

# How Successful is your System?

Advancing your Approach

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Making Every  
Adult Matter

“

*Learning is not compulsory; neither is survival...*

*-Deming*

”

# Systems Leadership



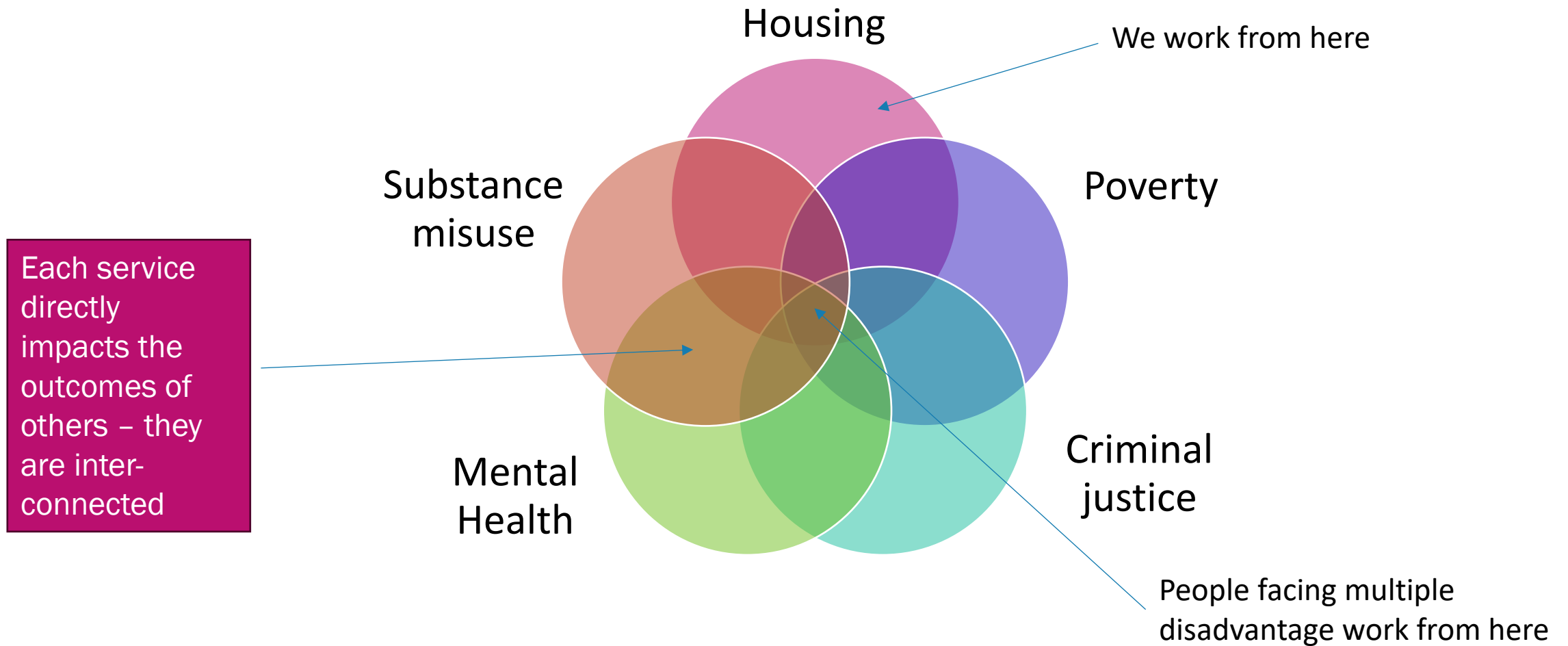
# Systems Practice

Common mess



Housing

# Common mess



*\*not an exhaustive list*



# Stafford Beer's Viability Principle:



Stability

If we get this balance right – we stabilise what works  
and we adapt to changes and challenges

Adaptation



Cohesion

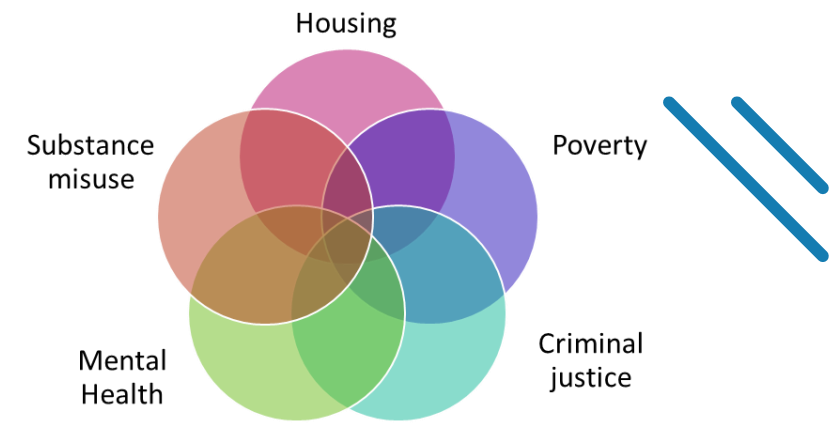
If we get this balance right – we work together as a whole but  
we have enough autonomy to be effective in what we do

Autonomy



# Viability Principle

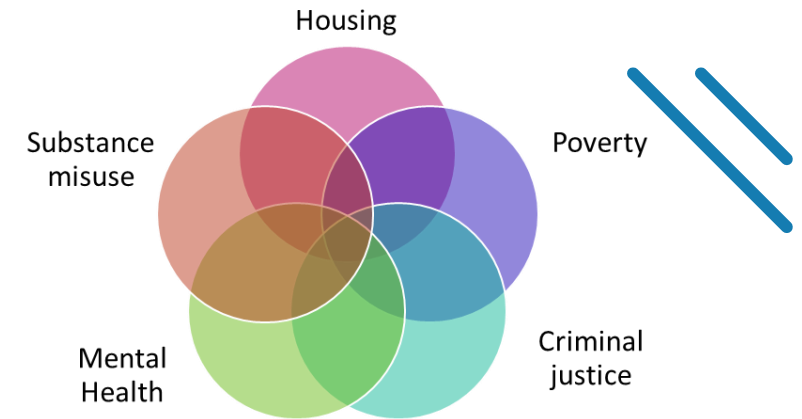
- **Stability** – keeping things going well
  - Finding what works and incubating, protecting
  - Strengthening cross-boundary/silo interpersonal relationships -> structural relationships
  - Sharing learning across boundaries and reinforcing shared goals and benefits.
- **Adaptation** (interventions) – making changes to improve
  - Working across stakeholders/the system boundaries and silos to identify the shared nature of complex challenges
  - Going ‘one level up’ to give context to the problem (eg Multiple Disadvantage is a problem one layer up)
  - Adapting the system (across silos) to perform better (often at one level up)



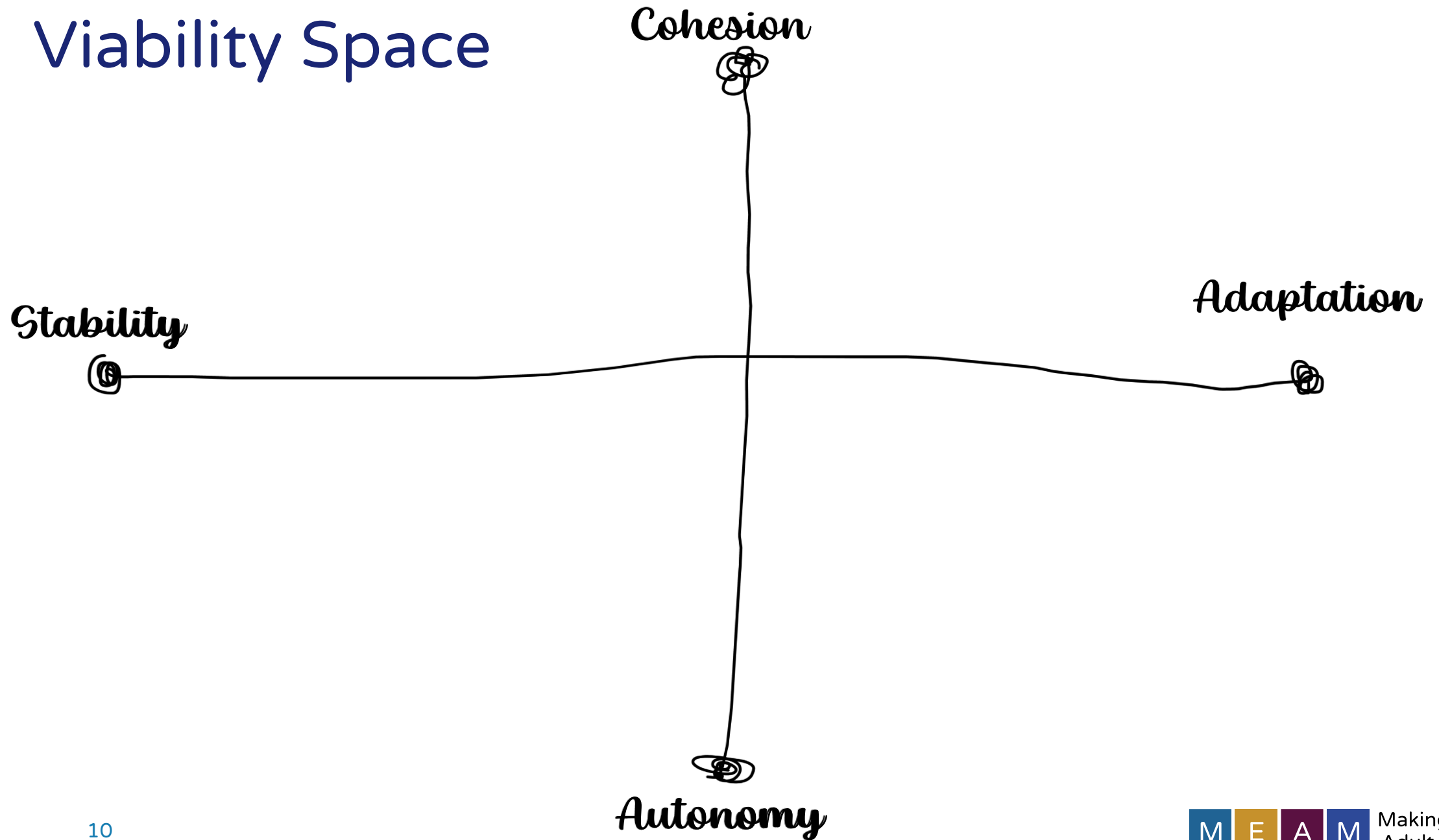


# Viability Principle

- **Cohesion** – working as a whole
  - The whole is more than the sum the parts
  - Getting the siloed organisations to work as one – otherwise autonomy will pull us apart
  - Connecting to the ‘level above’ / to ‘the whole’
- **Autonomy** – having the flexibility to meet challenges
  - Having enough flex to absorb the complexity each part of the system faces
  - Having enough freedom from centralised control to help clients ‘in the overlaps’
  - Skills and resources are available at local levels to local needs



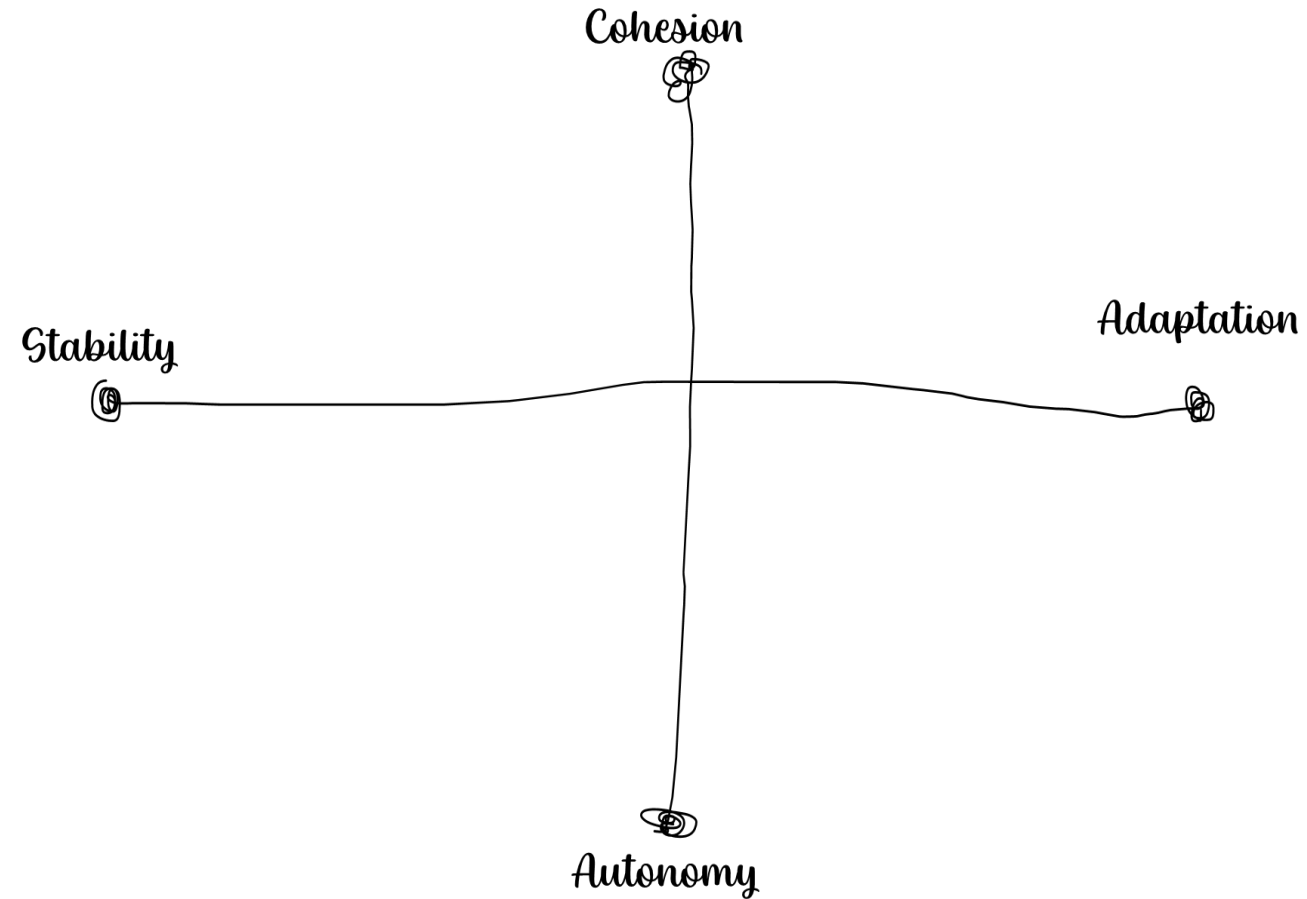
# Viability Space



# Constellation 1 – your system NOW



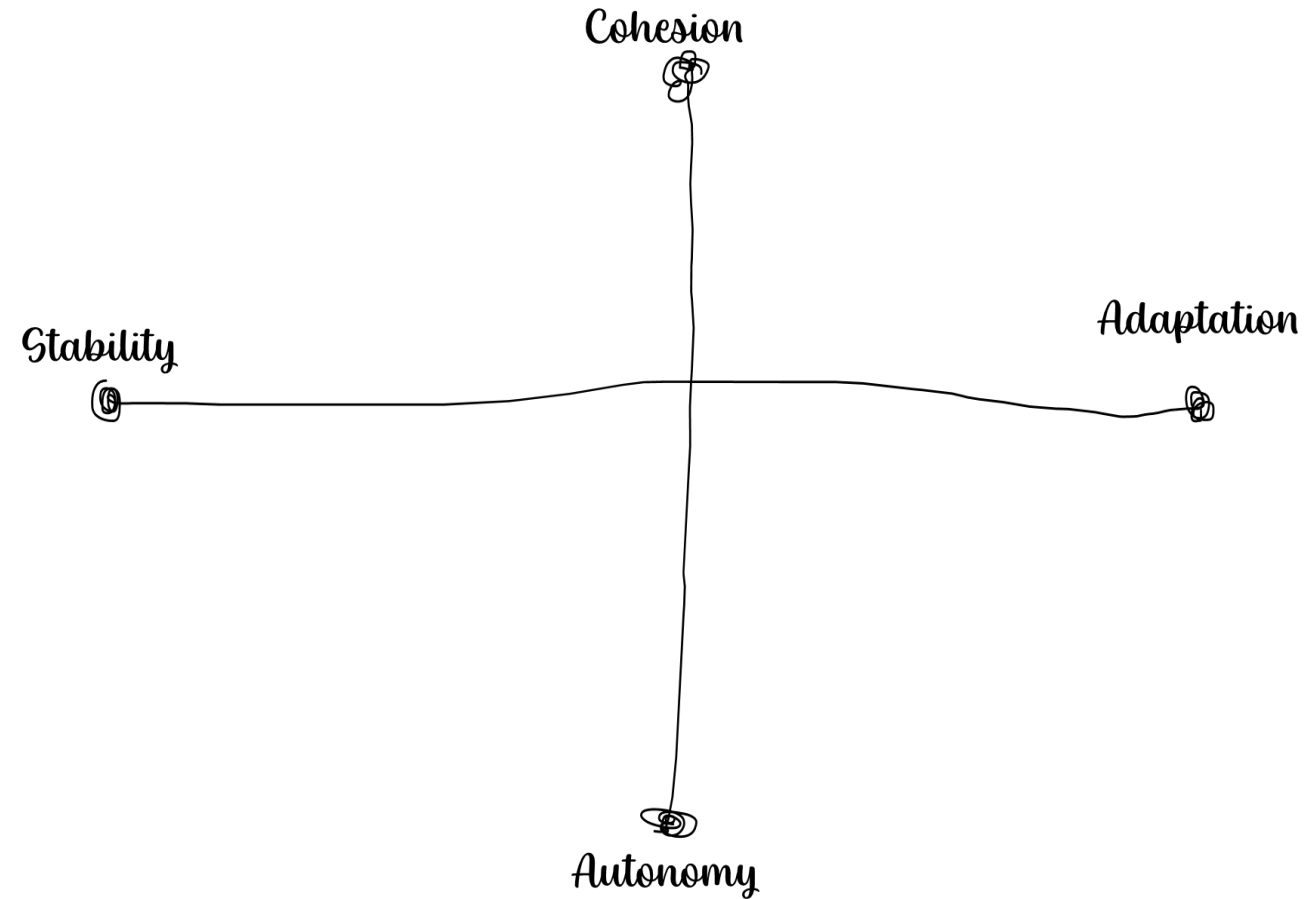
1. Reflect on a system you know well.
2. Pick a totem and place in into the viability space to mark your system



# Constellation 1.5 – Default Trajectory



1. Think about your system now
2. If nothing happens – where will this system move to?
3. What would that mean for the system?





# Discuss

# How to move



Direction	Name	Purpose	Leadership Style	Tactics
Up	Cohesion Weaver	“forge unity without uniformity”	Collaborative, connective, symbolic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pool Power</li><li>• Strengthen connections</li><li>• Inter-dependency mapping</li></ul>

# How to move



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Down	Autonomy Guardian	“enable self-determination without chaos”	Facilitative, libertarian, catalytic,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trust building</li><li>• Share power</li><li>• Red-tape elimination</li></ul>

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Left	Stability Anchor	“sustain continuity without stagnation”	Stewarding, grounding, ritualistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align &amp; embed Core operations</li><li>• Memory bank of best practice</li><li>• Shared languages</li></ul>



# How to move



Direction	Name	Purpose	Leadership Style	Tactics
Up	Cohesion Weaver	“forge unity without uniformity”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborative</li><li>• Connective</li><li>• Symbolic</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pool Power</li><li>• Strengthen connections</li><li>• Inter-dependency mapping</li></ul>
Down	Autonomy Guardian	“enable self-determination without chaos”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitative</li><li>• Libertarian</li><li>• Catalytic</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trust building</li><li>• Share power</li><li>• Red-tape elimination</li></ul>
Left	Stability Anchor	“sustain continuity without stagnation”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stewarding</li><li>• Grounding</li><li>• Ritualistic</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Align &amp; embed Core operations</li><li>• Memory bank of best practice</li><li>• Shared languages</li></ul>
Right	Adaptation Scout	“drive evolution without recklessness”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visionary</li><li>• Experimental</li><li>• Provocative</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Innovation sandboxes</li><li>• Test and trial</li><li>• Controlled demolition</li></ul>

# Constellation 2 – changing the system



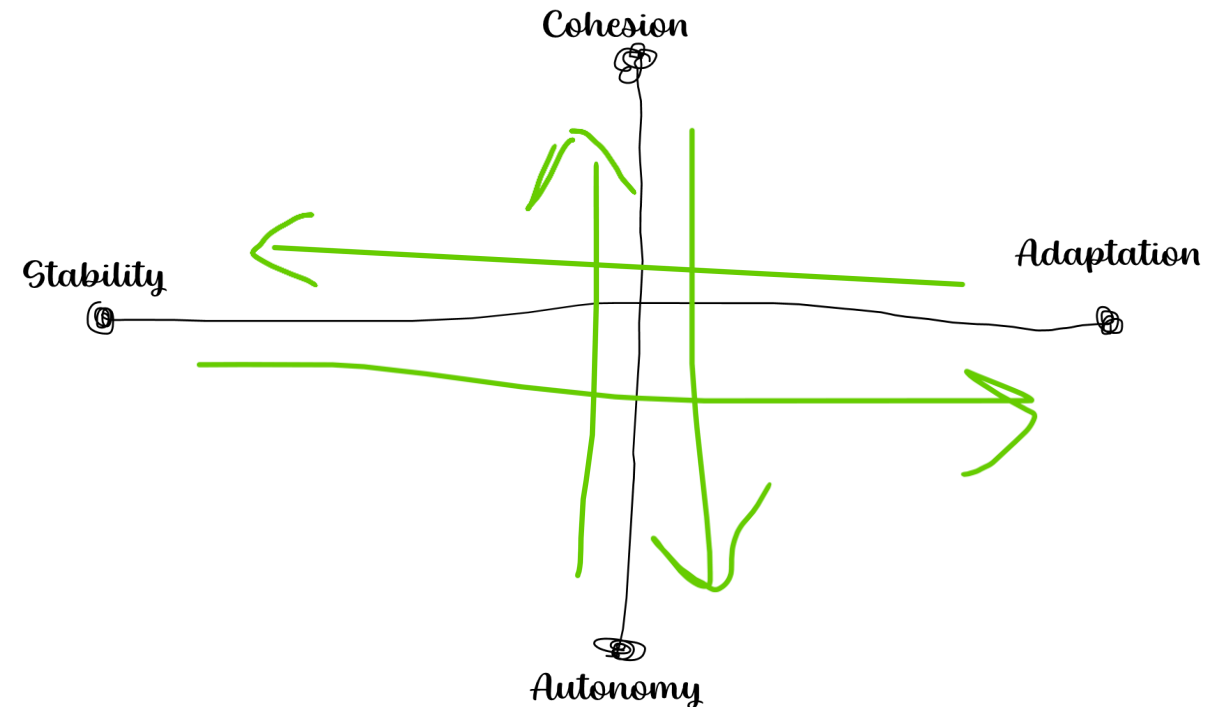
1. Adopt roles:
  - System Owner
  - System Changers
  - Observers/critics
2. Move everyone off the space except the system owner
3. Mark this default trajectory with another totem

# Constellation 2 – Changing the system



Systems changers will coach the system owners to create ideas to move their system to a better place:

1. Establish where the system needs to be considering what it faces right now – mark with another totem
2. Coach the system owner to find ideas to move their system



# Feedback





# Thank you

Do reach out!

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