

Communicating Effectively

Systems change work involves a web of interconnected stakeholders, interrelated problems, and multiple solutions. Distilling this information and sharing it with others can be tricky because we often only consider people who are already part of the system. Shifting the focus of communication to those who are unfamiliar with the systems or work can help you think through what you really need to say.

Consider the following options for simplifying how you communicate complex problems:

- **Diagram it.** A diagram is a great way to think through systems change work because it helps you identify and understand the problem at hand. Be sure to work with others: To succeed, solutions must involve multiple stakeholders and individuals. This Stanford Business article, [Hit the Mark: Make Complex Ideas Understandable](#), provides six diagram exercises to help you communicate about the problem you're trying to solve.
- **Use graphics.** Use charts, graphs, and other images to break up heavy blocks of text and provide a visual representation of what you're trying to say. Provide these as helpful takeaways for audiences. Remember that graphics are visual aids rather than text substitutes, and you may need to offer additional context to maximize their effectiveness.
- **Break it up.** In your communications, block out sections to improve information flow and help your audiences better understand and remember the problem you're working to solve. Systems change work is ever-changing, and communications should not be stagnant. Consider [this example](#) on how to communicate about the complex topic of displacement from climate change.