

Why deprescribing is a "wicked" problem and what we can do about it

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Implementing deprescribing is a problem to be solved

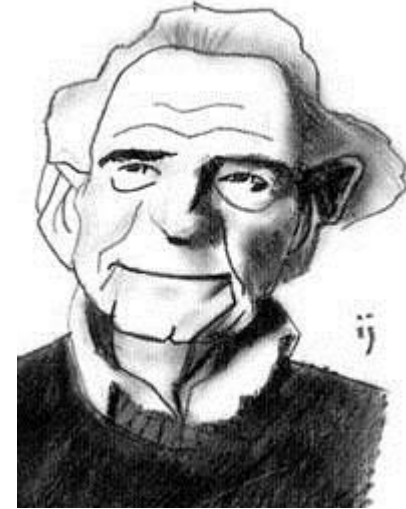
- But what kind of problem is it?
- What is the best way to frame this problem?
- Who needs to be involved in the framing of the problem?
- Who needs to be involved in solving the problem?
- What would a solution look like?



Technical problems and wicked problems



Isaiah Berlin was astonished that American undergraduates thought that all human problems could be solved, and that complex questions have a single correct answer.



Karl Popper said that some systems are like clocks, and others are like clouds. Clocks are regular, orderly, and predictable. Clouds are irregular, disorderly, and much less predictable.



Implementing deprescribing as a "wicked" problem

- Wicked problems arise in complex human systems where people agree and disagree about priorities and approaches
- Wicked problems have no single, all-pervasive solution or answer
- What is desirable in one context may be less desirable in another
- What works in one context may not work in another



Adaptive challenges require adaptive solutions

"Adaptive challenges ... are complex learning problems for which the organization has little or no preexisting experience or solutions. ... They can be solved only by people **learning new ways** of working them out. ... A consistent characteristic of an adaptive challenge is that there is **no common agreed-on understanding of the problem**. In other words, different people make sense of the problem differently. They have trouble describing the challenge succinctly. They have **conflicting opinions** about its causes. They propose **different solutions**."

Dr. C. Souba, Emeritus Dean of the Geisel School of Medicine, Dartmouth College, MA



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Adaptive responses to adaptive challenges



Kurt Lewin called for the creation of techniques to solve intractable problems afflicting human communities around the world.



Adam Kahane says that we can solve intractable problems only when the people who must bring the solution to life are willing and able to listen to each other and work together.



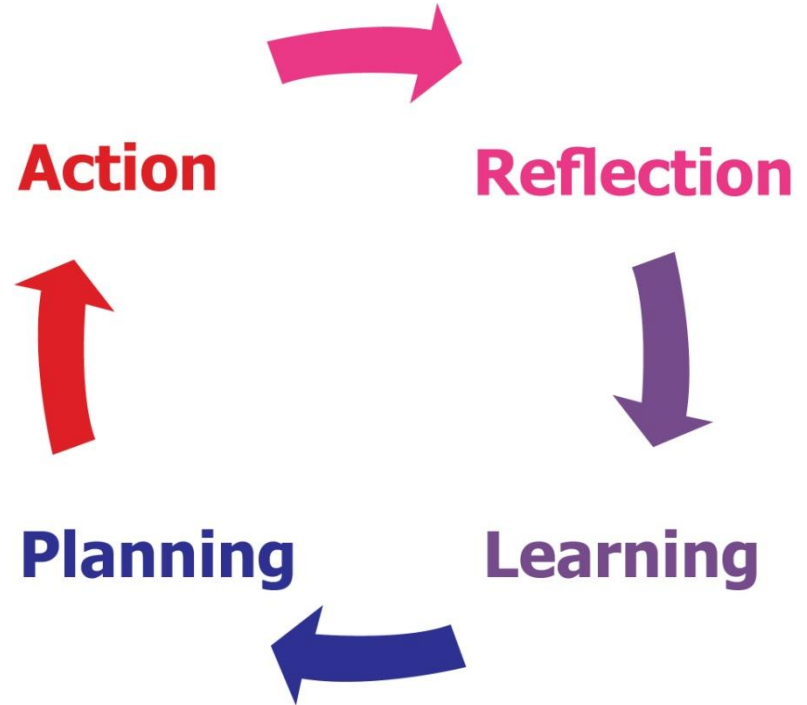
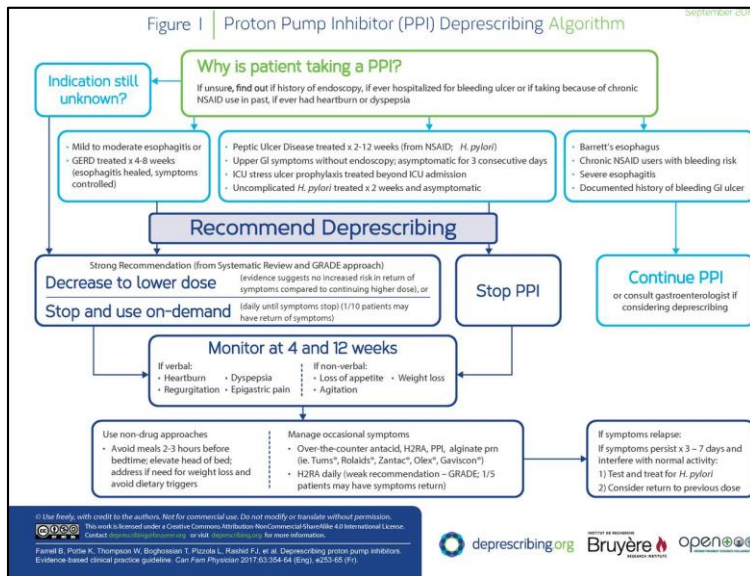
Acting on an adaptive challenge

- Collaboration
 - Create a coalition drawn from groups affected by the challenge that is able to influence and participate in the change process
- Expansive thinking
 - Access and consider the perspectives that give rise to different understandings
- Leadership
 - Mobilize stakeholders, foster coherence and coordination, frame the issues, empower stakeholders
- Flexible processes and structures
 - Flexible membership & monitoring that focus on development and feedback loops more than implementation fidelity



Adaptive implementation of deprescribing guidelines

The evidence-based deprescribing guidelines represent the contribution that science can make to the solution.



We now need adaptive implementation approaches to implement the guidelines in different practice contexts.

Adaptive change means changing the conversation

- We think, act, and structure our social worlds into existence.
- Exchanging ideas and experiences today is part of the solution.
- Going home and talking with others (supporters and opponents) is part of the solution.

