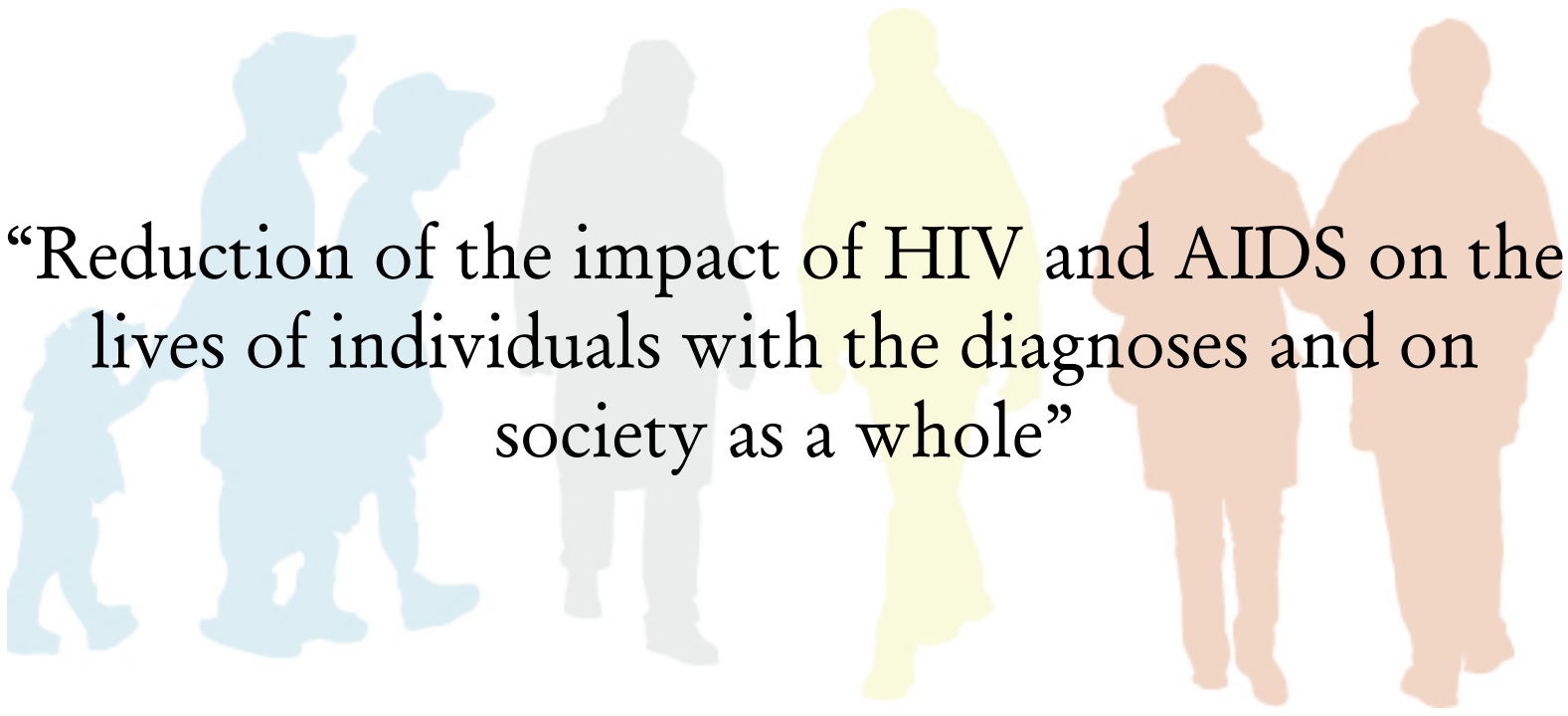
What Products and Services?

- Primary health care services for people with HIV and AIDS
- A physical environment in which care can take place
- Information about HIV and its effective treatment
- Referrals to other providers, social services

Who Uses or Receives Them?

- People with HIV and AIDS
- Their families, partners and friends
- Employees
- Provider staff-in-training (e.g., medical residents, students in other disciplines)
- Governmental funding agencies
- Advocacy groups
- Specialty care services and social services

The Underlying, Core Need Is?

A row of seven stylized human silhouettes in various colors (light blue, grey, yellow, orange) representing a diverse group of people. The silhouettes are positioned behind the central text.

“Reduction of the impact of HIV and AIDS on the lives of individuals with the diagnoses and on society as a whole”

Characteristics to Assess the Goodness or Quality?



People with HIV and AIDS:

- Effectiveness of care
- Respect and compassion from caregivers
- Clarity and relevance of information given
- Ease of use of facility (friendliness of support staff, waiting time, cleanliness of facility, etc.)
- Confidentiality



Families, partners and friends

- Confidence that loved one is satisfied with care
- Information targeted to specific needs of this group

Characteristics to Assess the Goodness or Quality?



Employees

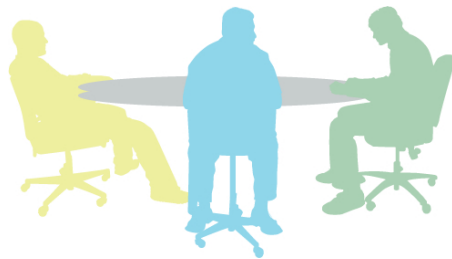
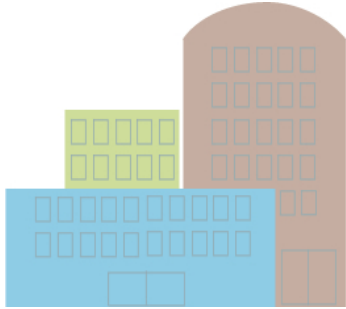
- Adequate resources to provide effective, respectful, compassionate care
- Safe environment
- Respect for their contribution
- Opportunities to grow and advance



Provider staff-in-training

- Accurate information
- Good teaching
- Opportunity to practice skills
- State-of-the-art models to follow

Characteristics to Assess the Goodness or Quality?



Governmental funding agencies

- Health care services that meet governmental standards
- Non-wasteful use of government funds

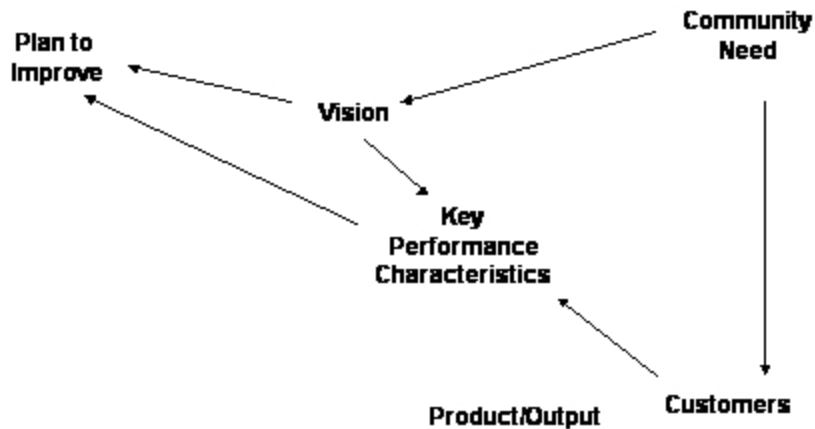
Advocacy groups

- Confidence that patients are satisfied with their care
- Responsiveness to their requests for information and action

Specialty care services and social services

- Complete information on any patients referred

What Do I Have Now?



- Right-hand section of the system diagram
- Clarity of purpose
- Understanding of complex needs

Test Question

Which of these is an example of a product or service a health care organization could provide?

- A) Drawing blood for testing purposes
- B) Individualized "When to Take Your Medications" calendars
- C) Neither
- D) Both

What Can I Do Next?



- Turn your quality characteristics into measures
- Clarify key and support processes

We've Only Scratched the Surface

- Changes in the structure of a system have the potential for generating unintended consequences
- Another reason for PDSA
- Systems must be managed
- An effective quality program helps in this

Key Points

- A system is a an interdependent group of items, people or processes with a common purpose
- Your long-term goal is to improve the operations of your system, because system changes have the greatest impact
- Understanding how the parts of your system support its purpose strengthens your ability to improve your system

Resources

- For more information on principles for improving systems in health care, see: Nolan, Thomas W., “Understanding Medical Systems,” *Ann Intern Med* 1998;128:293-298.
- For more information on how to change systems by identifying key leverage points, see Senge, Peter, *The Fifth Discipline*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
- The Deming System Diagram and an exercise to support its use in your HIV program is available in the *HIVQUAL Group Learning Guide*, which can be downloaded by going to:
<http://www.nationalqualitycenter.org/index.cfm/5659>

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