



Local health departments as Learning Organizations

APHA 135th Meeting
Advances in Organizational Design and Management
Washington DC, November 5, 2007

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Overview of session

- What is a Learning Organization?
- The Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire (DLOQ)
- Michigan DLOQ study results
- Importance of leaders in learning organizations for next steps

Michigan Public Health Training Center – *Transfer to Practice* study



- One of 14 centers covering 44 states
- Mission: Strengthen workforce skills
- Focus: training multiple individuals on cross-cutting skills, e.g., program evaluation
- Limited impact on organization's outcomes
- Why? Organizational barriers prevent transfer of training to practice





Industrial vs. knowledge era

Push	Pull
Can predict needs	Unpredictable world
Anticipates	Responds
Inflexible / static	Flexible / dynamic
Conform / core	Innovate / edge
Monolith / glued together	Small pieces / loosely joined
Program	Learnscape

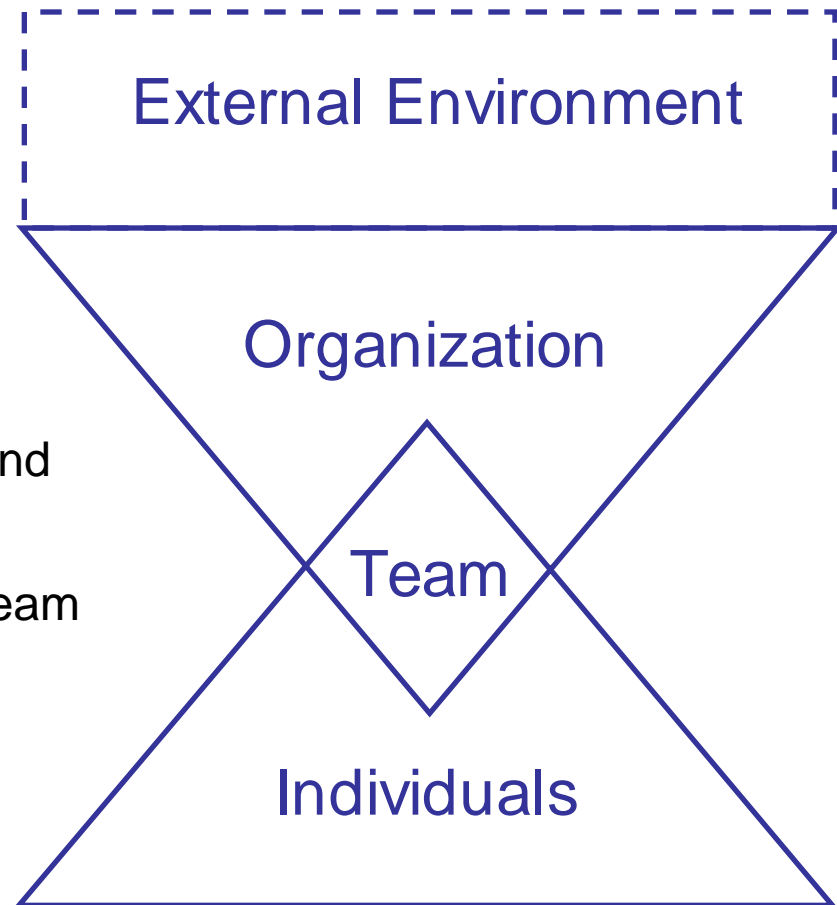


Introduction to Watkins-Marsick Model of a Learning Organization

Understanding the underlying model
and its application

Learning Organization model

- Leaders model learning
- Connect the organization to its environment
- Empower people toward a collective vision
- Establish systems to capture and share learning
- Encourage collaboration and team learning
- Promote inquiry & dialogue
- Create continuous learning opportunities



Watkins & Marsick, 1993, 1996, 1999



Organizational learning is ...

- System-wide capacity to stimulate, create, capture, share, and use learning / knowledge to make a difference in the organization
- Encoded into “organizational memory”
- Achieved and continuously interpreted and re-interpreted by people — acting on behalf of the organization



The DLOQ

- A questionnaire designed to assess an organization's learning culture across the seven dimensions
- Questions ask for individual's perception about the organization



Example of DLOQ questions

To what extent is each statement accurate?

Individual Level

Almost Never ←-----→ Almost Always

In my organization:

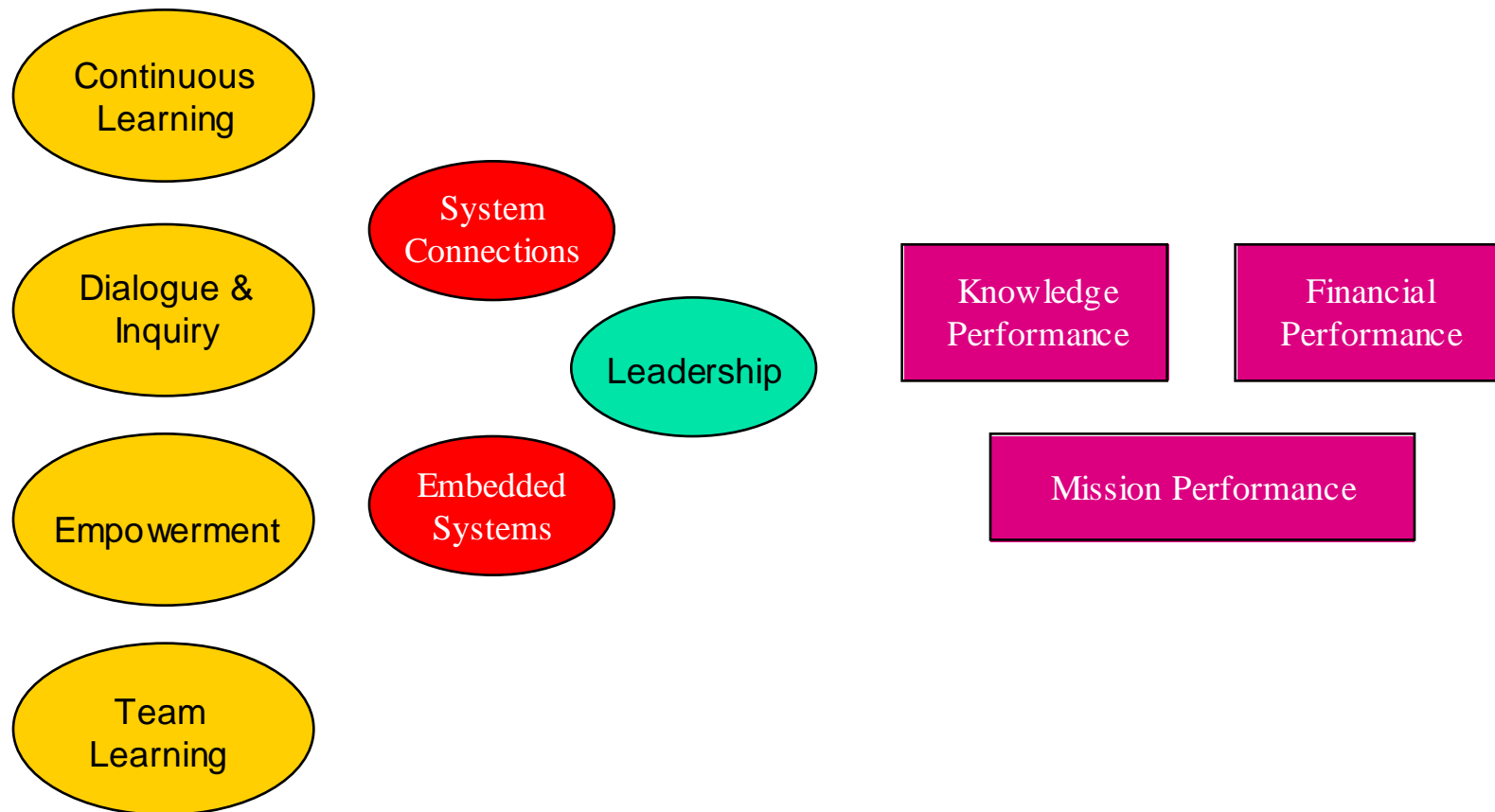
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. People openly discuss mistakes in order to learn from them.						
2. People identify skills they need for future work tasks.						
3. People help each other learn.						
4. People can get money and other resources to support their learning.						
5. People are given time to support learning.						
6. People view problems in their work as an opportunity to learn.						



Attributes of Learning Organizations

- Individual
 - Create continuous learning opportunities
 - Promote dialogue and inquiry
- Team
 - Promote collaboration and team learning
 - Empower people to evolve a collective vision
- Organizational
 - Establish systems to capture and share learning
 - Connect the organization to its environment
 - Provide strategic leadership for learning

Linking Learning Organization dimensions with performance outcomes



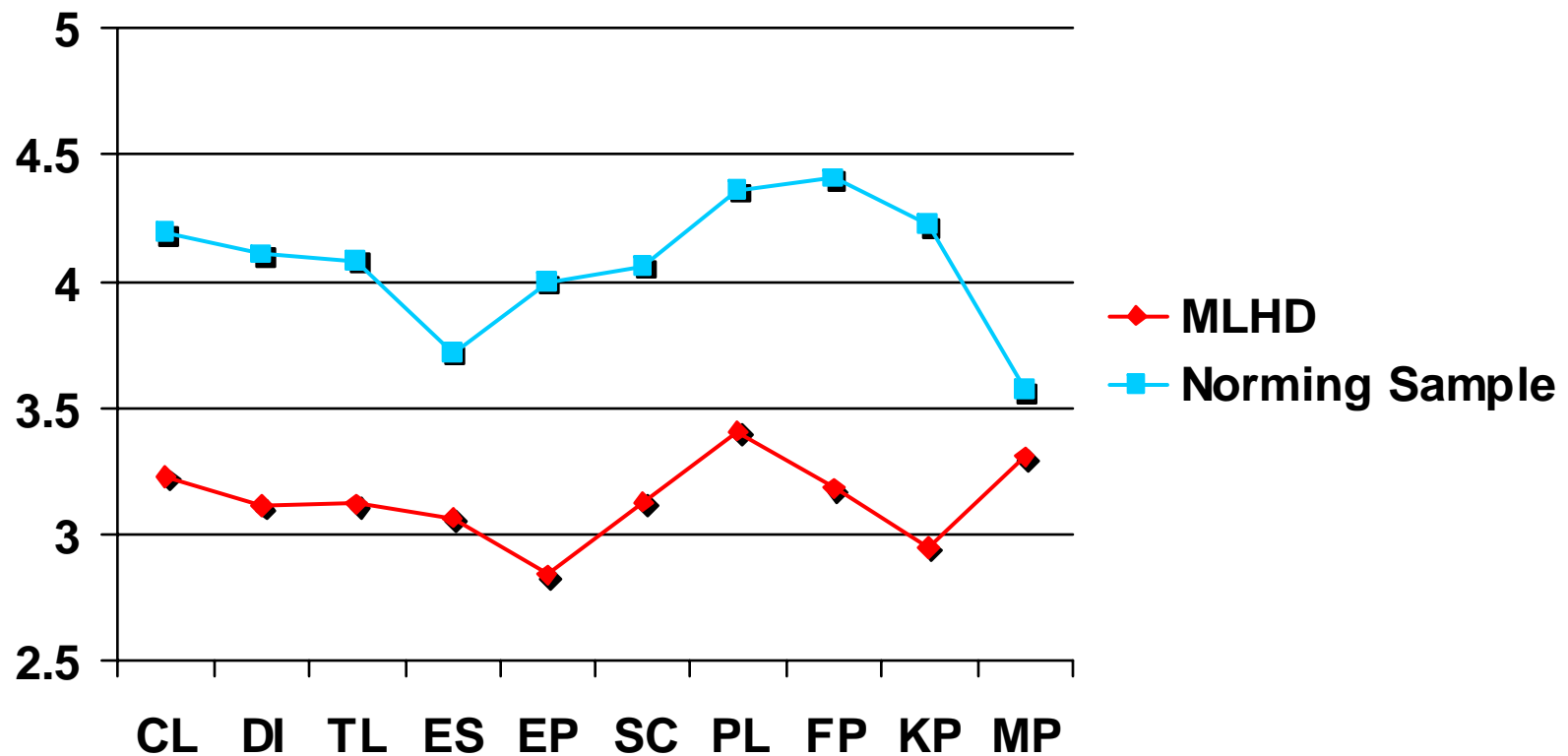


The DLOQ Results

Results from the *Dimensions of the Learning Organization Questionnaire* for Michigan
Local Health Departments



Comparing MLHD & cumulative group on DLOQ dimensions





Response rate & respondents

	Surveys Distributed	Surveys Received	Response Rate
Total	998	675	67.6%

64	What is your job role in your organization? (check one)	
	professional staff	59.6%
	other staff	26.6%
	management	13.8%
65	What is the length of time you have worked in your organization in any role?	10.66
<i>Based on a sample of 675 respondents</i>		



Reliability (Chronbach's Alpha)

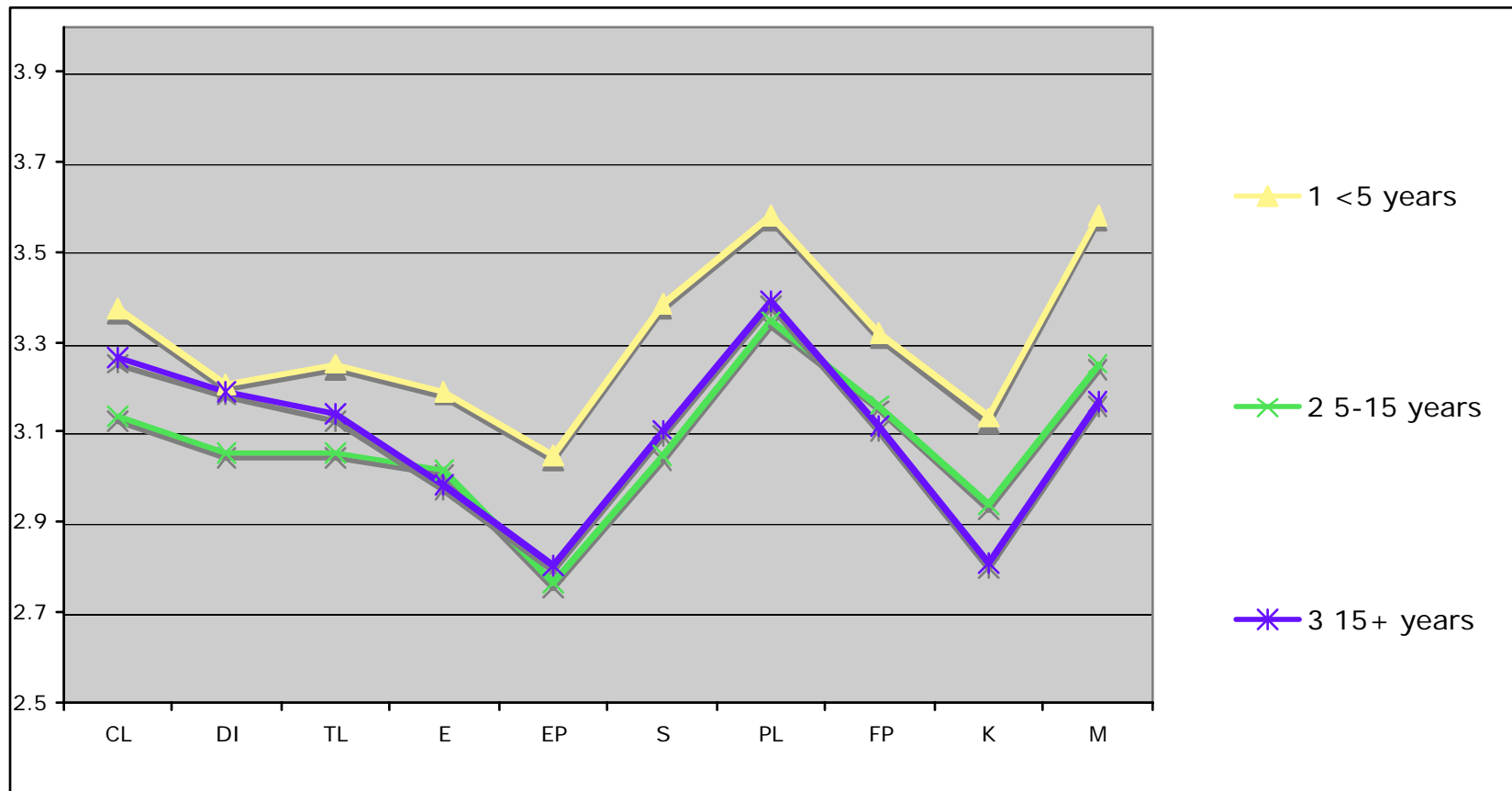
	Alpha	Alpha from norming sample
CL	.8733	.809
DI	.9183	.865
TL	.9345	.858
ES	.9051	.814
EP	.9202	.842
SC	.9081	.803
PL	.9446	.870
FP	.8375	.738
KP	.8802	.769
MP	.9172	



Means for Michigan local health departments and norming sample

Dimensions	Means MLHD (n=675)	Means of Norming Sample (n=3253)
CL	3.23	4.19
DI	3.11	4.11
TL	3.12	4.08
ES	3.07	3.72
EP	2.84	4.00
SC	3.13	4.06
PL	3.41	4.36
FP	3.18	4.41
KP	2.95	4.22
MP	3.31	3.57

Comparison by years of service



Implementing change



Henk Jacobs,
treearth.com 2005

Creating Learning Organizations = changing the culture

Learning organizations have systems that:

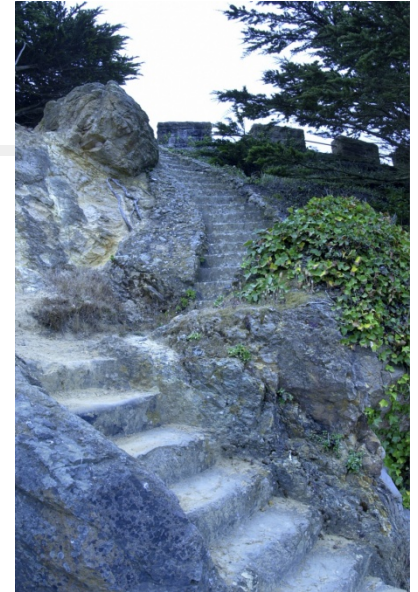
- Capture
 - Share
 - Use
- knowledge

Leadership must champion this.

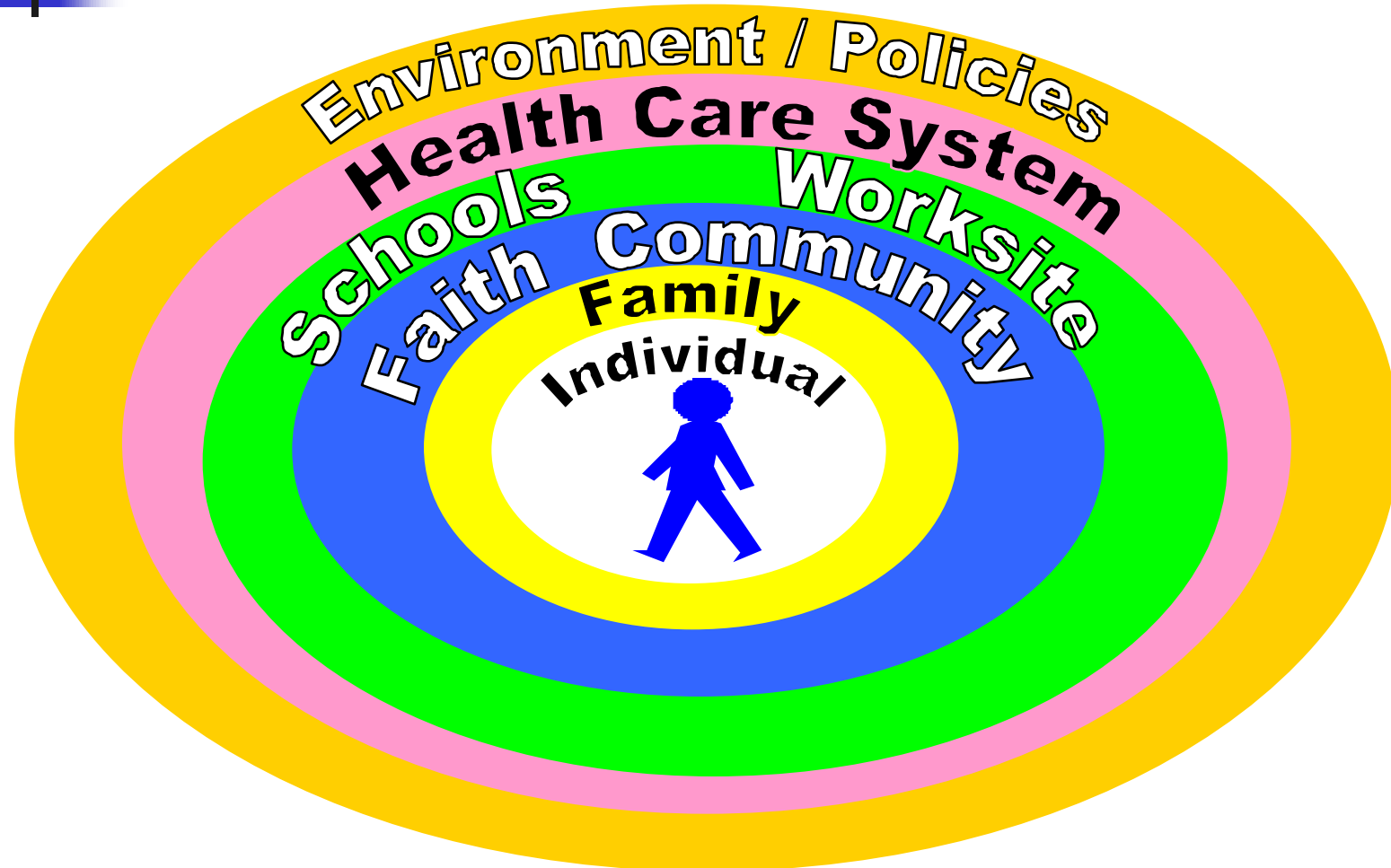


What are next steps for individual health departments?

- Share results and gather more data: where do people agree or disagree? What do we need to know about organizational constraints?
- Which interventions support vision and strategy--should we focus on low or high scores?
- What does benchmarking tell us about key learning interventions?
- What “levers” can be used to build organizational capacity:
 - Develop learning leaders among managers?
 - Use key change initiatives to transform the organization?
 - Work with HRD units to create a learning infrastructure?



Appreciating the breadth of public health





Importance of Learning Organizations for local public health

- Managing change
- Addressing, with diminishing resources
 - health equity
 - environmental justice
 - collaborative partnerships
- Working across disciplines



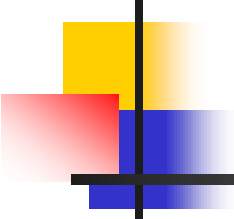
Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Example of priorities for change

Using action learning and continuous quality improvement tools to address:

- Employee orientation
- Burnout of 'good' employees
- Empowerment to explore and solve common problems across divisional areas
- Communication of rationale behind decisions and policies in the organization



Taking a learning organization perspective means that..

- We move from a focus on individuals and training to...
 - building a learning infrastructure
 - helping leaders create a learning culture
 - promoting managers as facilitators of learning



The learning infrastructure

- The learning infrastructure consists of all of those activities, systems, and policies which promote
 - individual
 - team and
 - organizational learningand lead to knowledge creation



Helping leaders create a learning culture

- A learning culture is one in which learning is a deliberate part of the organization's strategy
- Change is understood to be a learning process - and change is continuous
- Leaders model learning themselves, reward learning, and use mistakes as opportunities to learn



Promoting managers as facilitators of learning

- Managers in the role of employee facilitator/coach
- Managers performance evaluation based on that role
- Managers evaluated on their modeling of continuous learning
 - by the training and education they seek
 - the reading that they do related to their role
 - their personal willingness to learn from their own mistakes



Acknowledgements

- Karen Watkins and Judy Milton
University of Georgia at Athens kwatkins@uga.edu
- John McKellar and Ward Lindsay
Genesee County Health Department
Flint, Michigan
- This work is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (Bureau of Health Professions) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Leadership Institute)



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