Using the Three Pillars

1. Identify an area of complexity in your work.

Try and think of something that feels blocked, challenging or stuck. It could be something where it's difficult to see how things will progress or resolve. Things that are complex can often feel volatile, uncertain, paradoxical and ambiguous.

You could choose something at a systems level (e.g. a partnership or a process) or at an organisational level (e.g. a specific project or team) or at an individual level (e.g. a person or specific relationship).

2. Now let's look at this issue using the three pillars:

a. What are the different **relationships** involved?
- Are there relationships between people, groups or organisations?
- Are there relationships between perspectives, ideas, aspirations or outcomes?
- Is it just a relationship between you and one other person?
- Has the relationship(s) changed over time?

Relationships

b. Where are there **collaborations**?
- Are people already working together?
- Are the collaborations visible or hidden?
- What are the different perspectives involved?

Collaboration

c. Where and how are **reflective processes** happening?
- Is it something you do by yourself?
- Is this something that happens informally with colleagues or in a group?
- Do you ever say your reflections out loud?
- Are your reflections captured? How have they changed over time?

Reflection
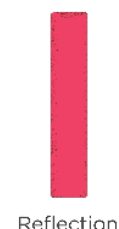
3. Now identify a positive action that will improve one of the 3 pillars.

This is not about trying to resolve the complex issue. It may just shift perspectives or unstick something. The action should be small and easily achievable. Once you have completed it, you can re-assess and use the pillars to choose another action.

You could use the following prompts to inform which pillar you choose to take action on.
- Was there one pillar that felt more difficult to think about?
- Does it feel more important to improve something that is already working well or to address a deficit?
- Are there specific pillars that would improve the situation:
    o for you?
    o for others?
    o for the aims or outcomes of a project or work activity?