



# Prevention Mindset Institute: *Embracing Prevention Across Systems*

This 3-2-1 newsletter shares three ideas, two quotes, and one question to ponder. In this edition, we focus on systems change and shifting mindsets. We will send new issues in December, March, April and June, prior to the in-person Institute.

The format, 3-2-1, is based on James Clear's newsletter that shares ideas related to developing effective habits, drawing from his book, [Atomic Habits](#).



## Three Ideas:

1. "In highly successful change efforts, people find ways to help others see the problems or solutions in ways that influence emotions, not just thought. In other words, when change works, it's because leaders are speaking to the Elephant as well as to the Rider." Change only works if the Elephant and Rider are working together.

Dan and Chip Heath, authors of [Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard](#), explain that we have two parts to us. We have the emotional side (the Elephant) and the rational side (the Rider). Most of us think that the Rider always controls the Elephant, but in most cases it's the other way around. The Elephant somehow ends up controlling the Rider. If the Rider can direct the Elephant down a well-prepared Path then there is a good chance for change.

~Heath, Chip and Dan Heath. [Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard](#). Toronto: Random House Canada, 2010.

2. Shifts in system conditions are more likely to be sustained when working at three different levels of change: explicit, semi-explicit, and implicit. FSG sees these levels as 1. structural change (explicit-policies, practices, the flow of resources), 2. relational change (semi-explicit-relationships and connections, power dynamics), and 3. transformative change (implicit-mental models). FSG correlates transformative change with mental models or deeply held beliefs and assumptions that influence one's actions. These three levels of change can be independently defined, measured, and targeted for change, and they are intertwined and interact with each other.

"Since the less explicit conditions are the most challenging to clarify but can have huge impacts on shifting systems, changemakers must ensure that they pay sufficient attention to the

relationships, power dynamics, and especially the underlying mental models embedded in the systems in which they work.”

~John Kania, Mark Kramer, Peter Senge. *The Water of Systems Change*. FSG: *Reimagining Social Change*, May 2018. [https://www.fsg.org/publications/water\\_of\\_systems\\_change](https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change)

3. In a conversation with two parent leaders, Valerie Lebanion and Joanne Hodgeman, who are both also full-time social workers and family advocates, several important ideas were shared. A few are offered here:

Child protection service providers and primary preventionists, need to continually ask themselves, “What is it that keeps families from asking for help sooner?”

Often family support services are available but it can be difficult for even trained professionals to easily identify and thereby access the services. Ultimately, we need a full-time person in every state whose job it is to maintain an accurate, up-to-date registry of appropriate services that are available throughout the state. At a minimum, “If the state is funding you, the state should be promoting you.” Lebanion and Hodgeman have discovered that even state-funded services are sometimes not marketed in such a way as to be easily identifiable. How does your state or county share information on support services with agencies and families?

~Read more about Joanne Hodgeman and Valerie Lebanion: <https://friendsnrc.org/parent-leadership/parent-advisory-council/>



## Two Quotes:

*“We must recognize that all of these systems are operating within, and often constrained by, an overall system that itself is built on a history of racism and lack of priority for children, poor people, and more recently, immigrants.” James-Brown said, in a letter to the Child Welfare League of American membership.*

*“I say go back to our founding – was the system founded by white men and funded by white men for racist reasons? Yes. The funding and policies of the CPS system in particular were developed by White men and reflect their values and views about families. But it is what it is. So now how do we go and root out the things that allowed the system to operate that way?*

*Our front door is very problematic, the way children get into the child welfare system and why. Who are the reporters to our hotlines? What does the hotline do with the information? How good is the training for reporters? How good are the alternatives and to what extent do we use them? Our group has had a lot of discussion about moving the system to understanding its role as strengthening families instead of being looked at as the ones who want to remove children.*

*We need to focus like a laser on keeping kids with their families and acting as advocates for them getting the dollars they need to do what they want to do. The guidelines and practices around the whole CPS area are important.”*

~Christine James-Brown, CEO Child Welfare League of America interviewed in an article, *Child Welfare League of America CEO: Field Must Confront Its Racist Roots*, written by Michael Fitzgerald and posted on 8/2/2022 in *The Imprint: Youth and Family News*. <https://imprintnews.org/child-welfare-2/child-welfare-league-of-america-ceo-field-must-confront-its-racist-roots/45794>

*"One of the great errors that organizations make is shutting down what is a natural, life-enhancing process---chaos. We are terrified of chaos. As a manager, it signals failure. But if you move out of control and into an appreciation of natural order, you understand that the only way a system changes is when it is far from equilibrium, when it moves from the 'quiet' we treasure and is confronted with the choice to die or reorganize. And you can't reorganize to a higher level unless you risk the perils of the path through chaos."*

~Margaret Wheatley - <https://margaretwheatley.com/bio/>



## One Question:

"Assume that more than one path exists to achieve your ideal life."

~James Clear's 3-2-1 Newsletter released on 7/16/2020

This would suggest that more than one path exists to change your child welfare system.

**What would an alternative path look like?**