

Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

For Arizona veterans and those who care for them.



Engaging People - Improving Our Processes - Serving Veterans

**Presented by Arizona Department of Veterans' Services:
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Scott Kurish – Office of Continuous Improvement**



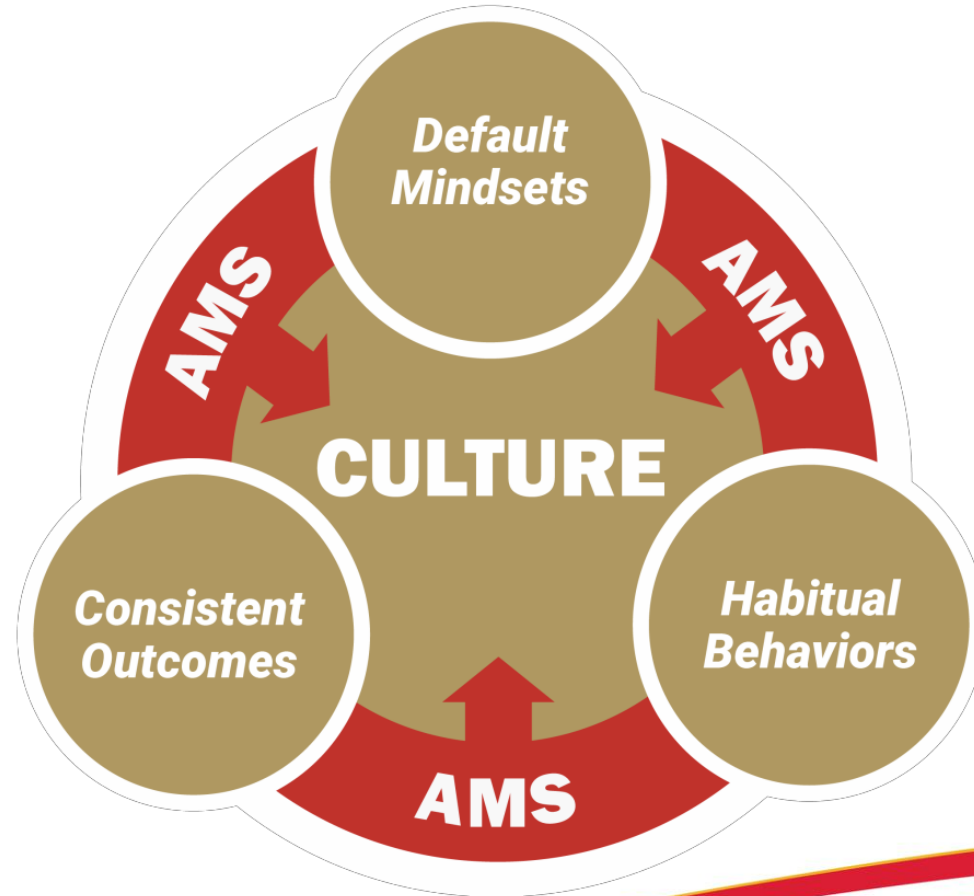
The Arizona Management System



- An intentional management system based in Lean Concepts
- Data driven problem solving at every level of the organization
- Leaders committed to developing their teams
- Teams dedicated to continuous improvement



What is a Management System?



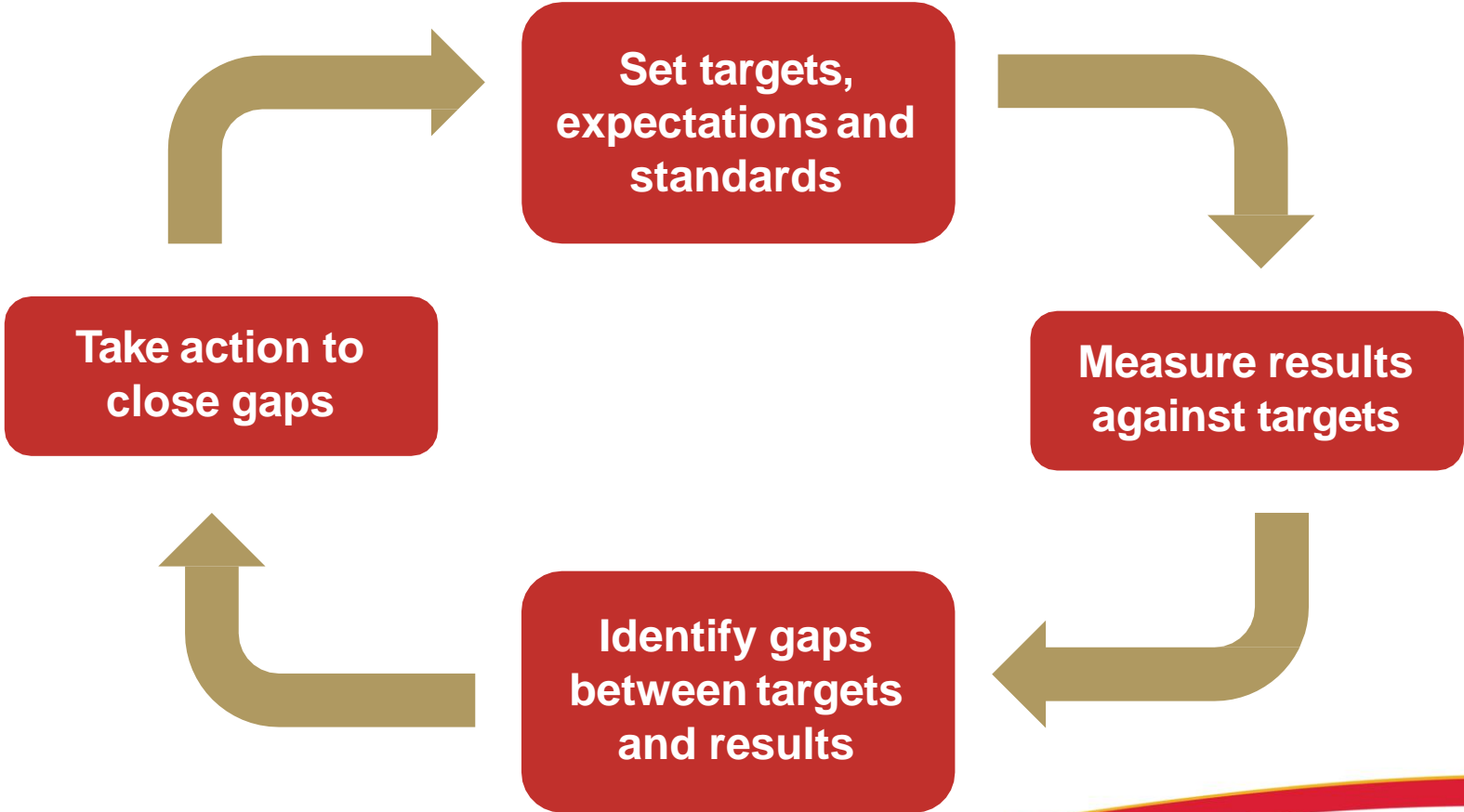
What We Believe at ADVS



- The best ideas come from those closest to the work
- Results come from strong processes utilized by qualified people
- Open communication
- Solve problems important to our team members first
- Listen – you will be amazed at what you hear



Our Culture



Keys to Effective Process Metrics

Enable rapid problem
identification
by front line.

(Stop & Notify)

Enable rapid problem
response
by management.

(Sense & Respond)



Make it normal for the flow of the product to be continuous. Reduce or eliminate stagnation.





ARIZONA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Goals, Metrics, & Targets:
Connecting the Organization

Business / Performance
Reviews

Visual Management:
Performance & Process Adherence

Tiered Huddles
& Huddle Boards

LEADER BEHAVIORS

Leader
Standard Work

Gemba
Walks

Andon
Response

One-On-One
Coaching

PROBLEM SOLVING

Process Standardization
& Standardized Work

Basic Problem Solving:
All Employees

Intermediate Problem Solving:
Managers & Select Employees

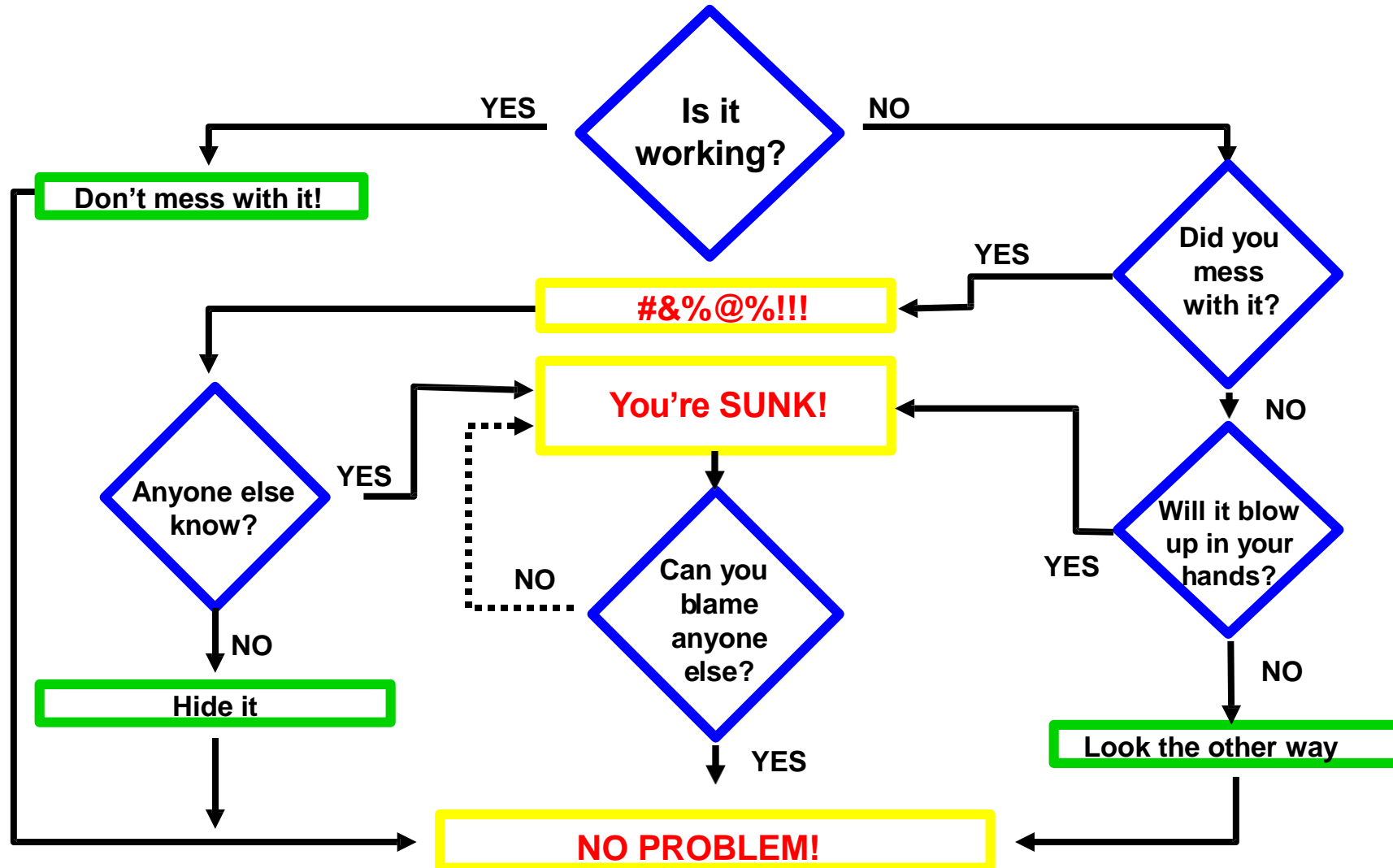
Complex Problem Solving:
Continous Improvement Staff

- GOAL** - priority mission outcome an agency seeks to achieve
- METRIC** - the actual score measured at a given point in time
- TARGET** - a measurable item that defines the status of achieving the goal
- BUSINESS / PERFORMANCE REVIEW** - The foundation of the management system, this comprises a review of the agency performance metrics and countermeasures, financials and business breakthrough projects.
- VISUAL MANAGEMENT** - The visual indicators that enable quick, informed assessment of how a process is performing whether standard work is being adhered to and if outcomes are being met.
- TIERED HUDDLES & HUDDLE BOARDS** - Brief daily or weekly meetings performed by teams using visual management to reflect on performance, identify and solve problems and commit to making adjustments. The tiered structure facilitates communication and problem solving at each level of the organization.

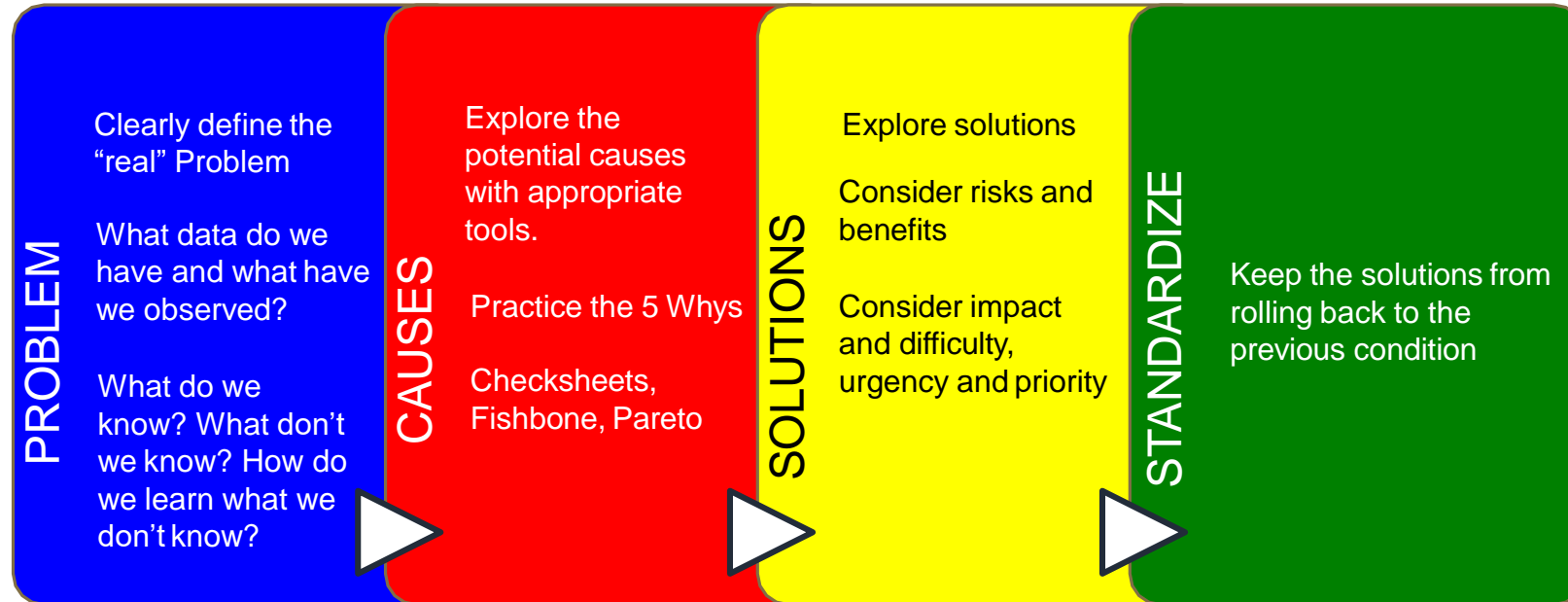
- LEADER STANDARD WORK** - The maintenance system for processes and the overall management system. It is the written plan that ensures leaders model AMS behaviors and provide coaching to teams. The plan includes Gemba Walks, Andon Response and One-on-One Coaching.
- GEMBA WALKS** - The personal observation of work by leadership for confirming standardized work and providing coaching.
- ANDON RESPONSE** - The Andon is a communication tool that announces a process problem at the place and time it occurs so that leaders provide support in a timely, effective manner.
- ONE-ON-ONE COACHING** - The regular cadence of discussion between managers and staff for the purpose of developing employees and providing regular feedback.

- STANDARDIZED WORK** - The documented current one best way to perform a process. It is the foundation for the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle of continuous improvement.
- BASIC PROBLEM SOLVING** - A simple and effective set of problem solving tools that everyone in the organization is expected to apply as problems are surfaced.
- INTERMEDIATE PROBLEM SOLVING** - This builds on the basic problem solving methods with a structured approach to identifying and documenting root causes and potential countermeasures. Problem solving at this level is documented using an A3.
- COMPLEX PROBLEM SOLVING** - Advanced skill sets and tools for breakthrough or high-impact, cross-agency projects involving staff trained in Lean/Six Sigma techniques.

Conventional Problem Solving



Basic Problem Solving



Only then...

Only then...

Evaluate each to choose the best known at the time



Arizona Department of Veterans' Services



- ADVS, headquartered in Phoenix, is a state agency that serves and provides advocacy to service members, veterans and their families.
- We employ 395 people who:
 - Operate two long-term care facilities with two additional facilities in the planning stages
 - Operate three State Veterans' Memorial Cemeteries
 - Provide guidance to Arizona Veterans that need help navigating the VA benefits process
 - Provide certification service to higher education institutions looking to accept the G.I. Bill financing
 - Advocate for Veterans through agency initiatives
 - Veteran Suicide prevention
 - Arizona Roadmap to Veteran Employment
 - Arizona Action Plan to End Homelessness Among Veterans
 - Tuition Waiver
 - Gold Star Military Medal
 - Native American Settlement Fund
 - Minority Veteran Programs



Our Story



- July 2016: Embraced the Arizona Management System
- February 2017: Provided AMS training to all team members
 - We saw immediate progress by establishing huddle boards and developing metrics
- Today we realize over 20 process improvements per month
- We are breaking down long-term barriers and making work more rewarding



Results to Celebrate



Engaging People



- **Problem:** Call off and turnover rates at State Veteran Homes were at unacceptable levels, causing constant recruiting and hiring, excessive use of overtime and temporary help which was eroding customer satisfaction. Time card errors were also at a record high.
- **Management View:** State pay scales are lower than private sector, causing worker dissatisfaction



Engaging People



- **Team Concerns:**

- Not enough consecutive time off
- Temporary help causing teaming issues and poor customer service
- Not enough time for professional development – internally or externally
- Non-standard work week causing confusion in time collection and pay



Improving Our Processes



- **Action:** Multi-discipline team convened to design a plan that would address the employee concerns
 - 12-hour shift format was planned and implemented, allowing each employee three consecutive days off
 - Traditional work week time charging was implemented
 - New shift format allowed for the addition of one extra team member per wing, per shift without increasing headcount



Serving Veterans



• Results:

- Over 90% reduction in time card errors
- Dependency on temporary help is declining
- Decline in overtime hours
- Increased customer satisfaction score
- Customer Care Quality score at record levels - 25% better than previous year
- Employee retention rate is increasing



Serving Veterans



- **Benefits:**

- Better customer satisfaction scores led to an increase in admissions
- Money savings, which were not anticipated
- Happier employees has led to:
 - Fewer call offs
 - Better customer care
 - More improvement ideas



Engaging People



- **Problem:** Total dollars in VA Benefits entering Arizona was lower than expected due to the size of our Veteran population
- **Management View:** The number of direct services could be increased by standardizing counseling appointments, thereby increasing the number of veterans that VBCs could see in a work day



Engaging People



- **Team Concerns:**

- Long drive times for VBCs in rural areas
- Imbalance of workload between regional offices
- Lack of Standard Work across regions and individual offices



Improving Our Processes



- **Action:** Problem-solving team formed to address the issue
 - Analyzed office visits to determine capacity
 - Established Virtual VBC capability to cut down on “windshield time” for both VBCs and Veteran customers
 - Established Standard Work for customer service and provided training



Serving Veterans



• Results:

- Increased Veterans served by 15% in less than one year
- Virtual VBC allows regional offices to level workload during peak times
- Reduced in-office wait times and timespan for scheduling appointments
- Federal dollars entering Arizona in the form of Veteran benefits increased by 16% over one year and has shown consistent growth
 - Veterans served by ADVS receive \$45.2 million a month in VA compensation and pension claims



Serving Veterans



- **Benefits:**

- More Veterans served means more Veterans are getting the benefits they have earned
- VBCs can do more of the work that they want to do
- Arizona becoming a leader in serving those who served us



Small Steps Enable Long Journeys



- Special Spice mixture reduces meal preparation time by 15 minutes per meal
- Cemetery coupling invention reduces time to water the grounds by two hours
- Process changes that reduced time to pay invoices from 29 to nine days
- Process changes that allow us to fill open job positions in 30 days or less from an average of over 45 days
- New internal mail distribution process helps regional offices get mail three to five days faster
- Transportation services have been challenged and revamped, reducing wait times for our resident veterans by over two hours



Summary



- **Engaging People**
 - 395 teammates identifying and solving problems
- **Improving Our Processes**
 - Concentrating on value and removing waste
- **Serving Veterans**
 - Better processes lead to improved service for Arizona's Veterans and their families



Contact Information



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Questions?

