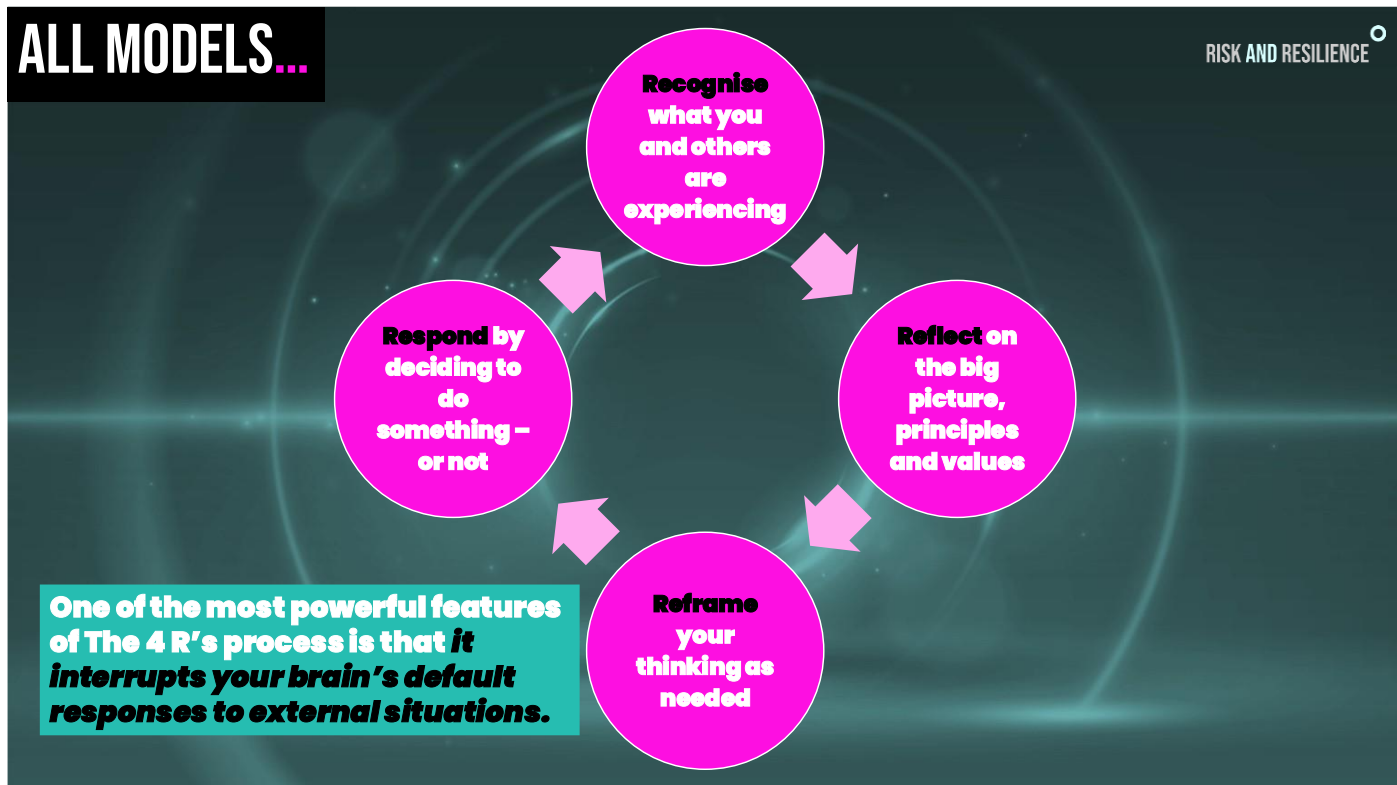


# REFLECTIVE PRACTICE MODELS



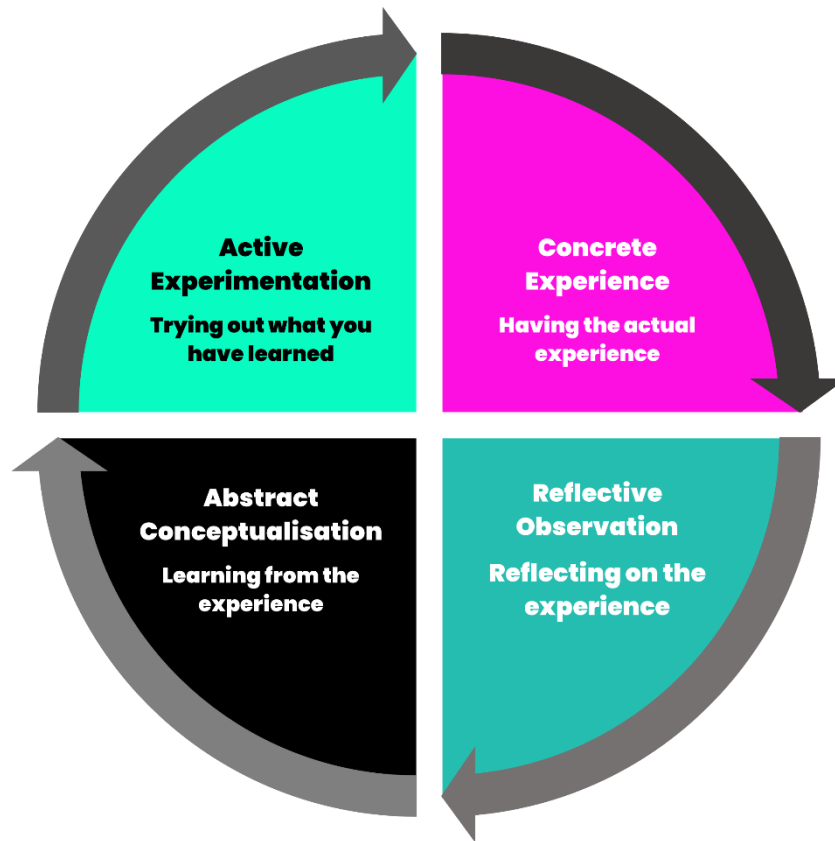
## Schwarz Rounds... Reflective Practice Adjacent!

Schwarz Rounds are monthly, facilitated group sessions where staff (clinical and non-clinical) come together to reflect on the emotional and social dimensions of their work.

They typically focus on a specific case or theme, with a few staff members sharing short stories, followed by open discussion.

They prioritise empathy, psychological safety, and shared understanding over problem-solving. They sit within the reflective practice family—but lean toward the *emotional-relational* end of the spectrum, rather than the *performance-action* end.

- **Help normalise emotional reactions to challenging work.**
- **Improve psychological safety and organisational culture.**
- **Reduce staff stress and compassion fatigue.**
- **Promote shared reflective insight that can't be reached alone.**



The Kolb Experiential Learning Model is a concise and effective tool for reflective practice in services. With its four stages—Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualisation, and Active Experimentation—the model encourages professionals to learn from hands-on experiences, reflect on their impact, connect insights to broader concepts, and apply new learning in real-world settings. This cyclical process is particularly valuable in the dynamic and adaptive environment of the third sector, promoting continuous improvement and informed decision-making for meaningful social impact.

- **Concrete experience:** You consciously and physically experience a situation, which makes you realise that you need to reflect systematically in order to learn something new or improve on your existing skill and practice. At this stage you should have made a mental note of the specific situation and just describe what you see, how you felt and what you thought.
- **Reflective observation:** Having shared the description of the experience, it is now time to reflect more deeply on what has happened in that situation. The questions you need to ask yourself are: what worked? what failed? why did the situation arise? why did others and I behave the way we did?
- **Abstract conceptualisation:** The guiding question for this stage leads on from the questions in the reflective observation stage: what could I have done better or differently? how can I improve? Initially, you try to find different ways for dealing with the situations

and think up strategies for when you experience a similar situation again. Also, this is the stage where you should consult colleagues and literature in order to get a better understanding and further ideas.

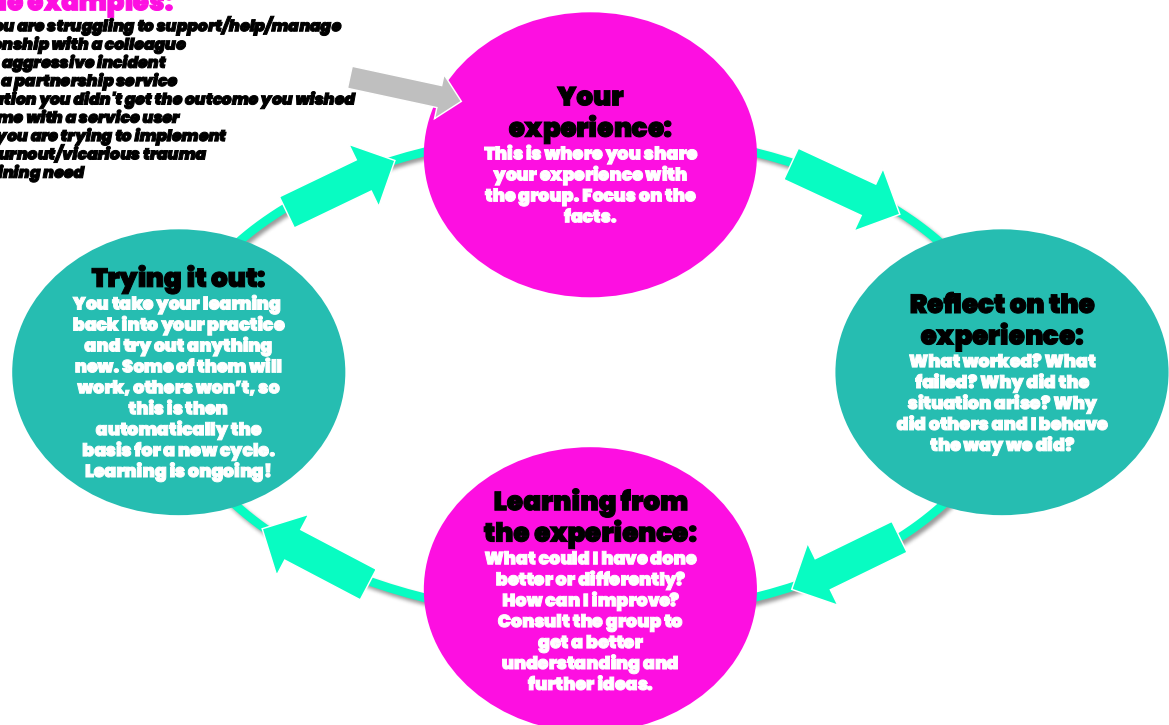
- **Active experimentation:** This stage is now practising the newly acquired knowledge. You take your own reflections and thoughts about improvements as well as the suggestions back into your practice and try out the new strategies. Some of them will work, others won't, so this is then automatically the basis for the new cycle. As the experiences within the active experimentation stage become the new "concrete experiences".

*Kolb, D.A. (1984). Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.*

## A simplified version of KOLB

### Some possible examples:

- A service user you are struggling to support/help/manage
- A difficult relationship with a colleague
- A challenging or aggressive incident
- Challenges with a partnership service
- An event or situation you didn't get the outcome you wished
- A positive outcome with a service user
- Something new you are trying to implement
- Struggles with burnout/vicarious trauma
- A learning or training need



## **“What? So what? Now what?”**

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This model comes from the book ‘Framework for Reflective Practice’. It’s based around three simple questions:

- 1. What?** – describe a particular situation, then focus on achievements, consequences, responses, feelings and any problems.
- 2. So what?** – discuss what you have learnt about yourself, relationships, models, attitudes, cultures, actions, thoughts, understanding and any improvements.
- 3. Now what?** – identify what you need to do in the future in order to improve future outcomes and develop your learning.

This reflective model is simple. However, this does not mean that the reflections should remain superficial. Really tackling those three questions honestly and thoroughly will always lead to some surprising answers.

### **What?**

*...is the problem/difficulty/ reason for being stuck/reason for feeling bad/reason we don't get on?*

*...was my role in the situation?*

*...was I trying to achieve?*

*...actions did I take?*

*...was the response of others?*

*...were the consequences for the service user? Myself? Others?*

*...feelings did it evoke in the service user? Myself? Others?*

*...was good/bad about the experience?*

### **So what?**

*...does this tell me/teach me/imply/mean about me/my team/others/our relationship/my service user's care/the model of support I am using/my attitudes/my service user's attitudes?*

*...was going through my mind as I acted?*

*...did I base my actions on?*

*...other knowledge can I bring to the situation?*

*...could/should I have done to make it better?*

*...is my new understanding of the situation?*

*...broader issues arise from the situation?*

### **Now what?**

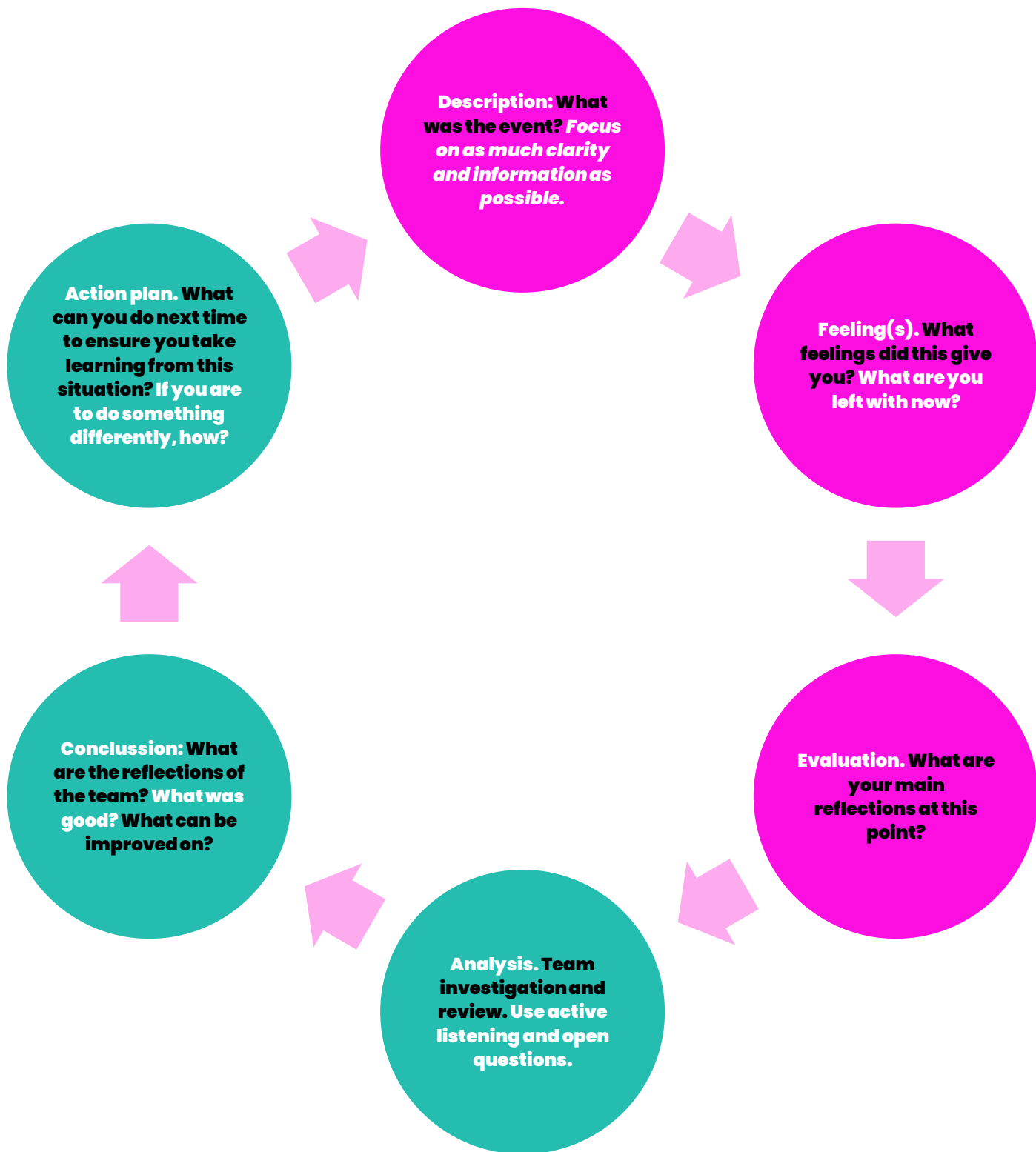
*...do I need to do in order to make things better/stop being stuck/improve my practice/resolve the situation/feel better/get on better/etc., etc.?*

*...broader issues need to be considered if this action is to be successful?*

*...might be the consequences of this action?*

The Rolfe et al. (2001) model was inspired by the foundational work of Terry Borton (1970), who used the 'What-So What-Now What?' reflective prompts for developing educational materials. These prompts can also be seen through the work of John Driscoll (2007) who adopted the model for healthcare professionals and endorsed using the three questions for individual and collective reflection in clinical practice.

**Source: Driscoll's "What Model" (2007)**



## Description – individual focus

Here you have a chance to describe the situation in detail. The main points to include here concern what happened. Your feelings and conclusions will come later.

Helpful questions:

- *What happened?*
- *When and where did it happen?*
- *Who was present?*
- *What did you and the other people do?*
- *What was the outcome of the situation?*
- *Why were you there?*
- *What did you want to happen?*

## Feelings – individual focus

Here you can explore any feelings or thoughts that you had during the experience and how they may have impacted the experience.

Helpful questions:

- *What were you feeling during the situation?*
- *What were you feeling before and after the situation?*
- *What do you think other people were feeling about the situation?*
- *What do you think other people feel about the situation now?*
- *What were you thinking during the situation?*
- *What do you think about the situation now?*

## Evaluation – individual focus

Here you have a chance to evaluate what worked and what didn't work in the situation. Try to be as objective and honest as possible. To get the most out of your reflection focus on both the positive and the negative aspects of the situation, even if it was primarily one or the other.

Helpful questions:

- *What was good and bad about the experience?*
- *What went well?*
- *What didn't go so well?*
- *What did you and other people contribute to the situation (positively or negatively)?*

## Analysis – team focus

The analysis step is where you have a chance to make sense of what happened. Up until now you have focused on details around what happened in the situation. Now you have a chance to extract meaning. The biggest positive impact at this point is that you are bringing your team in to help you analyse.

Helpful questions:

- *Why did things go well?*
- *Why didn't it go well?*
- *What sense can I make of the situation?*
- *What knowledge – my own or others can help me understand the situation?*

### Conclusions– team focus

In this section you can make conclusions about what happened. This is where you summarise your learning and highlight what changes to your actions could improve the outcome in the future. It should be a natural response to the previous sections.

Helpful questions:

- *What did I learn from this situation?*
- *How could this have been a more positive situation for everyone involved?*
- *What skills do I need to develop for me to handle a situation like this better?*
- *What else could I have done?*

### Action plan– team focus

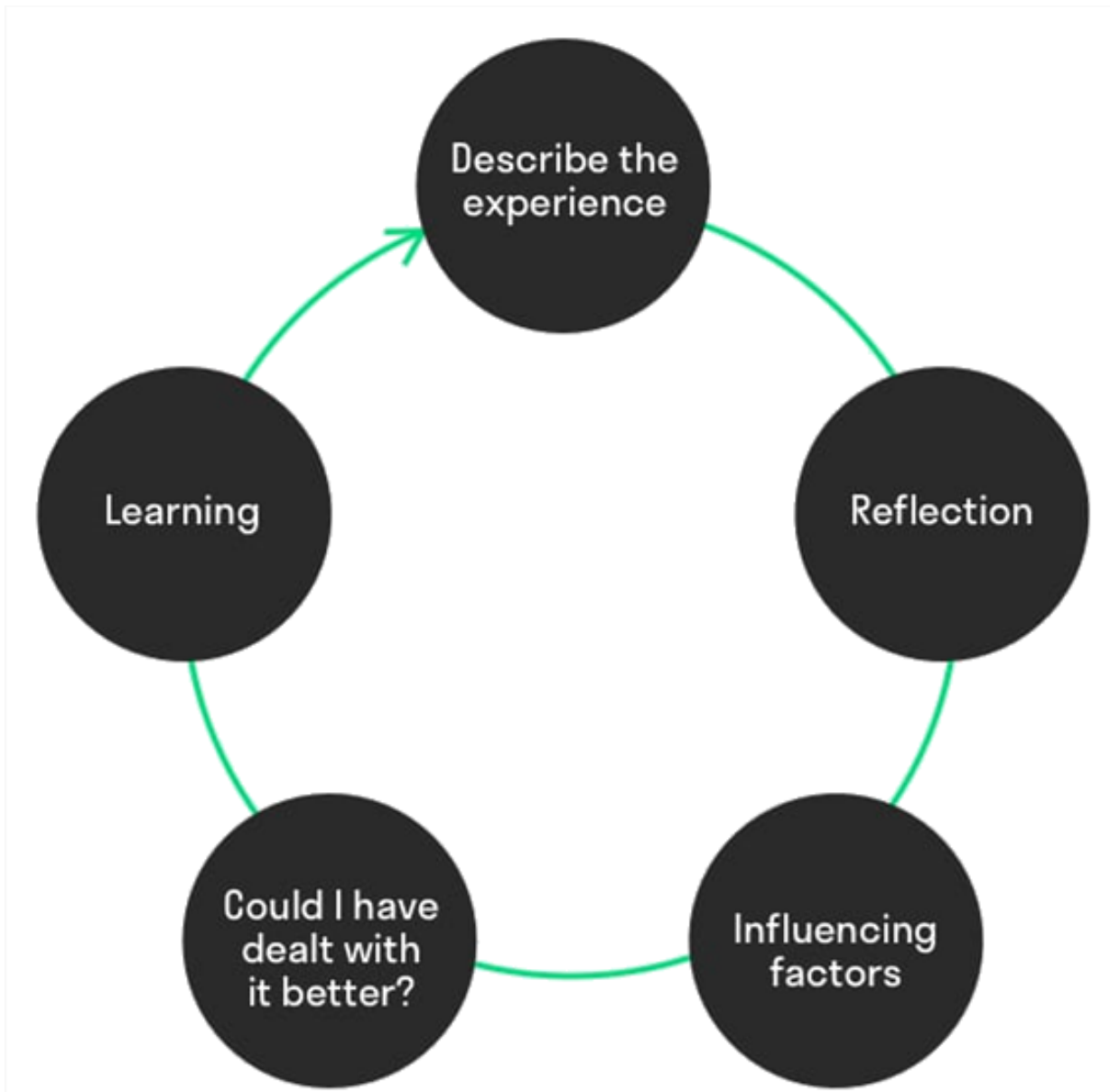
At this step you plan for what you would do differently in a similar or related situation in the future. It can also be extremely helpful to think about how you will help yourself to act differently – such that you don't only plan what you will do differently, but also how you will make sure it happens. Sometimes just the realisation is enough, but other times reminders might be helpful.

Helpful questions:

- *If I had to do the same thing again, what would I do differently?*
- *How will I develop the required skills I need?*
- *How can I make sure that I can act differently next time?*

*Adapted from: [www.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ed.ac.uk)*

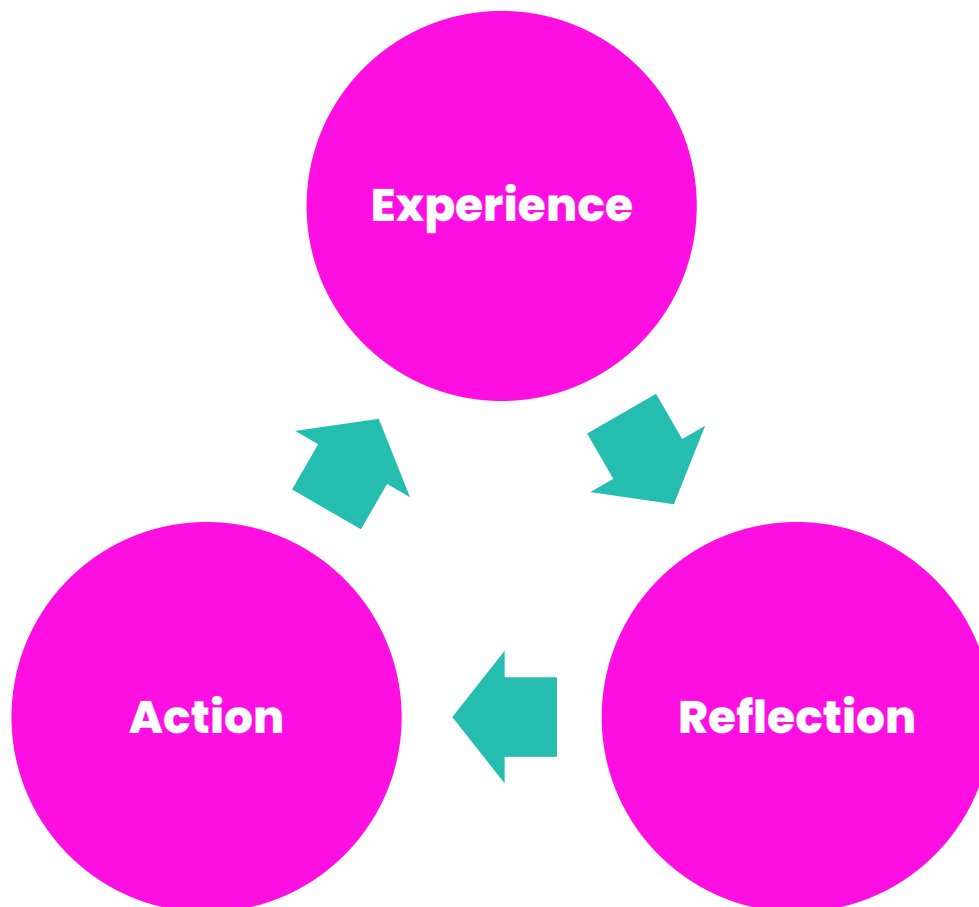
*Source: Gibbs, G. (1988). Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Further Education Unit.*



Developed for healthcare but adaptable elsewhere, this model provides a structured series of **cue questions** to guide deep reflection:

- **Description:** What happened?
- **Reflection:** What were you trying to achieve? How did you feel?
- **Influencing factors:** What internal/external factors influenced your actions?
- **Learning:** What could have been done differently?
- **Action plan:** How will this inform future practice?

**Useful for:** In-depth reflection, personal growth, and professional development.



A concise three-stage reflection model:

1. **Experience** – Describe the event or situation.
2. **Reflection** – Analyse and think about what happened.
3. **Action** – Identify what can be improved for next time.

**Useful for:** Encouraging concise reflections