



# Letting Go and Breaking Through

Aligning parallel movements in college  
counseling and health promotion

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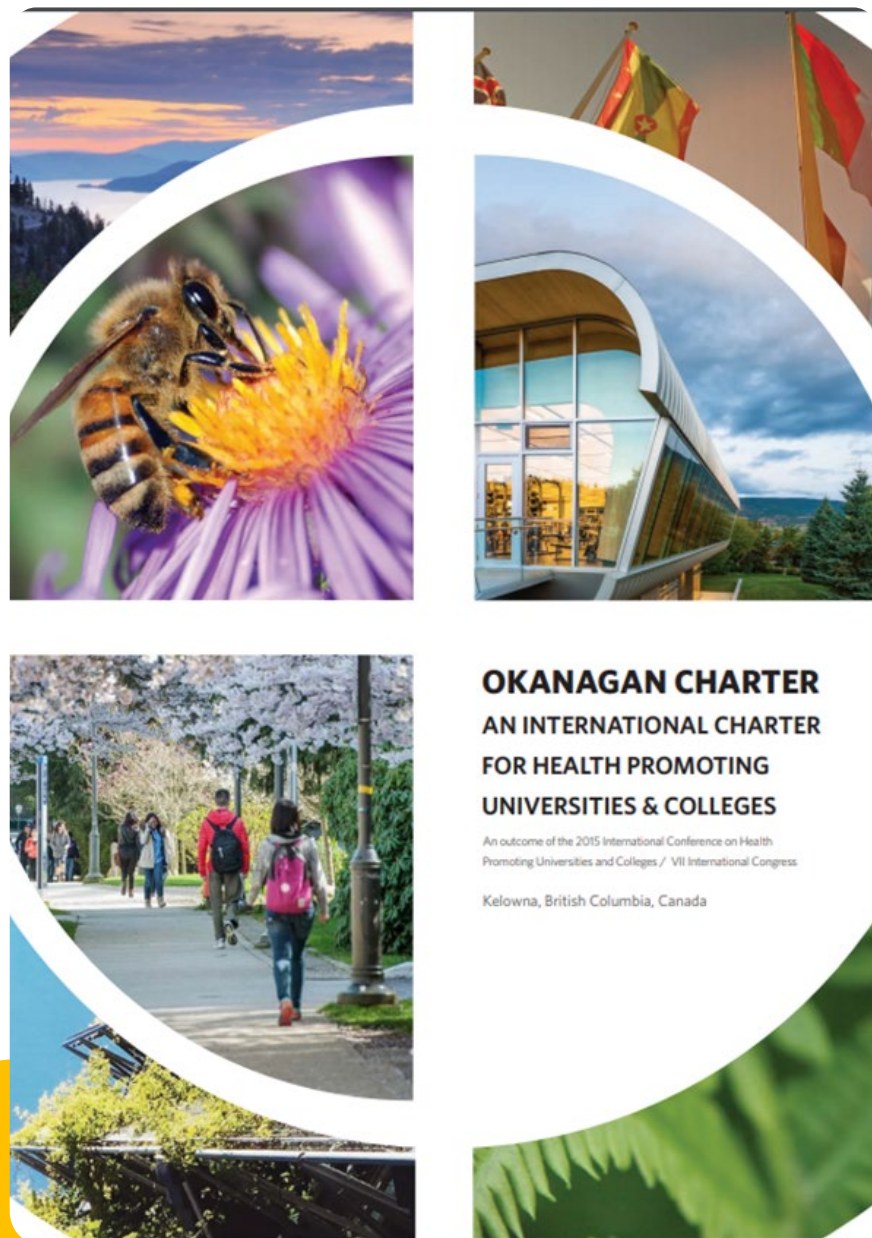


# Overview

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- The fields of Health Promotion & College Counseling are shifting
- The change is from services & programs to systems thinking
- This has downstream impact on clinicians & health promotion professionals
- Where could this take us together?





**OKANAGAN CHARTER**  
AN INTERNATIONAL CHARTER  
FOR HEALTH PROMOTING  
UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES

An outcome of the 2015 International Conference on Health  
Promoting Universities and Colleges / VII International Congress

Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

# Health Promotion

- Health Education → Health Promotion
- Okanagan Charter
- Moving "beyond a focus on individual behavior towards a wide range of social and environmental interventions" that create and enhance health in settings, organizations and systems, and address health determinants
- As such, health promotion is not just the responsibility of the health sector but must engage all sectors to take an explicit stance in favor of health, equity, social justice and sustainability for all, while recognizing that the well-being of people, places and the planet are interdependent

# Counseling Centers

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- **The history:** Increased demand & acuity
- **The impacts:** Efforts to "meet demand"
- "Comprehensive" approaches often focused on screening & funneling to counseling
- Centers have turned to outside resources & Campuses have incorporated additional or reconceptualized resources
- There has been a shift in the dialogue



## Traditional Approach

Everything to everyone,  
additive programs & services

Individual department identity

Address individual issues for some  
groups in some places/Setting  
individual-level outcomes

Reliance on short-term solutions and  
traditional approaches

Focus on pathology and addressing  
problems as they occur

## Systemic Approach

Plugging into systems and settings

Institutional identity

Campus-wide and comprehensive  
approaches/Setting population-level  
outcomes

Promote research, innovation, and  
evidence-informed action

Build on strengths/assets

# Systemic Approach



“If the frogs in a pond started behaving strangely, our first reaction would not be to punish them or even treat them. Instinctively, we’d wonder what was going on in the pond.”

Dan Reist, UVIC, Canadian Institute for Substance Use  
Research

# Letting Go

- It's like a pool membership
  - "We're everything"/  
"We're the experts"
  - Pathogenic focus
- Letting go of the "clinical"
  - Student & Field narrative
  - More about valuing/hierarchy
  - Let's have a pool party... or maybe enter the ocean?
- Complications
  - That narrative made us "matter"/got us resources
  - Some still in "gathering resources" phases

POOL FOR  
RESIDENTS  
ONLY



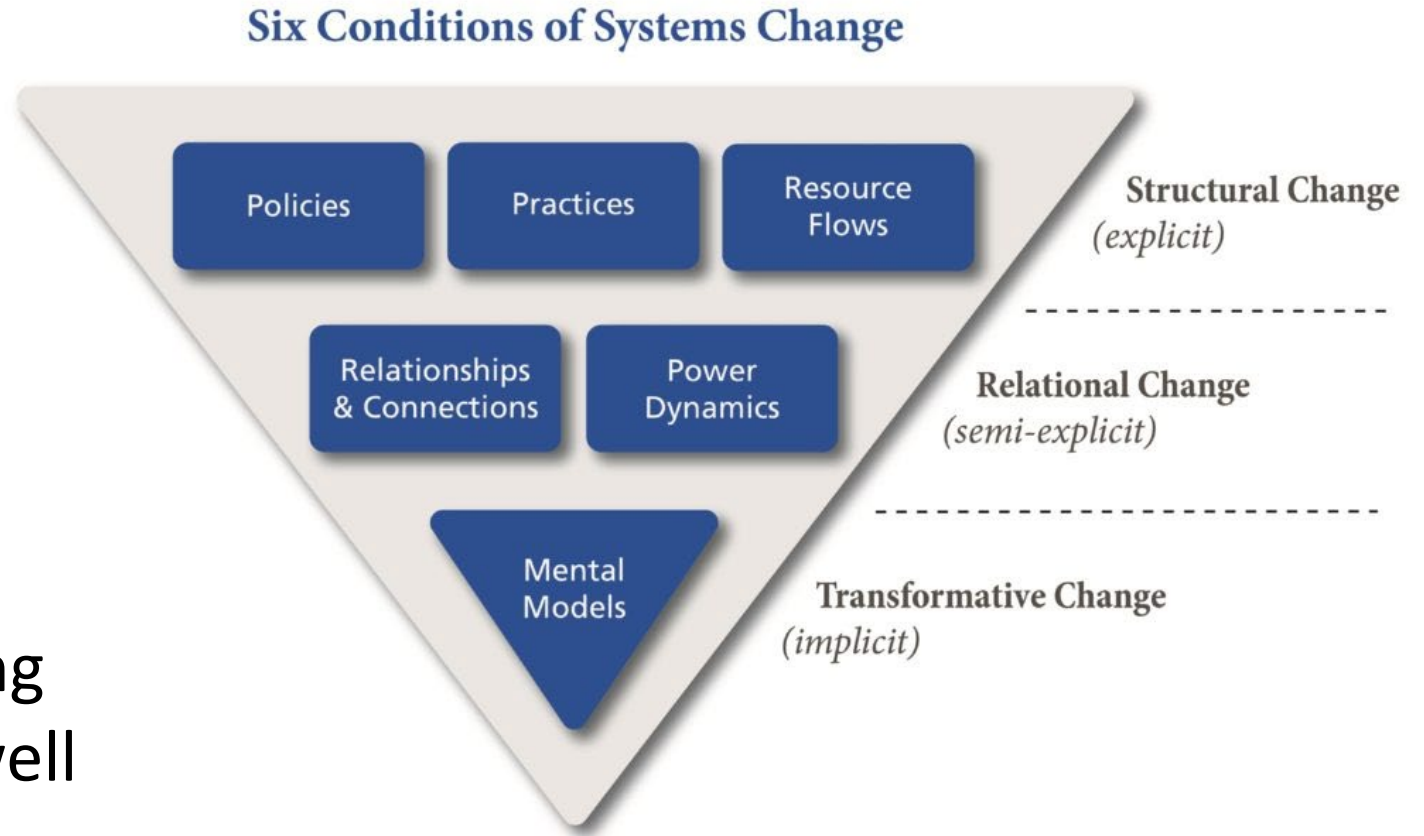
Finding the Heart of It





# Breaking Through

- Systems change is about shifting the conditions that hold a problem in place
- To fully embrace change, we need to be prepared to see how our own ways of thinking and acting must change as well



*The Water of Systems Change*, John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge 2018



## Summary

- Counseling Centers & Health Promotion have been focused on clinical services & upstream programming
- Lots of focus on Frogs, not Ponds
- Mental models & Aligning systems
- This can be outward or inward facing:
  - Work in professional organizations (e.g., position papers, advocacy, etc)
  - Changing local mental models/system messaging
  - Co-developing programs (e.g., peer programs, staff as supports, etc)

A close-up photograph of a bright green frog sitting on a lily pad. A black butterfly with a red stripe on its wings is perched on the frog's back. The scene is reflected in the water below. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

Letting go is  
an iterative  
process.