

## Workforce Synergy Forum Resources

### System Partner Meetings with Design Thinking

*We build coalitions by bringing partners together for meaningful conversation, both in-person and virtually, inviting radical collaboration and modeling a "sky's the limit" mindset. The right stakeholders and answers to the big questions might not show up right away, so have patience with the process.*

- Louise McLoughlin, Director, Dutchess County WIB

### Recording

Click "View session recordings" at the top right corner | Search: System Partner Meetings with Design Thinking

#### Resources:

[IBM Design Thinking Toolkit](#)

[Slides](#)

#### Agenda:

Why and What of Design Thinking

Dutchess County Child Care Coalition

Pacific Power & Light Company Example

Participate in Design Thinking Activity

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**A solution-based approach to problem-solving**

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**Seeks to uncover human needs**

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**Assists to reframe the problem in human-centric ways**

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**A mindset**

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**Approach to help develop innovative and life-centered solutions**

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**Helps teams solve complex problem**

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**Flexible and agile**

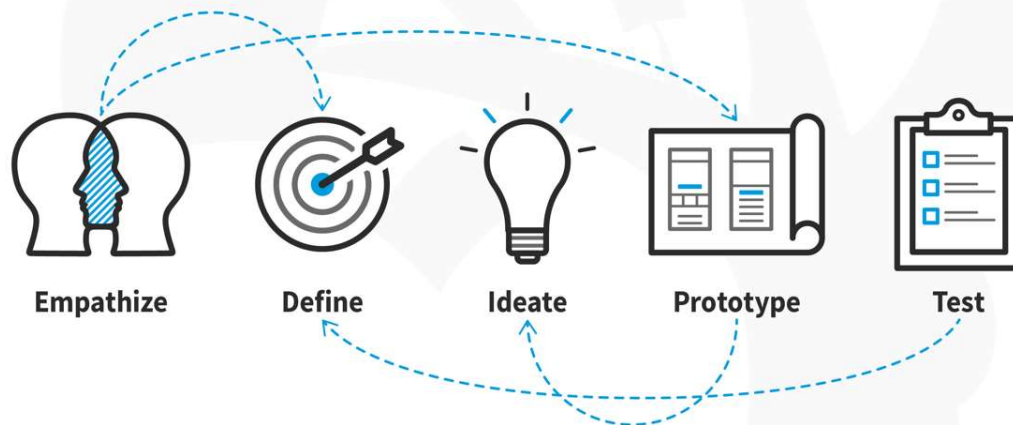


What is  
Design  
Thinking?

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."**

**-Margaret Mead**

# Design Thinking: A 5-Stage Process



Interaction Design Foundation  
[interaction-design.org](http://interaction-design.org)

## What's the Loop?



Who are our users?  
What are their needs?  
What's their context?  
What's their feedback?



Who are our users?  
What are we learning?  
Are we aligned?  
What's our plan?



What's possible?  
What's the concept?  
What's the story?  
How do we deliver?

## 2 KEY FACTORS

### Radical Collaboration

- Leave job titles and ranks at the door
  - I keep a pretend basket at the door for egos
- Show respect and practice active listening
- Explore ideas together as equals
- Practice empathy
- Share knowledge

### Sky's the Limit

- No idea is a bad idea
- Not the time to compromise
- Crazy ideas/thoughts are welcome and encouraged
- Don't say no

# Dos and Don'ts of Design Thinking



DON'T BLAST  
OFF



DON'T  
ASSUME  
YOU KNOW  
WHAT THE  
GROUP  
WANTS

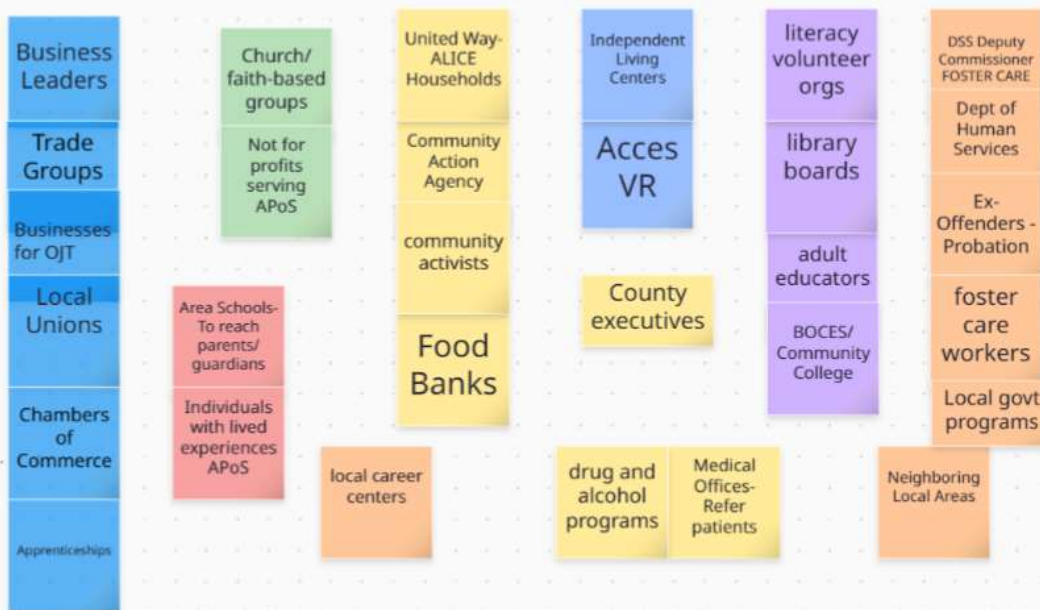


DON'T ASSUME  
YOU KNOW  
WHAT THE  
STAKEHOLDERS  
NEED



DON'T TALK  
TOO MUCH

## Adult Priority of Service (APoS) Stakeholder Map



Try diverse design thinking tools from the [IBM toolkit](#) at your internal, external, supervision and other partnership building meetings!

**Please take a [survey](#) to shape future Synergy Forums!**

# Synergy Forum Facilitators



Louise McLoughlin is the Executive Director of the Dutchess County Workforce Investment Board, an adjunct professor at Marist College and Adelphi University, and a former business owner. As a believer in lifelong learning, Dr. McLoughlin completed her formal education in 2019 and is a graduate of West Chester University's Doctor of Public Administration program. Now she brings her passion for program development and implementation to the workplace, the classroom, and the board room. [louise@dcwib.org](mailto:louise@dcwib.org)



As a Master of Social Work with a Management efficiency, Advocacy, Community building, Resource development, and Outcome evaluation (MACRO) focus, Juie Deo has worked with many large-scale human services programs. For over a decade, she has evolved alongside NYSDOL and the workforce development system, fostering deep empathy for the challenges of leaders. She understands their diverse responsibilities and recognizes the value of us mastering Design Thinking skills through Louise's expertise. Juie hopes leaders will attend this Synergy Forum live, enhancing their toolkit for successful collaboration. [Juie.deo@labor.ny.gov](mailto:Juie.deo@labor.ny.gov)

[Resources from past Workforce Synergy Forums](#) (under the Workforce Synergy Forum filter)

## What is the Workforce Synergy Forum?

As the leaders of WIOA Programs, we all face similar opportunities and thrive by asking questions, sharing practices, and learning from experts and our peers. Workforce Synergy is a monthly forum that explores, develops, and sustains effective workforce strategies. We will collectively build the synergy we want and need for our workforce system. Leaders are encouraged to attend live for active, real-time collaboration!

Synergy  
Principles  
STEP-CC

Safety

Trustworthiness and transparency

Empowerment, voice, and choice

Peer support

Collaboration and mutuality

Cultural, historical, and gender inclusion

Inspired? Questions? Collaborate! [LWDB@labor.ny.gov](mailto:LWDB@labor.ny.gov) | 518-457-3555

Brought to you by the WIOA Local Leaders and New York State Department of Labor



# Synergy Forum

Unite to Strategize and Operationalize

Past Forums @ NYSDOL's Workforce Professionals Tools Page under Workforce Synergy Forum Filter

1

## Synergy Principles

### STEP-CC

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Safety

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Trustworthiness and transparency

---

Empowerment, voice, and choice

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Peer support

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Collaboration and mutuality

---

Cultural, historical, and gender inclusion

2

### Prior Synergy Forums!

Total Attendance ~1200  
Average Attendance ~110

#### Topics:

1. Training Strategy Development 1
2. Training Strategy Development 2
3. Brainstorming with Leaders
4. OJT Process and Marketing
5. Strategies for Adult Priority of Services
6. Planning for Basic Skills Assessments & Services
7. Mental Health Support in Employment Services
8. Tools for Frontline Staff Training
9. Possibilities for Youth Programs
10. Program Monitoring Discussion
11. Fiscal Monitoring Preparation

### Next Synergy Forum

October 29, 2:30pm

### Outreach Funds and Innovation

-Jesse McCree from PA works

lwdb@labor.ny.gov

3

## Why Design Thinking @ Synergy Forum?

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Need for effective, efficient, and empathetic partnership building!

Practice skill building in a small group

4

## Share in Chat

Name, Local Area, Role

What's your **glow and grow area** of partnership building?



5

## Design Thinking

FOR NON-PROFITS/GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Louise McLoughlin, DPA  
Executive Director  
Dutchess County Workforce Investment Board

6

### What we will do:

1. Learn what Design Thinking is
2. Hear how Dutchess County used Design Thinking to create a Childcare Coalition
3. Learn how Pacific Power & Light Company used Design Thinking to solve a problem
4. Setting up your own Design Thinking Session
5. Go through Dutchess County's strategies to bring the community together to begin to solve the childcare issue
6. Participate in a Design Thinking activity
7. Feedback and questions



7

## What is Design Thinking?

A solution-based approach to problem-solving

Seeks to uncover human needs

Assists to reframe the problem in human-centric ways

A mindset

Approach to help develop innovative and life-centered solutions

Helps teams solve complex problem

Flexible and agile

8

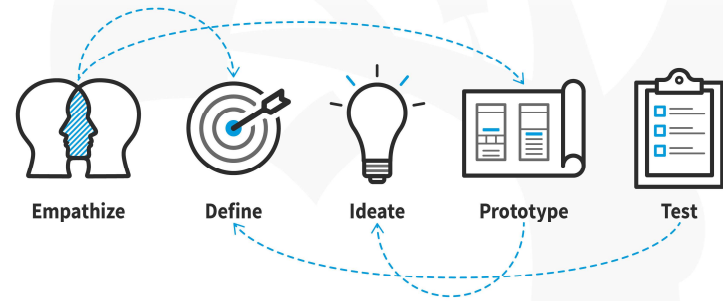


## How does it work?



9

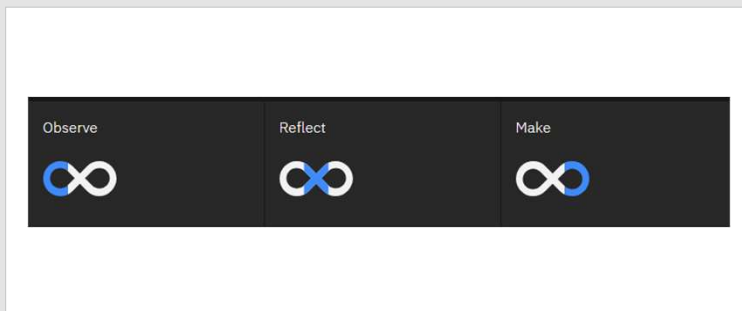
## Design Thinking: A 5-Stage Process



Interaction Design Foundation  
[interaction-design.org](http://interaction-design.org)

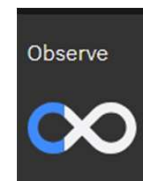
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## The Loop

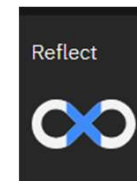


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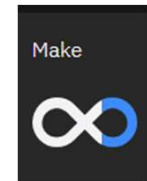
## THE LOOP



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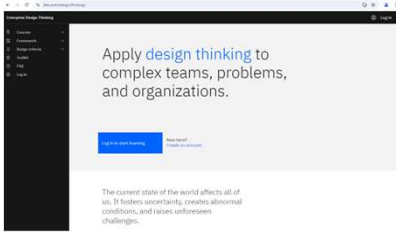
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**WHERE CAN YOU GET TRAINING?**

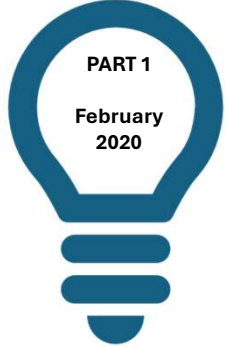


**FREE TRAINING**  
**GO TO THE WEBSITE:**  
<https://www.ibm.com/design/thinking/>

**What the website looks like:**



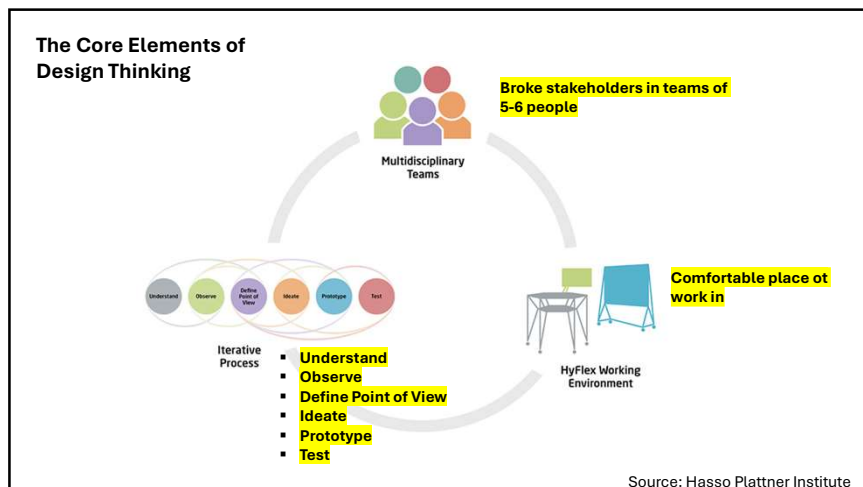
13



**PART 1**  
**February 2020**

**HOW WE USED DESIGN THINKING IN DUTCHESS COUNTY**

14



15

**BASED ON DESIGN THINKING SESSION**

**February 2020 Design Thinking at IBM**

Work on problem of not enough workers in Dutchess County to fill all the job openings

Brought together business, workforce development, educators and county government in all day session

Discussed challenges of businesses, youth, educators and people receiving public assistance

Came up with three key issues:

**Transportation**  
**Housing**  
**Childcare**

16



## In 2024: Choose Our Problem to Tackle

Went back to the 2020 Design Thinking notes and based on the February 2020 stakeholder notes and discussions we started with this....

### DUTCHESS COUNTY DOES NOT HAVE:

Enough trained childcare workers

Enough open daycare slots

Affordable childcare

Slots available outside of normal 9-5 work schedules

17



## Dutchess County Childcare Coalition

### Initial Goal of the DCWIB

Pull stakeholders together to work towards a unified goal

### Assumptions:

1. Stakeholders want to increase the number of skilled childcare workers
2. Stakeholders want to increase the number of childcare slots
3. Stakeholders are willing to utilize data to track

18

## LET'S LOOK AT AN EXAMPLE

Many years ago, the Pacific Power and Light (PP&L) had a problem with ice building up on the power cables that supplied their customers in the [Cascade Mountains](#). The build-up of ice on the cables could overstress the lines causing them to break. The normal solution was for a linesman to climb the towers and shake the power line. It was a dangerous job with a high chance of the linesman falling off the towers.



19

## TOOK A DESIGN THINKING APPROACH

- Brought in a professional facilitator
- Gathered a diverse group to look at the problem
- Group included many stakeholders including:
  - Linesmen
  - Supervisors
  - Accountants
  - Administrative staff



20

## IDENTIFIED THE PROBLEM

1. Ice builds up on powerlines in remote areas
2. Lines are difficult to clear/too dangerous for workers
3. Not economically feasible to clear the lines

DEFINE



21

## NEED A GOAL/AIM IN MIND

- ✓ Knock The Ice Off The Power Lines
- ✓ Do Not Use Linesmen
- ✓ Tolerable Cost



22

## During Break

One of the linesmen recounted the story of how he came across a black bear who was not happy that he was trespassing on his territory. The bear chased him for over a mile.

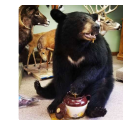


IDEATE

23

## To try and stimulate the group, the facilitator retold the story

- One person suggested training the bears to climb the poles to shake the ice off the lines.
- Ideas followed about how they could be tempted with pots of honey placed on top of the poles.



24

One of the more senior, more sarcastic linemen said, 'You know all those fancy helicopters the front office staff fly around in all the time? **Why don't we grab one of those and fly from pole to pole placing the honey pots on top just after an ice storm?** That way the honey will be there when we need it.

Everyone laughed.



25

## DESIGN THINKING AT WORK

Then one of the staff spoke for the first time.

"I was a nurse's aide in Vietnam. I saw many injured soldiers arrive at the field hospital by helicopter. The down wash from the helicopter blades was amazing. Dust would fly everywhere. It was almost blinding. **I wonder if we just flew the helicopter over the power lines at low altitude, would the down wash from those blades be sufficient to shake the lines and knock the ice off?**"



26

This time there was no laughter.....just silence. She had come up with a solution.



27

## Setting the Stage for Design Thinking

What does it look like?

28



## In Person

29

## Supplies Needed

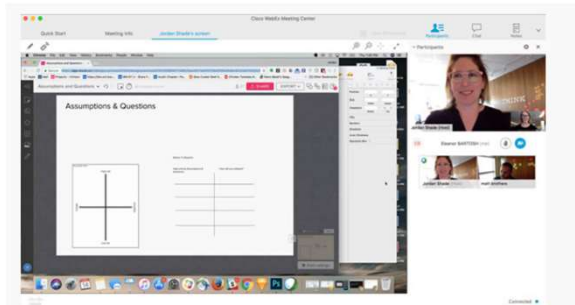
### IN PERSON:

- Sticky note pads
- Markers
- Easel and Pads



30

## Zoom or a Video Call



31

# Using Design Thinking to Create a Childcare Coalition

Dutchess County

32

## Pull together stakeholders

Held a series of (monthly) meetings and invited stakeholders

Defined stakeholders as anyone interested

Included ALL of the 2024 meeting dates on all correspondence with the zoom link in person was preferred

Patiently allowed the group to grow

33

## Meeting Agenda

AGENDAS WERE LIGHT AND ALLOWED TIME FOR DISCUSSION

STARTED EACH MEETING WITH INTRODUCTIONS

STARTED EACH MEETING WITH A SUMMARY OF WHERE WE ARE NOW

34

## Agenda Items

INITIAL MEETINGS:

Why this group/Why now

Was asked – why the DCWIB by a major (local) foundation

EVERY MEETING

Education & Information

35

## There are some DON'TS



DON'T BLAST OFF



DON'T ASSUME YOU KNOW WHAT THE GROUP WANTS



DON'T ASSUME YOU KNOW WHAT THE STAKEHOLDERS NEED



DON'T TALK TOO MUCH

36

## Starting point

1. Start with reflective questions
2. Pick a question to answer together
3. Share your answers
4. Move to another reflective question  
What's working?/What isn't?
5. Who can you reach out to for help?
6. Come back together
7. Come up with a short-term idea

37

## 2 KEY FACTORS FOR DUTCHESS COUNTY

### Radical Collaboration

- Leave job titles and ranks at the door
  - I keep a pretend basket at the door for egos
- Show respect and practice active listening
- Explore ideas together as equals
- Practice empathy
- Share knowledge

### Sky's the Limit

- No idea is a bad idea
- Not the time to compromise
- Crazy ideas/thoughts are welcome and encouraged
- Don't say no

38

## What did we accomplish?

### Brought together 50+ stakeholders

- Community College
- State Senators
- NYATEP
- United Way
- BOCES
- Dutchess County Government
- Community Centers
- Childcare Council
- Trainers
- Daycare Providers
- Parents
- Business
- DSS
- WDI
- Foundations

### Held a Childcare Roundtable Event in May

- Pattern for Progress State of Childcare in the Region
- United Way ALICE
- Discussion

### Held a Childcare Coalition Summit in June

- 2 Day Summit
- Set Goals for the 10-year Action Plan
- Visited several daycare centers
- Agreed on language and signed an Accord

39

## What else happened?

Silo's were reduced

Two educators are now working together

Made some friends

40



## This is what we agreed:

Between now and 2035 we will focus on three high-level guiding targets that will have set timelines and be reviewed annually to re-shape and re-organize early learning and childcare within Dutchess County.



41

1. Universal system with space available for every child in DC regardless of income, family structure, number of children or location
2. A space for every child will require the training of a corresponding number of early learning and childcare professionals

Age	Numbers	Staff
Infants (under 18 mos.)	3,777	945
Toddlers (18 to 36 mos.)	3,898	780
Pre-schoolers (age 3)	2,673	381
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>10,348</b>	<b>2,106</b>

1. Elevating compensation for the field to ensure the profession thrives and retains those most skilled at early childhood education.

42

## Next Steps

### Create an action plan

- Decide on sub-groups
- Continue to meet as a full group monthly

### Some things we are focusing on:

- How do we increase the number of people we can train?
- How do we increase entrepreneurship?
- What are our "asks" for our "electeds"?
- How will we keep track of the data?

43

## Activity

### Create a Stakeholder Map

44





## Purpose of the activity

To try out some “Design Thinking”



45

## THE PROBLEM

How do we increase our Adult Priority of Service rate to 75%?

46

## Loop

### Identify individual people

- On the whiteboard identify people involved or impacted

### Discuss

- Look at the list- do any overlap? Who is missing?
- Decide as a team if you have everyone

### Make connections

- Start to connect with lines and arrows- how do they interact

### Play back and discuss

- Identify emerging themes
- Who stands out
- What relationships stand out
- Again, who is missing?

47

### 1. Identify individual people

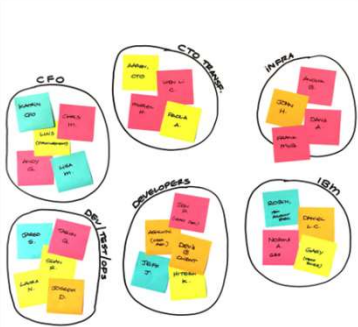
On your whiteboard, large sticky pad, or virtual whiteboard, identify people involved with or impacted by the project. Make sure to include specific names and roles. Do this individually and silently at first.



48

## 2. Converge and discuss

Look at all the people you've identified so far. Are there any that overlap? Did you miss anyone? Come together as a team and make sure you have all of your stakeholder documented.



49

### 3. Make connections

Begin drawing lines with arrows connecting the people. Describe the relationships between them. You can also cluster, circle, and label related groupings. Draw arrows between the clusters to describe relationships between groups (ex. sales to product management).

The diagram illustrates an organizational structure with the following clusters and roles:

- CFO:** Includes roles like "KIMBERLY CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER", "LARRY CHIEF ACCOUNTANT", "JIMMY CHIEF TAX", and "JANE CHIEF COMPLIANCE".
- CTO/IT:** Includes roles like "ANDREW CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER", "JAMES CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER", and "ALAN CHIEF DATA OFFICER".
- HR/PA:** Includes roles like "PATRICIA CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER", "JILL CHIEF PERSONNEL OFFICER", and "CHRIS CHIEF PAYROLL OFFICER".
- IR/IN:** Includes roles like "SARAH CHIEF INVESTOR RELATIONS OFFICER", "JENNIFER CHIEF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICER", and "CHRIS CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER".
- DEVELOPERS:** Includes roles like "JASON CHIEF DEVELOPER", "ANDREW CHIEF SOFTWARE ENGINEER", "JAMES CHIEF QA ENGINEER", and "JILL CHIEF UX DESIGNER".

Relationships are indicated by arrows:

- Solid arrows point from CFO to CTO/IT, CTO/IT to HR/PA, HR/PA to IR/IN, and IR/IN to DEVELOPERS.
- A dashed arrow points from CTO/IT to HR/PA.
- A solid arrow points from DEVELOPERS to CTO/IT.
- A solid arrow points from DEVELOPERS to HR/PA.
- A solid arrow points from DEVELOPERS to IR/IN.

Legend:

- ★ Director - President / Representative
- ★ in circle Senior Manager
- in circle Staff Manager

50

Questions?  
Further Discussion?

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**Another way to use  
Design Thinking-  
Empathy Maps**

**NYSCION-**  
Agency asked us to do  
a training for their staff.  
Their number one  
problem was  
developing empathy  
with their staff.

The diagram is a hand-drawn Empathy Map. It consists of a central circle with a cross extending from its center to the edges. The cross divides the circle into four quadrants. The top quadrant is labeled 'THINKS' and 'FEELS'. The right quadrant is labeled 'THINKS' and 'FEELS'. The bottom quadrant is labeled 'DOES'. The left quadrant is labeled 'SAYS' and 'DOES'. Inside the circle, there is a drawing of a person wearing a cap and holding a laptop. The name 'RARA' is written above the person, and 'PERSONA' is written below the person.



# Example of another use - working on employment challenges for youth who are neurodivergent

53

# Share in Chat

Rename yourself as your favorite leader


What's your **glow and grow area** of your local area?

A decorative graphic on the right side of the slide featuring several colorful speech bubbles (orange, green, blue) hanging from above by black strings. The bubbles are stylized and have a soft, blurred background.

54

A collage of colorful sticky notes (yellow, green, pink, blue, purple) with black outlines of a person icon. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the bottom left, containing the URL [tinyurl.com/synergy-forum-feedback/](https://tinyurl.com/synergy-forum-feedback/) in blue text. Above the URL is a small blue horizontal line.

55



**THANK YOU!**

**Louise McLoughlin, DPA**  
**Executive Director DCWIB**

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56