

# Reflection Toolkit



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## Statement from our Chief Executive – Adrian Leather

At Active Lancashire we strive to engage with our partners, empower the communities we work within and enable key individuals to create a difference across Lancashire. Through our work, we have recognised the importance of taking the time to stop, and look at where we have come from and where we are going next. Reflective practice is a powerful tool in achieving this and we want to empower you to do this both as individuals and with those you work with.

Therefore alongside the support of this toolkit, I want to re-commit to you that you can take half an hour every week to reflect on work. Take this when it suits you as we recognise everyone works differently!



## Sector professionalisation and its connection to learning

Unlike other industries, the sport and physical activity sector has only recently undergone a rapid 'professionalisation' when the Institute for Sport and Physical Activity received its chartered status in 2013. This professionalization means that like other professionalised industries its workforce must strive to continuously undertake professional development. Reflective practice and applying the learning it generates is one of many approaches available. In its simplest terms, reflective practice is about exploring experiences, either personal or of others, and recognising how they can potentially alter our day-to-day practices.<sup>1</sup>

With that in mind, this toolkit is designed to offer a range of 'tools' to facilitate the practice of reflection both independently and with others. Whilst reflection may feel 'uncomfortable' at first, we encourage people to have a go and understand that the outcome may feel limited at first. Over time as individuals become more comfortable with the processes, the identification of any actions/ learning will become clearer.



## Making the space

If reflective practice is something that is new, then we would encourage you to start with one of the below activities. They are designed to encourage your mind to relax and allow you to focus on reflecting on your past activities.

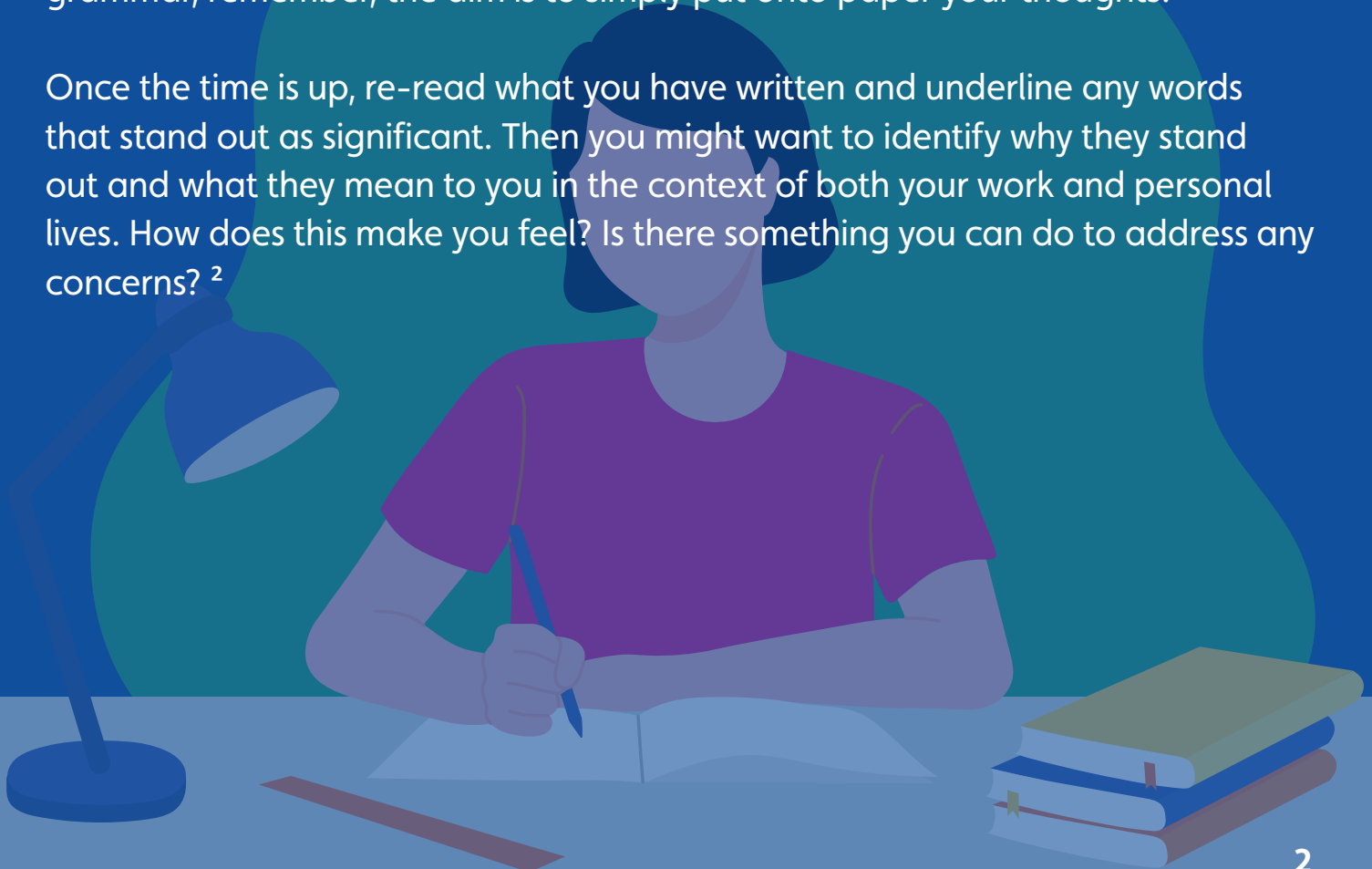
We encourage you to select whichever one you prefer and have a go! <sup>2</sup>



## Free writing

This is a good method to get started and encourages you to 'get everything out'. There are no fixed aims simply start typing or writing on paper, whatever comes non-stop for 4 to 6 minutes! Don't worry about spelling, punctuation or grammar, remember, the aim is to simply put onto paper your thoughts.

Once the time is up, re-read what you have written and underline any words that stand out as significant. Then you might want to identify why they stand out and what they mean to you in the context of both your work and personal lives. How does this make you feel? Is there something you can do to address any concerns? <sup>2</sup>



## Free drawing

This approach may suit those who are more creative and like to visualise their thinking! Using a blank sheet of paper and a pen/pencil simply draw whatever comes to mind but do not take your pen/pencil off the paper. Do not worry about the detail, just let your mind draw whatever it wants to draw! The purpose of this exercise is to help to relax your mind and allow you to think about things with a fresh perspective. <sup>2</sup>

## Breathing exercises

This is a method that is likely to be familiar as it is often used in Yoga or other relaxation exercises. This approach is likely to be very beneficial if you find yourself constantly on the go and have very little time to pause and

Simply sit or stand and focus on your breathing. Breathe in through your nose and out of your mouth, with each cycle lasting around 6 seconds. Repeat for as long as necessary until you feel relaxed and able to focus on yourself. <sup>2</sup>



## Approaches to reflection

This section offers a range of tools that you may find useful when undertaking self-reflection.

### The 5 R's self-reflection approach

This table provides some structure with some prompts to encourage you to think deeper about the particular event/ problem/ experience. Write your reflection/ thoughts in the last column. It doesn't matter if it doesn't result in actions straight away, but by having a go, you are becoming more comfortable with the process of reflecting. <sup>3</sup>

The 5 Rs	What to do	What's included	Helpful questions	Your reflection
Reporting	A brief description of the experience/ problem or issue	The key elements of the situation that are essential for you to communicate the context to reader	What happened? What are the key aspects of this situation? Who was involved? What did I do?	
Responding	Your personal response to the situation.	Your feelings and thoughts about the experience, as well as any observations and potential questions you have.	How did what happened make me feel? What did I think? What made me think and feel this way?	
Relating	Provide your understanding of how the situation relates to your own knowledge and past experiences.	Provide your understanding of how the situation relates to your own knowledge and past experiences.	Provide your understanding of how the situation relates to your own knowledge and past experiences.	
Reasoning	Explore and explain the situation or experience.	Significant factors within the situation and how they are important to understanding what	What is the most important aspect of this situation and why?  Is there any theoretical literature that can help me make sense of the situation?	

The 5 Rs	What to do	What's included	Helpful questions	Your reflection
Reconstructing	Use this to develop an action plan for what to do next.	You will also have to include an action plan, arguing for why it will work.	How would I need to do this differently in the future?  What might work and why?	

## Gibbs self-reflection checklist

This approach again offers some structure and some may find this structure easier to follow. It encourages you to think about the event, how you felt, what the consequences were, how you might do things differently and a chance to summarise your learnings.<sup>4</sup>

Steps	Explanation	Reflections
Description	Describe the situation	
Reflection	What I felt, why I might've felt it, what I thought at the time, why I might've thought it, how I might try to understand my behaviour, what caused me to make decisions etc.	
Consequences	Outcomes of what I did / felt or thought	
Alternative tactics	What I might do differently next time if anything, what I might do differently in a slightly different situation	
Learning	Overall what have I taken away from learning about that key event / reflection?	



## Going for a walk and reflecting

For those who may like to get away from the desk, you may like the idea of going for a walk and thinking about your work away from your desk/ usual work environment. Simply going for a walk will help you to relax and allow you to think about whatever you are focusing on in your role. This doesn't have to be done alone, equally, it could be done with someone else if you prefer to have a chat.

When you return to your place of work (and this is the important bit!) spend a little bit of time noting down your thoughts and any actions you are going to take!



## The weather reflective log

This approach uses some common emotional attachments we may have with the weather. By following this approach, you will be able to cover the core questions we should be asking ourselves when reflecting on a particular thing/ event/ experience.<sup>5</sup>

### Sunshine: What went well?



Reflections

### Rain: What didn't go so well?



Reflections

### Lighting: What came as a surprise?



Reflections

### Storms: What conflicts were there?



Reflections

### Wind: Were you thrown off the course?



Reflections

## Group reflection

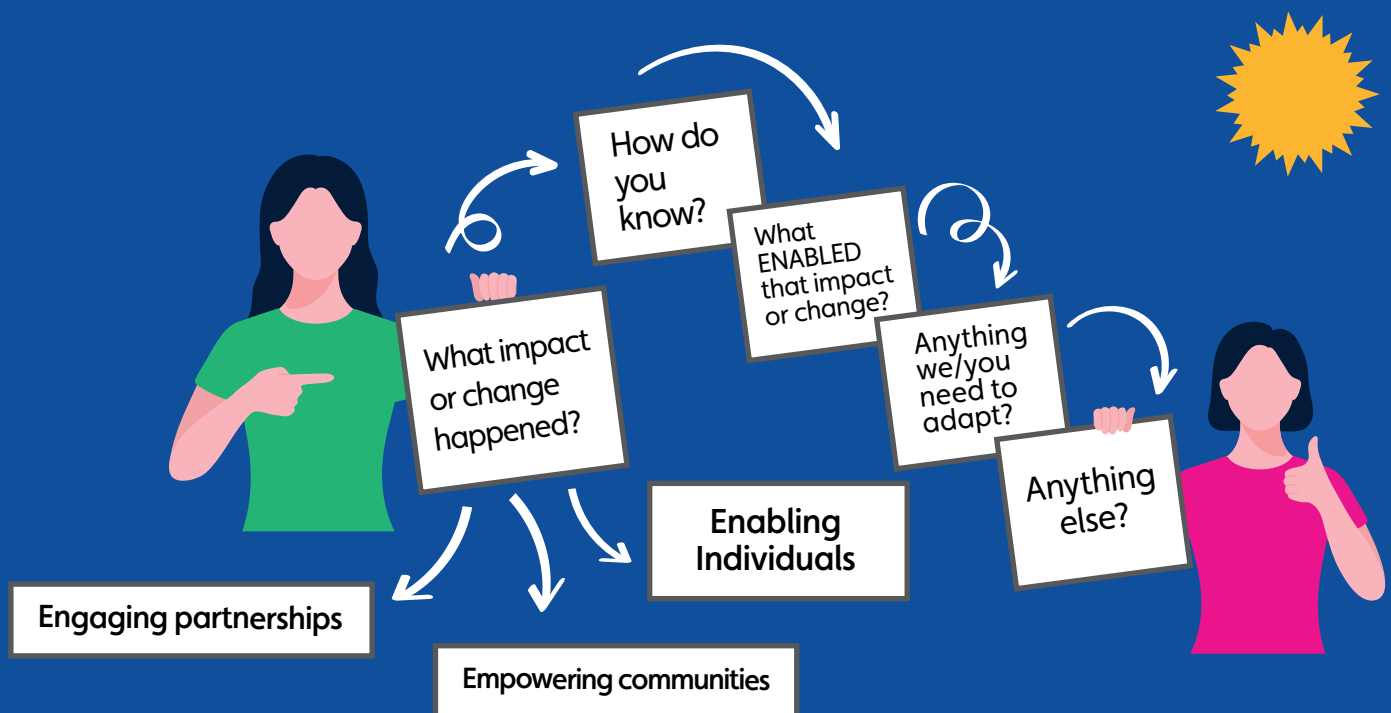
Reflection can also be done as a group and the following approach is an example of how this can be done.

### Learning pods

This approach is best done in groups of no more than three. Each member is expected to bring a 'thing' that they have experienced or done and share it with the group. It is the responsibility of the other group members to ask questions such as the ones highlighted in the table on page 10. <sup>6</sup>

- 1) Ask yourself below questions
- 2) Discuss with your Pod Partner

- 3) Make note/record somewhere



## Reflective questions

Below are some questions to help you deepen your reflection and help you focus more on actions and progress.<sup>7</sup>

If the same situation happened again, what would you do?	Which of your skills and resources did you use?	What has changed?
What has surprised you?	How have your thoughts changed regarding...?	What have you learned by not doing what you said you would?
What advice would you give yourself next time?	What has been your key insight from this?	What will you now incorporate into your work?
What will you take away from this?	How will you capture this learning/insight?	What did you do differently?
What is different for you now?	What has been the biggest challenge?	What did you need to be?
What were you aiming to achieve?	What went well even a little bit?	What could you do differently next time?
What do you know now that you didn't before?	What do you now know about yourself?	



## References

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