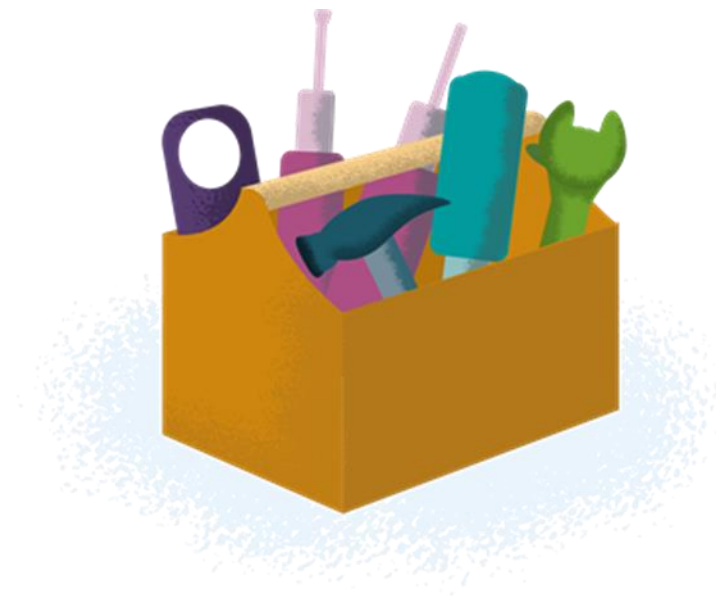


Improvement Cymru Academy Toolkit Guide



Reflective Models

Introduction

Reflective models are structured frameworks that are used to guide individuals and teams through the process of reflecting on experiences. These models are particularly valuable in healthcare where all staff roles require continuous learning and improvement. By analysing past experiences, reflective models can help you gain deeper insights into their actions, thoughts, and feelings, leading to personal and professional growth. They facilitate critical thinking and self-awareness, enabling healthcare professionals to evaluate their practices, identify areas for improvement and test potential changes.

There are some key features of reflection:

1. Reflection can result in learning.
2. Reflection is an active and dynamic process.
3. Reflection is not a linear process but rather cyclic.
4. Reflection encourages looking at issues from different perspectives.

By incorporating reflective models into staff practice, healthcare professionals can continuously learn and adapt to new challenges. It can not only enhance individual practice but also contribute to increasing the quality and safety of services by fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement (See our Culture of Continuous Improvement Toolkit Guide [here](#) for more information).

Rationale

There are several reasons why you would want to use a reflective model in healthcare:

1. Professional Development and Continuous Improvement.

A reflective model can aid in critically analysing your own performance, providing insights to identify areas for improvement.

Using such a model can aid your professional development, enhancing your effectiveness at work and contribute to improving the overall quality of services you help deliver. We then develop a cycle of professional development and continuous improvement.

2. Enhances Self-Awareness

Through reflecting on your thoughts, feelings, and actions, you can better understand your strengths and development needs. In healthcare, this can lead to more effective and empathetic patient care.

3. Improved Decision-Making and adaption to new challenges

By having a structure framework for reflection, you can evaluate and learn from past decisions and outcomes, leading to improved decision-making and enabling you to apply your learning to new challenges.

4. Team Collaboration and Person-Centred Care

Reflective models can involve group reflection which can improve communication and collaboration amongst different multi-disciplinary teams. Through sharing experiences, the team can gain insights into past experiences of other and can improve team dynamics. Through reflecting on patient interactions, patient experiences, and outcomes, you can have a deeper understanding of patient needs and preferences and this can lead to more personalised and patient-centred care.

Background

Reflective models have their roots in educational theory and practice as they were primarily developed to enhance learning through reflection. Reflective practice is often accredited to the work of John Dewey (1933) who was an American philosopher and educator. He emphasised the importance of reflection in learning, arguing that individuals do not learn from experience alone but from reflecting on the experience.

When to use

There are many situations where you may want to use a reflective model:

1. After a significant event

When a significant event has happened like a successful intervention, challenging situations, or a critical incident, reflecting on that event can help you digest and understand what has happened, why it happened, and what you may do differently when faced with similar challenges in the future.

2. During routine practice

Reflecting on routine practice can help to identify patterns, re-enforce good practice or address areas of improvement.

3. Following feedback

You can use a reflective model when you receive peer feedback to help you process the feedback constructively.

4. Team meetings and debriefs.

Team meetings and debriefings after patient activities can provide a focal point to improve quality and safety. It is not only important to reflect on the physical activities that has taken place e.g. a clinic appointment or an operation, but also to reflect psychologically as well. Questions may be asked such as; did the team cohere well? Was there effective communication? Reflecting psychologically can reduce the risk of human error and in turn increase quality and safety. See our Human Factors Toolkit Guide [here](#) for more information.

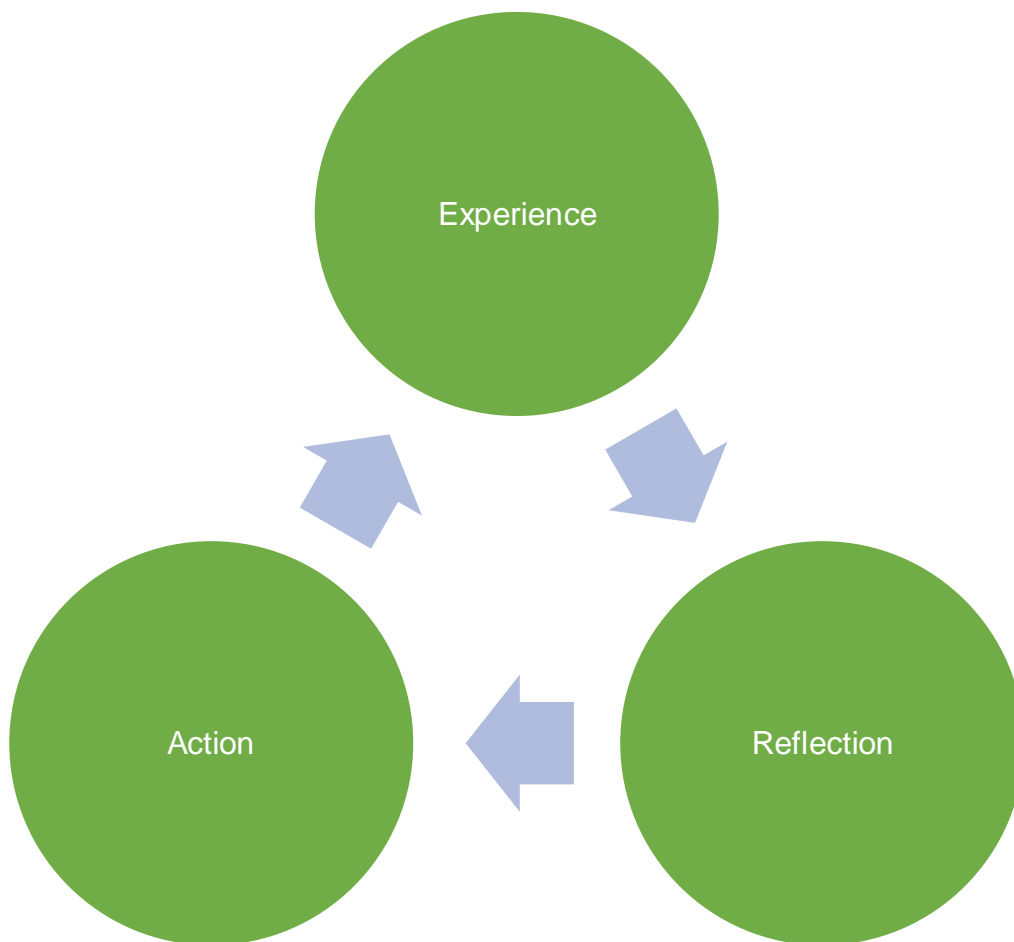
5. Quality Improvement initiatives

Reflecting on quality improvement is an important aspect of undertaking improvement projects. The Act phase in the Plan, Do, Study, Act (Cycle) provides an opportunity to reflect on the PDSA cycle which will help inform the next steps. See our Testing Changes Toolkit Guide [here](#) for more information. It is also important to reflect on the project, to learn from the experience for the next project.

How to use

There are many different types of reflective models you can use. Below are some of the most popular reflective models that are used in practice and are a useful place to start with your reflections:

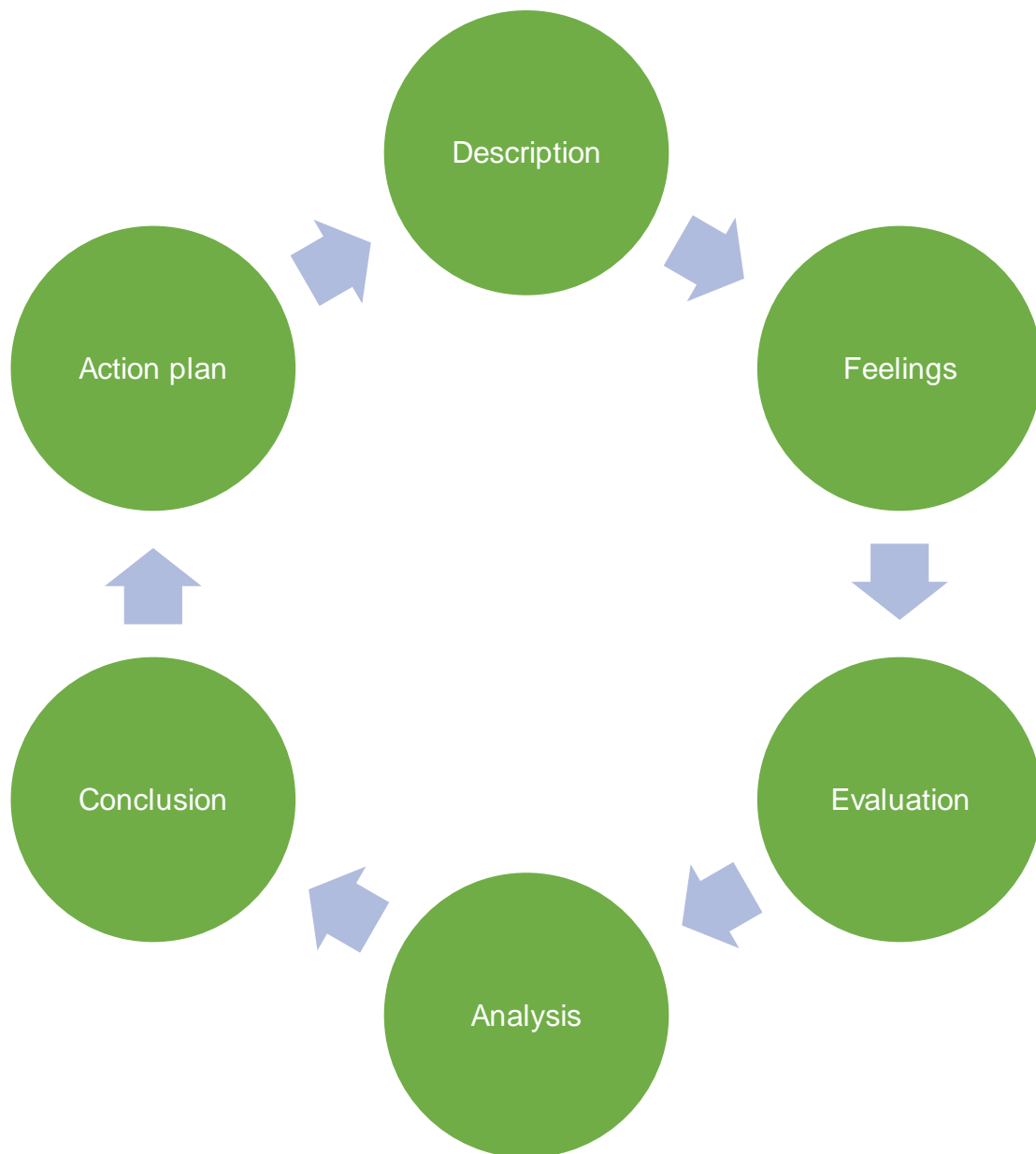
Experience, Reflection and Action (ERA) (Jasper, 2013)



The ERA cycle is a simple yet effective reflective model. It begins with **Experience** where an event is described in detail. Next is **Reflection**, where an individual analyses their thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the experience. The final stage is

Action, where insights from the reflection are used to plan and implement improvements.

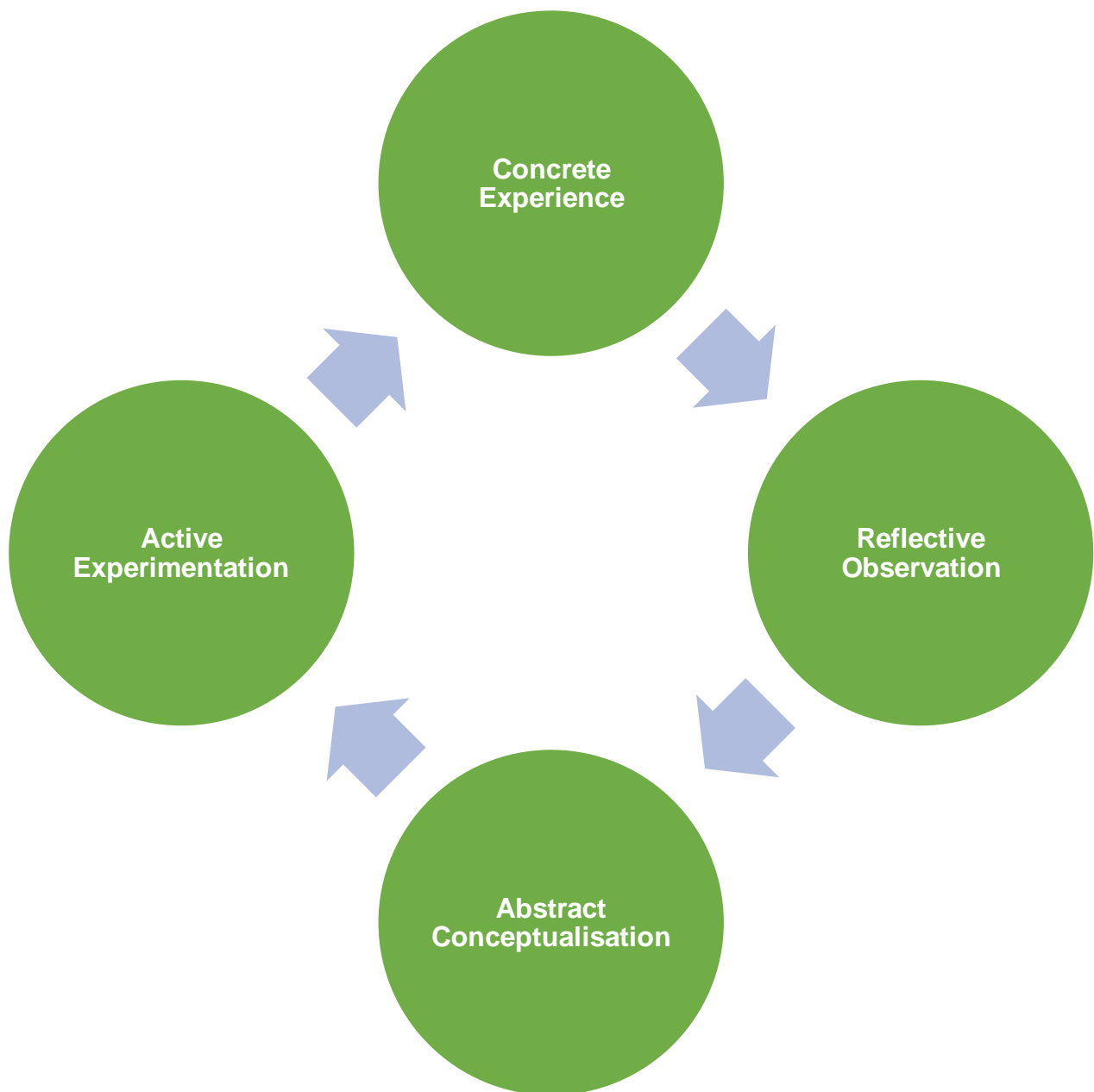
Gibbs (1988) Reflective Cycle



Gibbs Reflective Cycle is a framework for reflection that was developed by Graham Gibbs in 1988. There are six stages of the model; **Description**, where you detail the event you are reflecting on; **Feelings**, where you document your emotional

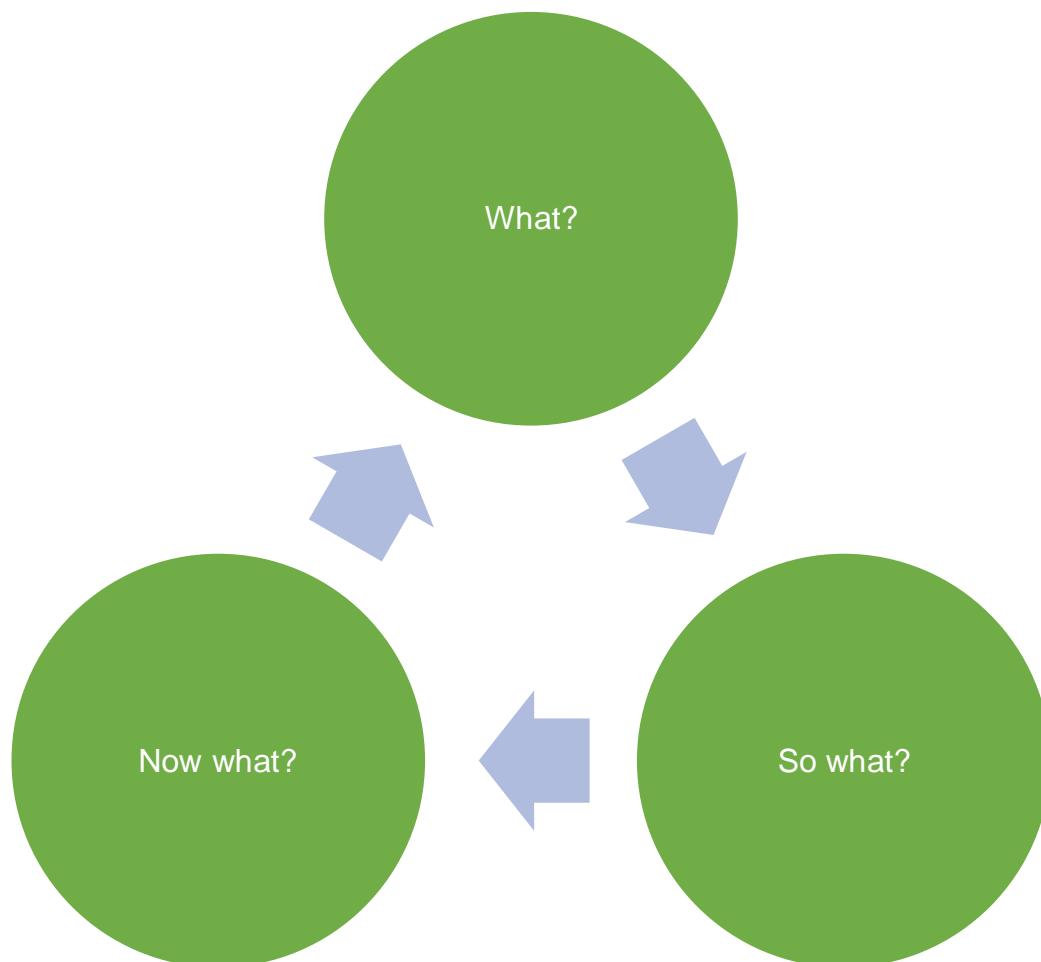
response; **Evaluation**, where you assess the strengths and weaknesses of the experience; **Analysis**, where you try and make sense of the situation; **Conclusion**, where you detail a summary of what you have learned; and lastly **Action plan**, where you outline the next steps for improvement.

Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle



Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle describes how individuals learn through experience and consists of four stages; **Concrete Experience**, a new experience or situation is encountered; **Reflective Observation**, where you reflect on the experience; **Abstract Conceptualisation**, where the reflection will lead to the formation of new ideas or possibly the modification of existing concepts; **Active Experimentation**, where you apply these new ideas, learn from experiences and continue the learning cycle.

Driscoll's (1994) What Model



Driscoll's What Model simplifies reflection into three questions: What? So What? And Now What? The **What?** Stage involves describe the experience, the **So What?** Stage focuses on analysing the significance of the experience and the learning from the experience, and the **Now What?** Stage focuses on applying these insights into future actions and improvements. This model is ideal for quick, effective reflections.

Helpful Tips

Reflective Models can be a powerful tool to gain insights and improve your practice. There are several tips here to help you make the most out of them:

- **Choose the right model:** there are different models that suit different purposes.
- **Be honest and transparent:** Reflection requires honesty. Acknowledge both strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Document your reflections:** this will help to keep track of progress over time.
- **Apply your insights:** Reflection should involve applying what insights you have gained from reflecting.
- **Seek feedback:** Discuss reflections with your peers and mentors. They can provide a different perspective of the experience.
- **Regular practice:** Reflect regularly. The more you reflect, the more beneficial it will become.

What next?

Start integrating reflective models into your routine by selecting a model that resonates with the experience you want to reflect on. Apply it to recent experiences – whether they are personal or professional and document your reflections. You will then be able to use these insights to create and action plan for improvement. Reflections are not static, and you will need to regularly revisit and update your reflections to track your progress.

Additional Resources

If you are interested in learning more about how improvement practices can benefit your workplace, we offer a range of training courses. Visit our website for more information. [Improvement Cymru Academy](https://www.improvementcymruacademy@wales.nhs.uk) or email us improvementcymruacademy@wales.nhs.uk to find about the improvement courses we offer.

Further Reading

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