Seeks to understand the big picture

Observes how elements within systems change over time, generating patterns and trends

Recognizes that a system’s structure generates its behavior

Identifies the circular nature of complex cause and effect relationships

Makes meaningful connections within and between systems

Changes perspectives to increase understanding

Surfaces and tests assumptions

Habits of a Systems Thinker

Considers an issue fully and resists the urge to come to a quick conclusion

Considers how mental models affect current reality and the future

Uses understanding of system structure to identify possible leverage actions

Considers short-term, long-term and unintended consequences of actions

Pays attention to accumulations and their rates of change

Recognizes the impact of time delays when exploring cause and effect relationships

Checks results and changes actions if needed: “successive approximation”