Building Resilience to a Changing Climate:

A Technical Training in Water Sector Utility Decision Support

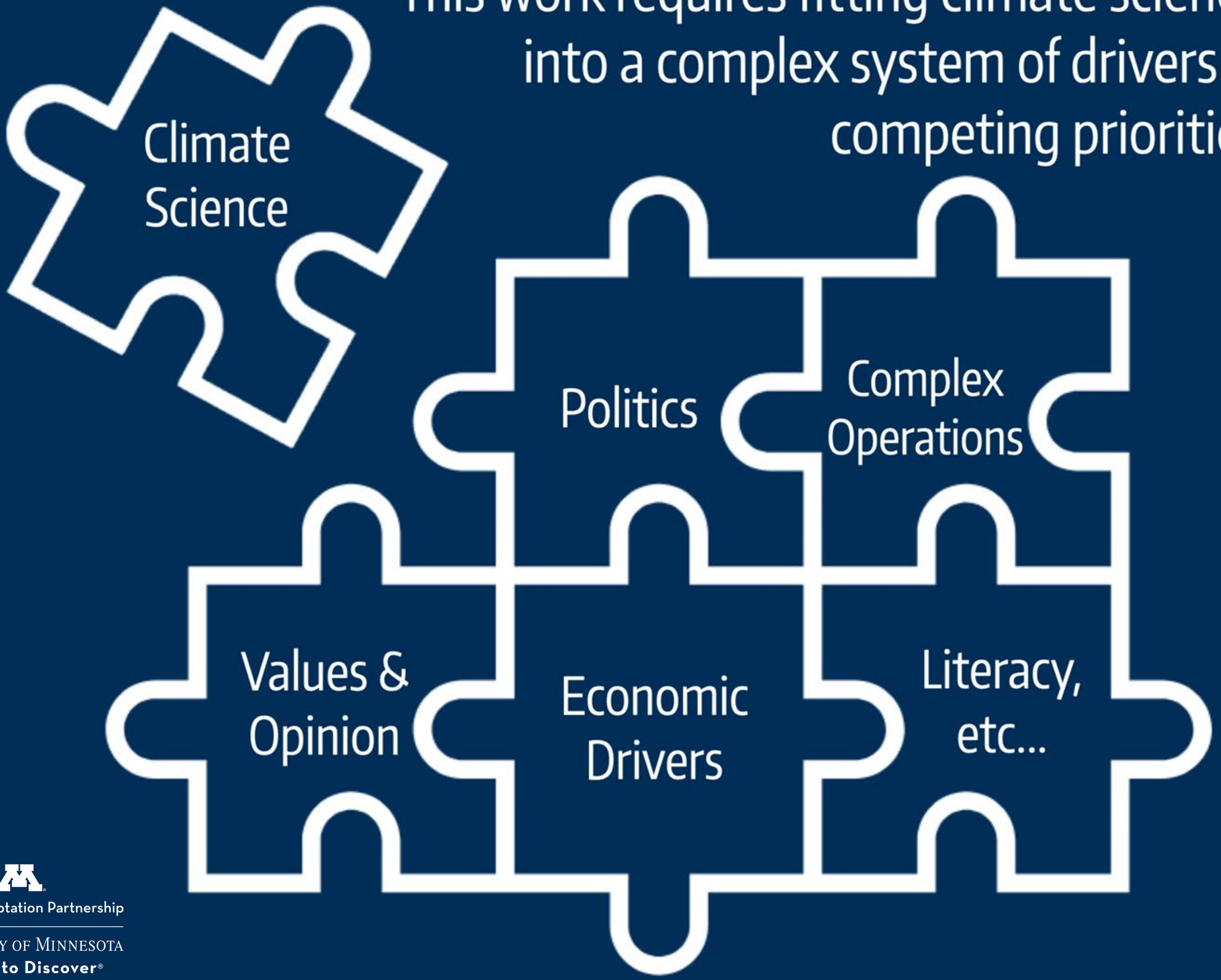
WUCA
Water Utility Climate Alliance

Confronting Common Challenges and Addressing Institutional Barriers to Change

Heidi A. Roop – University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership,
Heidi Roop Climate Consulting

How do we engage, connect & establish common ground & confront challenges to advancing climate adaptation efforts?

This work requires fitting climate science into a complex system of drivers & competing priorities

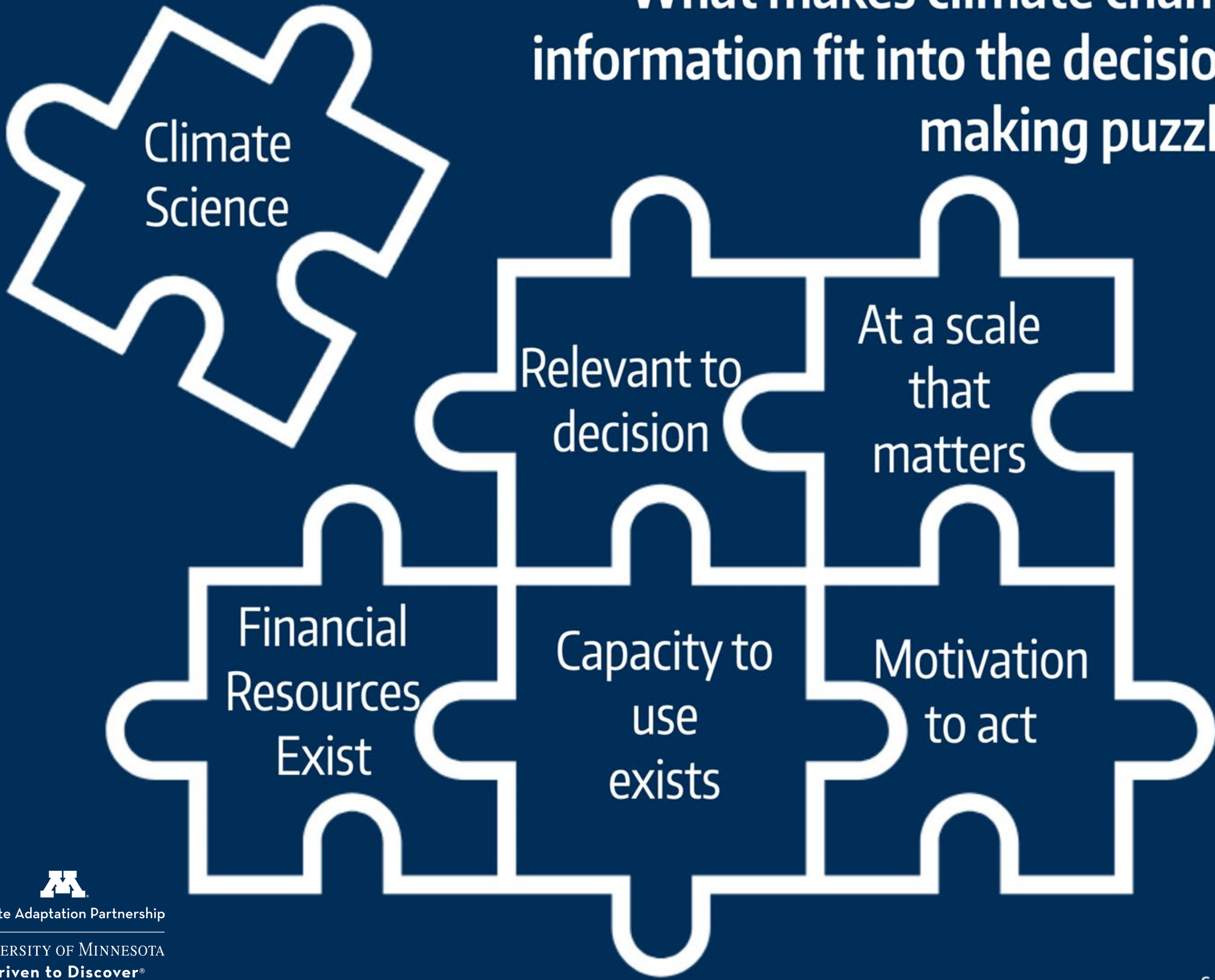


Climate Adaptation Partnership

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to Discover®

H. Roop

What makes climate change information fit into the decision-making puzzle?



Climate Adaptation Partnership

University of Minnesota
Driven to Discover®

Snover et al., 2019

Confronting Common Challenges Activity

Organizational Structure
(e.g., silos, separations, general management, etc.)

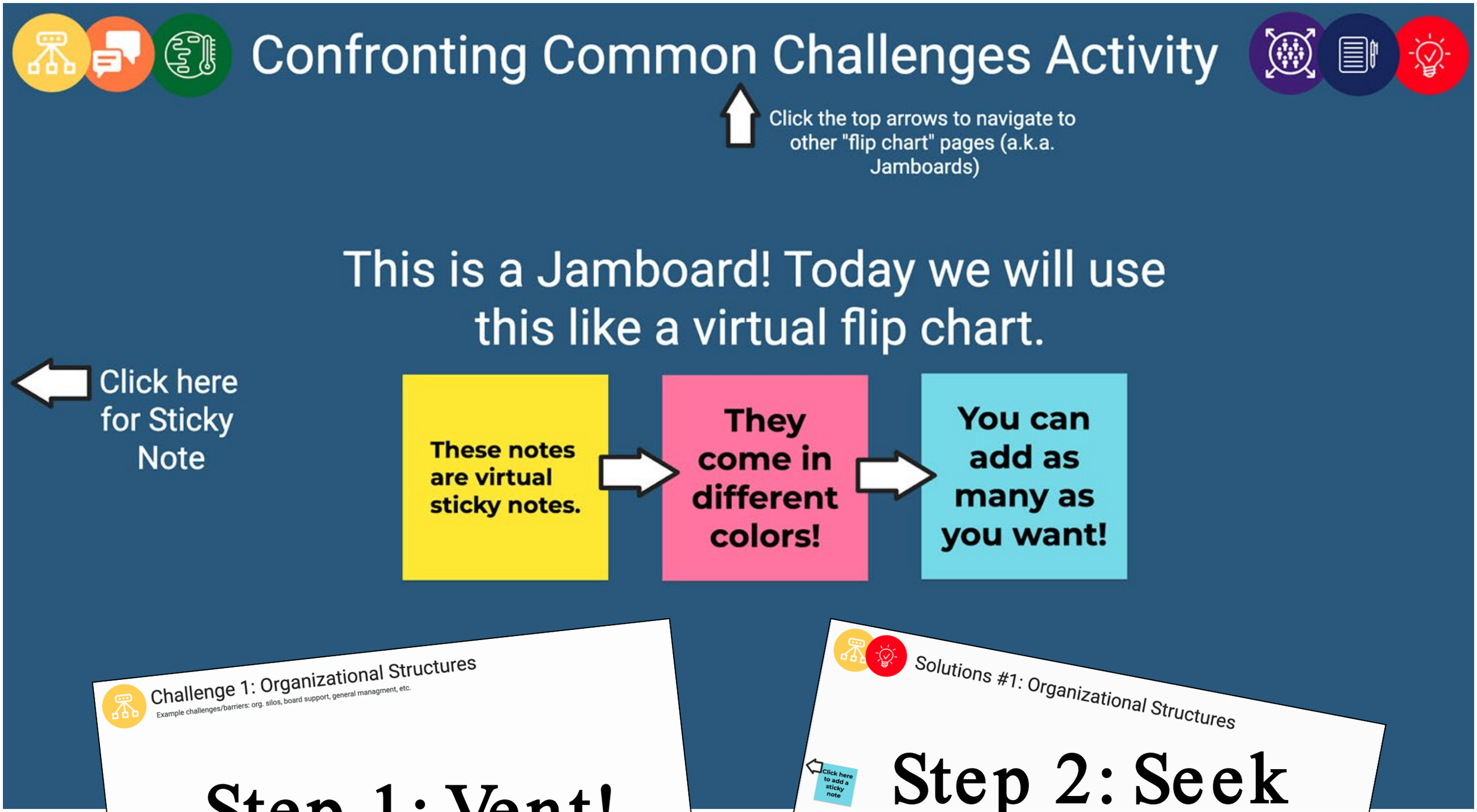
Communication
(e.g., political will, ideological barriers, lack of public support, communicating uncertainty, new and longer planning timeframes)

Technical Challenges
(e.g., limitation of climate models, insufficient data)

Resources & Capacity
(e.g., staff time, funding, staff understanding)

Policies
(e.g., lack of regulation/mandate to consider climate change, few implemented examples, no specifics in engineering design manual)

Confronting Common Challenges Activity



Challenge 1: Organizational Structures

Example challenges/barriers: org. silos, board support, general managment, etc.

Challenges/Barriers

Click here to add a sticky note

In the Jamboard, we will add barriers for each of the 5 “buckets” We will have 2 minutes per “bucket”

Solutions

In facilitated break out groups, you will organize the barriers, discuss and then think about one or two solutions/paths forward

bit.ly/wucachallenges

Report Back: Confronting Common Challenges Activity

Organizational Structure
(e.g., silos, separations, general management, etc.)

Communication
(e.g., political will, ideological barriers, lack of public support, communicating uncertainty, new and longer planning timeframes)

Technical Challenges
(e.g., limitation of climate models, insufficient data)

Resources & Capacity
(e.g., staff time, funding, staff understanding)

Policies
(e.g., lack of regulation/mandate to consider climate change, few implemented examples, no specifics in engineering design manual)

I will take the following actions to advance climate adaptation at my organization:

WUCA
Water Utility Climate Alliance

ACTION 1

ACTION 2

ACTION 3

These can be big, small or incremental actions that support the longer process of creating institutional change.

Key Takeaways

- Many barriers exist. A diversity of evidence-based *strategies* and solutions can help you work towards climate adaptation solutions.
- You have new resources and a new community of practice (everyone in this Zoom room!).
- Concrete actions are needed to address this complex issue. Practice, repetition, time and missteps are keys to success.
- Building dialogue and planning to implementation is time-intensive but essential. *Think marathon, not sprint!*

The Climate Action & Communication Challenge

- Psychological & ideological barriers
- Climate risks can appear distant & exaggerated
- Scale of issue can be used to rationalize inaction
- Need to plan for & incorporate uncertainty
- Asking for use of new approaches & data
- Associated with political, social and financial costs

3
or more!

Next Steps

YOURS

?

AR

E

WHAT

Towards climate adaptation & resilience

Resources & Capacity

Communication

Technical Challenges

Organizational Structure

Policies, regulation & mandates