

# Critical building blocks for embedding a Systems Approach

The WELL Collaborative uses 10 critical building blocks to effectively embed a systems approach to tackle obesity. Each of these critical building blocks is required to facilitate and drive change as a whole system but they will also be present and required for each individual action that is taken to achieve the end goal of halting the rise of obesity.

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| <b>1. Culture and leadership</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster and embed a culture that is open to change and supports innovation.</li> <li>• Encourage curiosity to find innovative ways to make system changes effective and sustainable.</li> <li>• Ensure sustained commitment and persistence from all levels, with ongoing political support.</li> <li>• Build, maintain, and support a variety of leaders and change agents at all levels to ensure the responsibility and passion for change is directed and shared.</li> <li>• Incorporate adaptive leadership that is flexible to shifting circumstances.</li> </ul> |
| <b>2. Action at all levels</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit to engagement across all levels of the system</li> <li>• Developing interventions and approaches that are multi-levelled, multi-pronged, and cross-sector</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3. Collective action</b>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a system approach where all partners and stakeholders work together with common vision and mission.</li> <li>• Work in coordination and collaboration with other organisations to deliver co-designed interventions that are complementary, aligned, and mutually reinforcing</li> <li>• Acknowledge and draw on the strengths, skills, resources, networks, and influence of different organisations and groups to increase momentum and effectively implement change</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4. Engagement and partnerships</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in and prioritise quality collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders, including community groups and consumers, from conception to delivery and review.</li> <li>• Prioritise stronger engagement and true partnerships with consumers.</li> <li>• Value diversity and actively seek diverse contributions, particularly from the most disadvantaged groups.</li> </ul>   |

- Work in a holistic framework that recognises the importance of connection to country, culture, spirituality, family and community for Aboriginal people and supports cultural safety.

**5. Building trust**

- Creating common ground between stakeholders.
- Promoting relationships, trust and honest conversations, especially during mistakes or setbacks.
- Celebrate actions and encourage the engagement of new stakeholders, including local communities, in the system-wide approach.
- Embed equity in actions, policies, processes and services.

**6. Shared aspiration**

- Develop and work towards a shared vision.
- Promote a sense of collective gain to maintain the vision and momentum of achieving positive outcomes.
- Prioritise shared responsibility, accountability and actions led through community development.

**7. Strategic learning and systems thinking**

- Prioritise a learning and experimentation environment.
- Listen to and actively apply lessons learnt from stakeholders, other sectors, and other programs to improve the way change is planned and delivered.
- Ensure the maintenance of an up-to-date and rigorous evidence base for action.
- Promote open discussions, critical analysis and reflection throughout every stage of the change process.

**8. Shared measures and transparency**

- Develop and use an agreed set of measures to monitor progress and success.
- Create a culture of monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement.
- Measure the impacts and outcomes of change.
- Acknowledge all forms of evidence from quantitative data analysis to storytelling, as different communities and cultural groups share and record their success in different ways.
- Share and make better use of data and information already available.
- Leverage data to support evidence-based decision making.
- Use feedback and insight to understand the effectiveness of change processes.

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| <b>9. Adaptable governance</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate coordination while enhancing local ownership and action.</li> <li>• Create an approvals and coordination structure that provides the necessary authority for change, decision making, and accountability across partners.</li> <li>• Leverage system governance to hardwire change, respecting the existing roles and responsibilities that exist.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>10. Funding and investment</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in high impact approaches that will result in the greatest benefit to the community and the health system.</li> <li>• Identify investment and reinvestment priorities.</li> <li>• Focus investment on maximising value and outcomes that support consumer and health system priorities.</li> <li>• Disinvest in services that do not provide value to the community or improve health outcomes.</li> <li>• Explore new ways of funding to provide flexibility, focused on outcomes and support long-term sustainability.</li> <li>• Invest to support service evaluation, reporting, and monitoring.</li> </ul> |

These critical building blocks are sourced from the [WA Healthy Weight Action Plan 2019-2024](#) and were adapted from the following sources:

1. [Western Australian Sustainable Health Review Final Report](#)
2. Public Health England's [Whole systems approach to obesity](#) guidance
3. McKinsey Global Institute's [Overcoming obesity: An initial economic analysis. Discussion paper](#)
4. An analysis of successful international and national programs currently targeting obesity:
  - a. [Amsterdam Healthy Weight Programme](#)
  - b. Borys JM, Bodo LY, Jebb SA, Seidell JC, Summerbell C, Richard D, et al. EPODE approach for childhood obesity prevention: methods, progress and international development. *Obesity Reviews* 2012;13:299-315.
  - c. [New Zealand Health Survey - Key Indicators](#)
  - d. Willis TA, Roberts KPJ, Berry TM, Bryant M, Rudolf MCJ. The impact of HENRY on parenting and family lifestyle: A national service evaluation of a preschool obesity prevention programme. *Public Health* 2016;136:101-8.
5. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) United Kingdom (UK) public health guidelines related to weight management
  - a. [Weight management: lifestyle services for overweight or obese adults](#)
  - b. [Weight management: lifestyle services for overweight or obese children and young people](#)
6. Swinburn BA, Kraak V, Allender S, Atkins VJ, Baker P, Bogard JR, et al. The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition, and Climate Change: The Lancet Commission report. *The Lancet* 2019;393(10173):791-846.