

**WICKED PROBLEMS:** a phrase originally used to describe a problem that is difficult or impossible to solve because of incomplete, **contradictory, and changing** requirements that are often difficult to recognize. The term 'wicked' is used, not in the sense of evil but rather its resistance to resolution. Because of complex **interdependencies** the effort to solve one aspect of a wicked problem may reveal or create other problems.

“varied, ever-changing and full of contradictions.”

**KEYWORDS:**

entanglement

complexity

dynamic system / interdependencies

contradictions

“It seems that we have to continue designing **now with even more care than ever before.**”

WHAT MAKES A WICKED PROBLEM?

1. there is no definitive formulation of a wicked problem
2. wicked problems have **no stopping rule** – there are no criteria for sufficient understanding because there are **no ends to the causal chains**
3. the solutions given can never be considered ‘true’ or ‘false’ as in other disciplines but rather as ‘good’ or ‘bad’
4. **there is no immediate and ultimate test** of a solution to a wicked problem
5. there is no opportunity to learn by trial-and-error when dealing with wicked problems – **every attempt counts**
6. every wicked problem can be approached from **various points of enquiry**
7. every wicked problem **is unique**
8. every wicked problem **is part of another** and at times more complex wicked problem
9. the ways in which one chooses to explain a wicked problem determines the nature of its resolution
10. when dealing with wicked problems the **aim is not the truth but to improve some characteristic of the world**