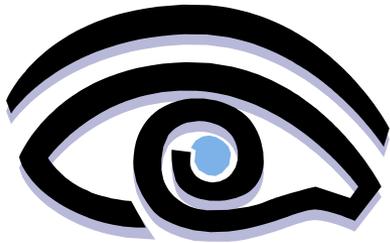


Massachusetts

# The Power of Positive Deviance



Solutions before our very eyes

- In every community or organization there are certain individuals or groups whose **uncommon practices/behaviors** enable them to find **better solutions** to problems than their neighbors or colleagues who have access to the **same resources**

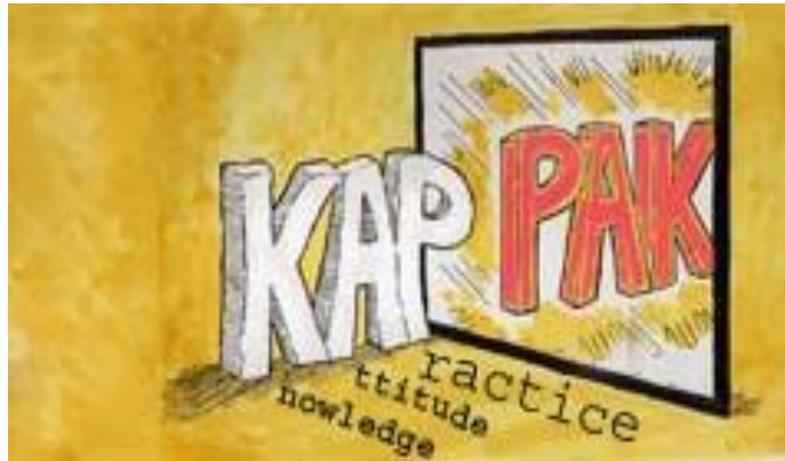
# Positive Deviance (PD) Approach

- Engages the very people *“whose behavior needs to change to solve the problem”* to identify existing solutions **from within**



- Thereby suppressing the “immune rejection response”

# PD Focus on **Practice** Rather than Knowledge



- “It’s easier to ACT your way into a new way of **THINKING**, than to **THINK** your way into a new way of **ACTING**”

# PD's Six Key Questions

PD is driven by a particular set of questions:

- What would you like to know about this problem?
- What do **you do** about this problem?
- What are the **barriers** that prevent you from doing it 100% of the time?
- Who do you know who is doing the **right** thing or who has **overcome** these barriers? (the positive deviants)
- **Who else** needs to be in this conversation that isn't here? (i.e. "Don't decide about me without me")
- How do we **invite** those people to be part of the **action**?
- What other ideas do you have?

# Analyzing PD Findings

*PD findings are passed through a lens of “accessibility”*

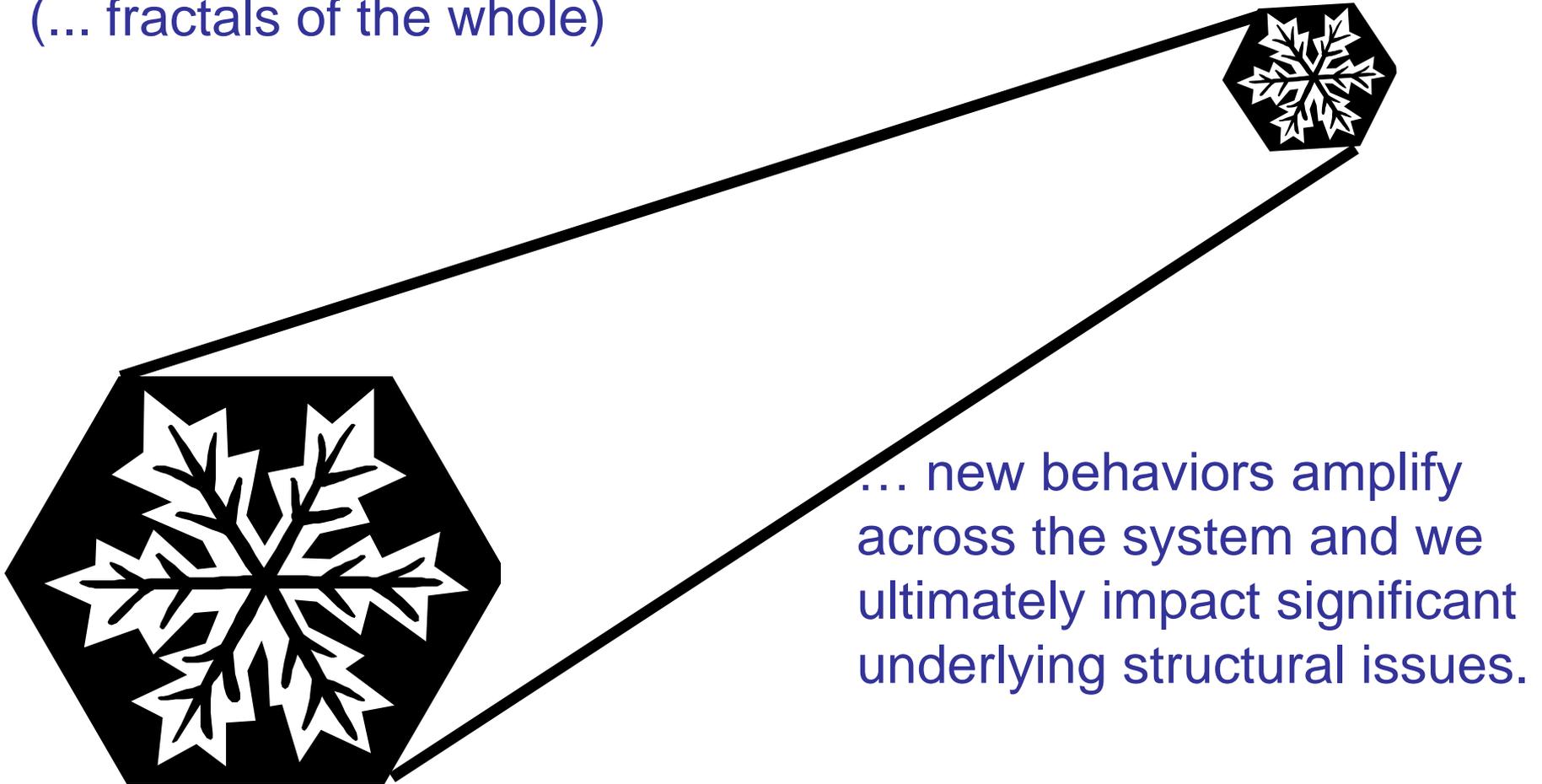
- Only those behaviors/strategies accessible to all within a cohort or unit are kept
- The rest are “**TBU**,” True but Useless (i.e. not accessible to all) and are discarded

# When to use the PD approach

- ☑ The problem requires behavioral and /or social change.
- ☑ It is a seemingly “intractable” problem.
- ☑ The problem is important and compelling.
- ☑ The problem is concrete and specific.
- ☑ Solutions must be possible; usually Positive Deviants *already* exist.
- ☑ Both the problem and anticipated progress are measurable.
- ☑ Leadership is committed to addressing the issue and willing to act when necessary to address identified barriers and possible solutions.

# Small Actions = Big Impact

Using PD, we address discrete parts of complex problems  
(... fractals of the whole)



# How is PD Different?

- Flows from identification and analysis of **solutions** NOT problems
- Solutions are appropriate because they emerge from the system
- Creates “ownership,” NOT “buy-in”
- Appreciative, strength-based – focuses on what’s working
- Emphasis is on changing behavior not increasing knowledge
- Includes unusual suspects
- It works!