



Reflective Journaling Toolkit



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1. Reflective Journaling

Foreword: In the context of our training program, reflective journaling serves as a personal record where Research Managers (RM) document their journey of awareness regarding situations and emotions. It encompasses understanding, analysing, and evaluating oneself, as well as formulating resolutions for action. Maintaining a balanced perspective by acknowledging both positive and negative states is crucial for fostering a comprehensive understanding. It acts as a tool for capturing, assessing, and contemplating one's learning and behaviour. Our minds are often filled with thoughts stemming from our concerns and unresolved matters, providing ample material for reflection. It extends beyond significant events, encompassing a continuous log of areas of personal concern.

What are the key benefits of keeping a reflective journal?

Maintaining a reflective journal aids us in clarifying and redefining our objectives, identifying, and reconstructing our core values, and establishing our emotional connections with individuals and elements within our organisation (Ghaye and Lillyman, 1997, p. 46).

It serves as:

- A documentation of *events* and our **responses** to them.
- An opportunity to *question* our **actions** and **behaviours**.
- A tool to *explore* alternative **approaches** and **improvements**.
- A *catalyst* for informed **decision-making** and **action**.
- A means to build **confidence** by gaining deeper **insights** into the issues we *reflect* upon.
- A method to *identify* recurring *patterns* of **thought** or **behaviour** that may be significant for initiating change.

Unlock the doors to self-development with Cardea's wisdom, turning thresholds into gateways to personal growth.

2. General Points on the value of Reflective and Learning journals:

This section provides general points on the value of reflective/learning journals. Incorporating Reflective or Learning Journals into your developmental journey can be exceptionally beneficial. Striking a balance between analytical and descriptive writing will optimize your efforts for developmental success. As Research Managers, you have a unique opportunity to utilize reading as a catalyst for your journal entries. This approach will not only allow you to gain new insights from your readings but also enrich your reflections and development, inspiring you to learn and grow.

- Your learning journal is your *personal sanctuary*; you have full control over it.
- Uphold confidentiality by refraining from identifying individuals or places by name, and carefully consider who can peruse your journal.
- **Consistency** is key to success; aim to write regularly, such as once a week, to maintain momentum.
- Clarify the distinction between recording facts, analysing experiences, reflecting on personal opinions, and devising actionable resolutions.
- In your journal entries, embrace a *diverse* range of experiences, including positive, neutral, routine, and negative occurrences.
- *Detail* is paramount; strive to record information with as much granularity as possible.
- Allow ample space for revisiting each entry, enabling reflection on how circumstances have evolved over time.
- Optionally, engage in discussions about your journal with a colleague or friend for additional insights and perspectives.
- View the journal as a transformative journey, fostering personal growth and change. Consider including a section dedicated to documenting your evolution, such as '*How I Have Changed*'.

Reflecting with Cardea, turning the key to unlocking self-discovery and personal evolution.

3. How can Journaling help me to develop as a research manager?

This section details how reflective journals can enable the RM's development. Reflective journals provide a structured way to reflect on one's learning experiences, challenges faced, and insights gained during the training. This process not only encourages **self-awareness** but also helps to identify areas for **personal** and **professional growth**, which can directly impact performance and competencies.

- **Facilitating Continuous Learning:** By regularly documenting one's thoughts and reflections, one can track one's progress over time and identify patterns in one's learning journey. This can help one stay motivated and committed to continuous improvement and achieving one's goals.
- **Enhancing Critical Thinking:** Reflective writing prompts can encourage RMs to critically evaluate their own assumptions, beliefs, and practices. This promotes deeper learning and encourages RMs to question and refine their approaches to research management.
- **Providing a Tool for Mentorship and Coaching:** Reflective journals can also serve as a valuable tool for mentorship and coaching. RMs can share their reflections with mentors or coaches, who can provide feedback, guidance, and support based on their insights.
- **Promoting Accountability:** Keeping a training journal can help RMs hold themselves **accountable** for their learning goals and action plans. By regularly documenting their progress and setbacks, research managers can stay focused on their development objectives.
- **Documenting Best Practices:** Reflective journals can serve as a repository of best practices and lessons learned for research management. Participants can share their reflections with colleagues, contributing to a culture of knowledge sharing and continuous improvement within their organisation.

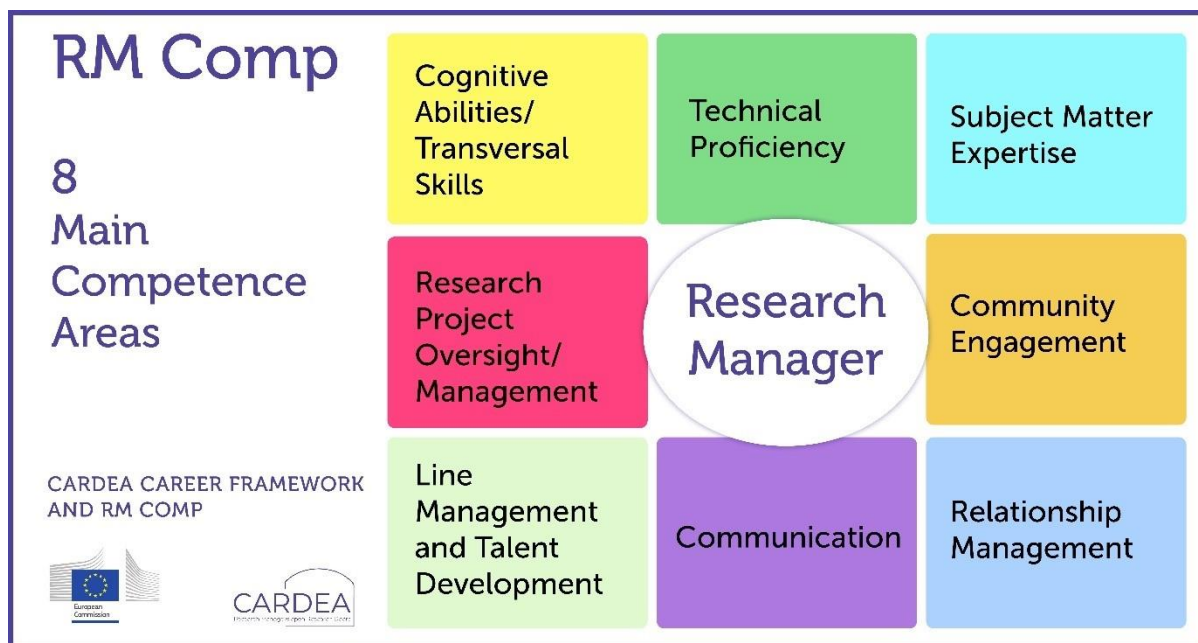
Guided by Cardea, the patron of open doors, research managers unlock new realms of competence and innovation through reflective exploration.

4. How can I link journaling to the Competency Framework?

This section links journaling to the CARDEA Competency Framework. By integrating reflective journaling practices into their daily routines, Research Managers can effectively develop and enhance the core competencies essential for success in their roles.

1. Cognitive Abilities/Transversal Skills
2. Technical Proficiency
3. Subject Matter Expertise/Specialised Knowledge
4. Research Project Management/Oversight
5. Community Engagement
6. Line Management and Talent Development
7. Communication
8. Relationship Management

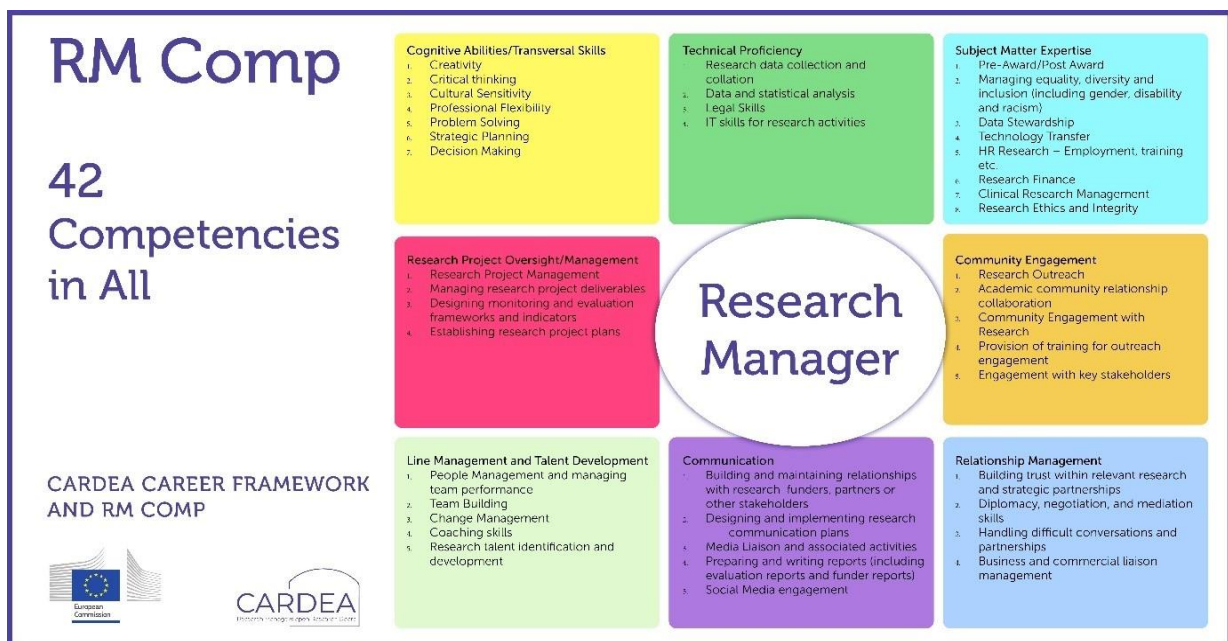
To link the development of journals with the competencies detailed for Research Managers (RM), we can align journaling practices with each competency area:



1. **Cognitive Abilities/Transversal Skills:** Journaling can enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills by encouraging RMs to reflect on their experiences, analyse different perspectives, and identify solutions to challenges they encounter in their research management roles.
2. **Technical Proficiency:** Journaling about the technical aspects of research projects can help RMs document their experiences with data collection, analysis tools, IT skills, and legal aspects. This reflection can facilitate the development of technical expertise and proficiency in handling specialised tools and technologies.
3. **Subject Matter Expertise/Specialized Knowledge:** Journaling allows RMs to document their experiences and insights in various specialised areas, such as research finance, ethics, technology transfer, and HR research. This practice supports the continuous development of subject matter expertise through reflection and learning from past experiences.
4. **Research Project Management/Oversight:** Journaling about project management experiences enables RMs to track the progress of research projects, reflect on challenges faced, and identify strategies for effective project oversight. This reflective practice contributes to the enhancement of project management skills and the ability to achieve research goals within defined constraints.
5. **Community Engagement:** Reflective journaling can aid RMs in documenting their engagement efforts with external audiences, stakeholders, and the broader community. By reflecting on outreach activities, collaboration efforts, and stakeholder interactions, RMs can improve their community engagement strategies and advance meaningful connections.
6. **Line Management and Talent Development:** Journaling about experiences in line management and talent development allows RMs to reflect on their leadership style, team dynamics, and strategies for managing team performance and development. This reflective practice supports continuous improvement in people management, coaching skills, and talent identification.
7. **Communication:** Keeping a journal helps RMs document their communication efforts, including interactions with research funders, partners, stakeholders, and media.

Reflecting on communication strategies, writing reports, and engaging in social media activities can enhance communication skills and facilitate effective information exchange within and outside the research team.

- 8. Relationship Management:** Reflective journaling enables RMs to document their efforts in building and maintaining positive relationships with various stakeholders involved in research initiatives. By reflecting on partnership building, negotiation skills, and handling difficult conversations, individuals can strengthen their relationship management abilities and foster productive collaborations.



Empower your journey of self-development and competency mastery through reflective exploration with Cardea, the guardian of growth.

5. Templates for journaling 8 competencies

This section contains journaling templates tailored to each of the eight competencies for Research Managers.

1. Cognitive Abilities/Transversal Skills:

Reflective Prompt:

- Describe a recent challenge or problem you encountered in your research management role.
- Analyse the situation using critical thinking skills. What different perspectives did you consider?
- Reflect on the strategies you employed to address the challenge and any creative solutions you developed.
- Identify any areas where you can further develop your cognitive abilities.

	Example
<i>Describe:</i>	
<i>Analyse :</i>	
<i>Reflect:</i>	
<i>Identify:</i>	

2. Technical Proficiency:

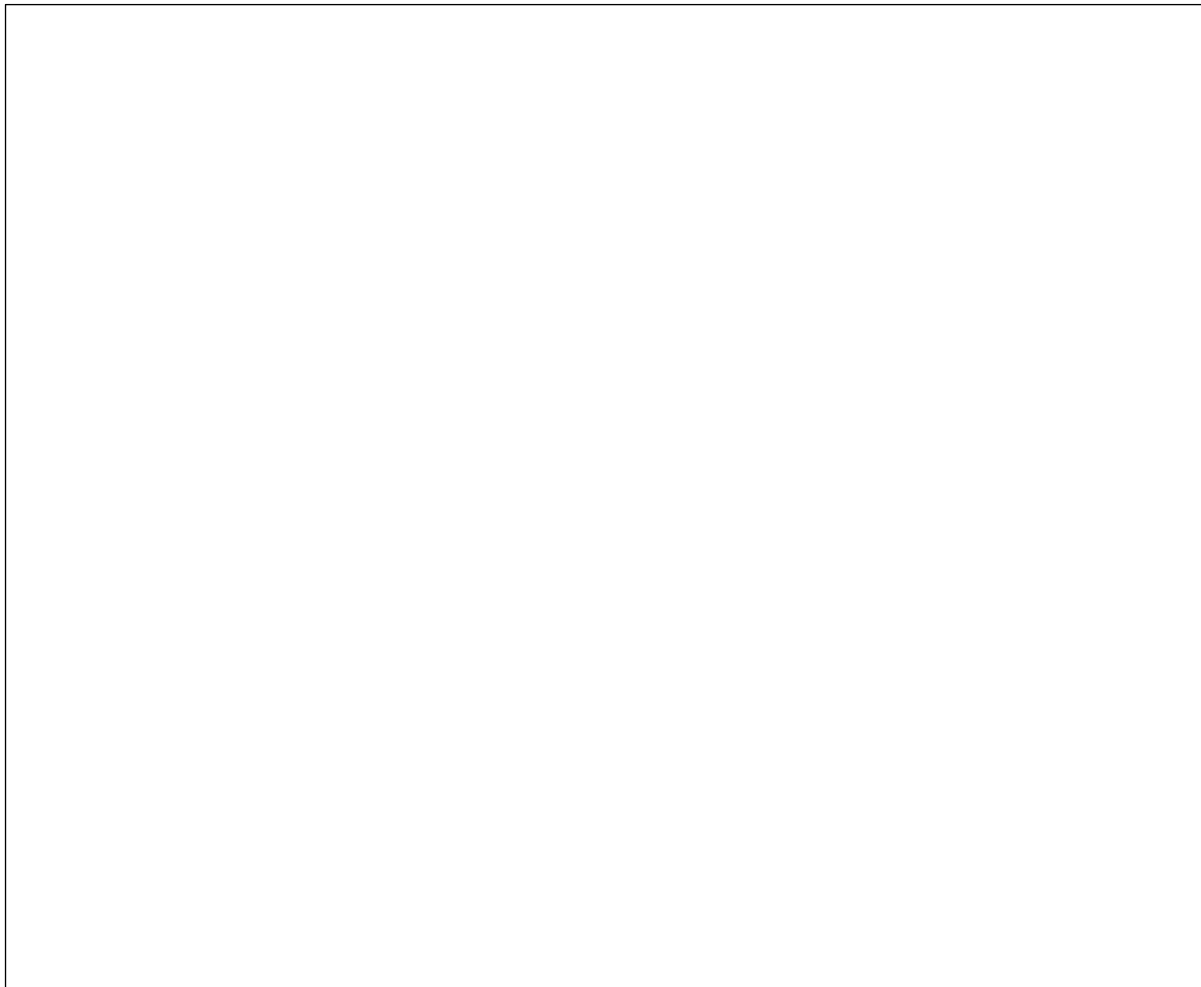
Reflective Prompt:

- Document your experiences with technical tools and methods used in research management (e.g., data collection, analysis, IT skills).
- Reflect on your proficiency level in each area. What aspects do you feel confident in, and where do you see room for improvement?
- Describe any challenges you faced when applying technical skills to your research projects.
- Identify opportunities for further training or skill development to enhance your technical proficiency.

3. Subject Matter Expertise/Specialised Knowledge:

Reflective Prompt:

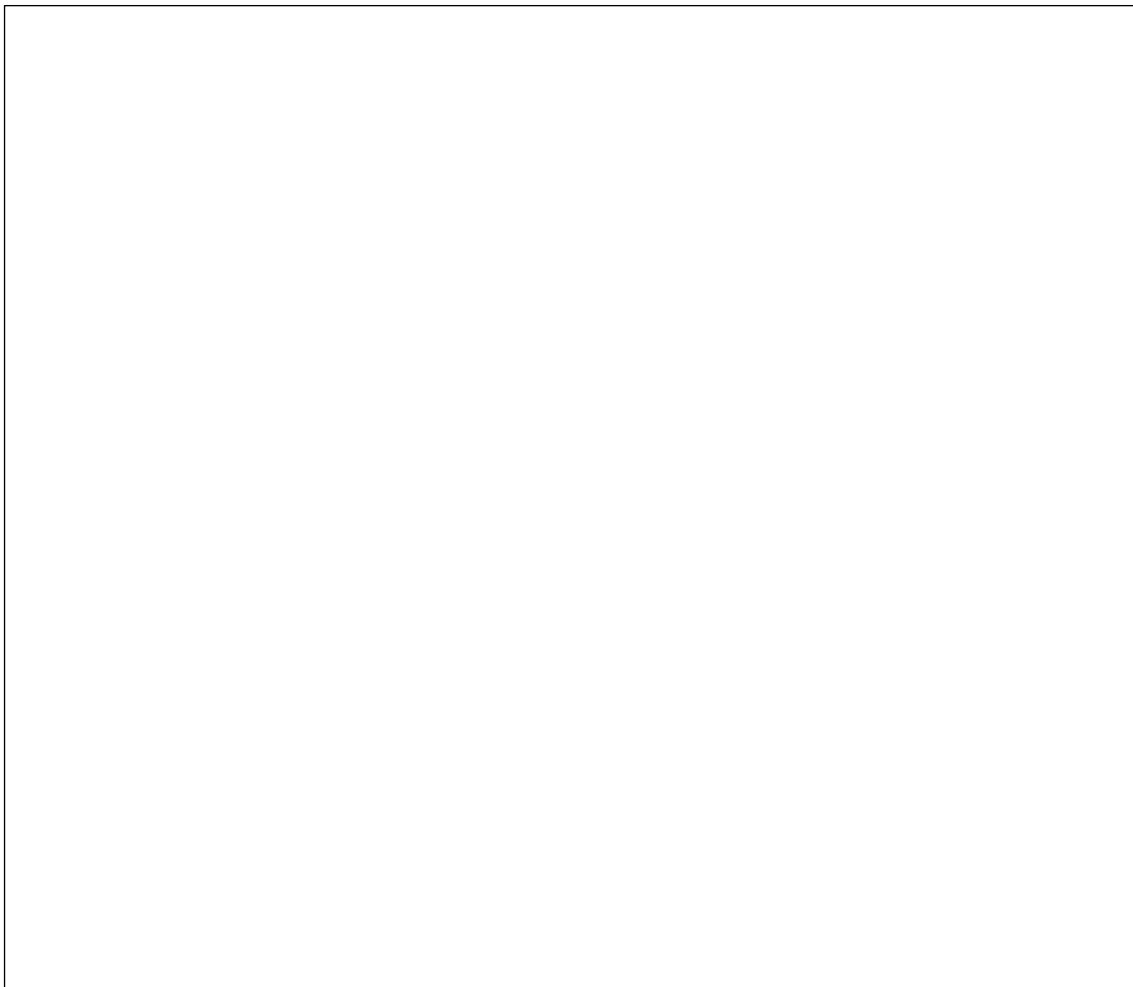
- Reflect on your understanding of specialized areas relevant to research management (e.g., research finance, ethics, technology transfer).
- Describe recent experiences where you applied subject matter expertise in your role.
- Analyse how your expertise contributed to the success of research projects or initiatives.
- Identify areas for continuous learning and development within your specialized areas of knowledge.



4. Research Project Management/Oversight:

Reflective Prompt:

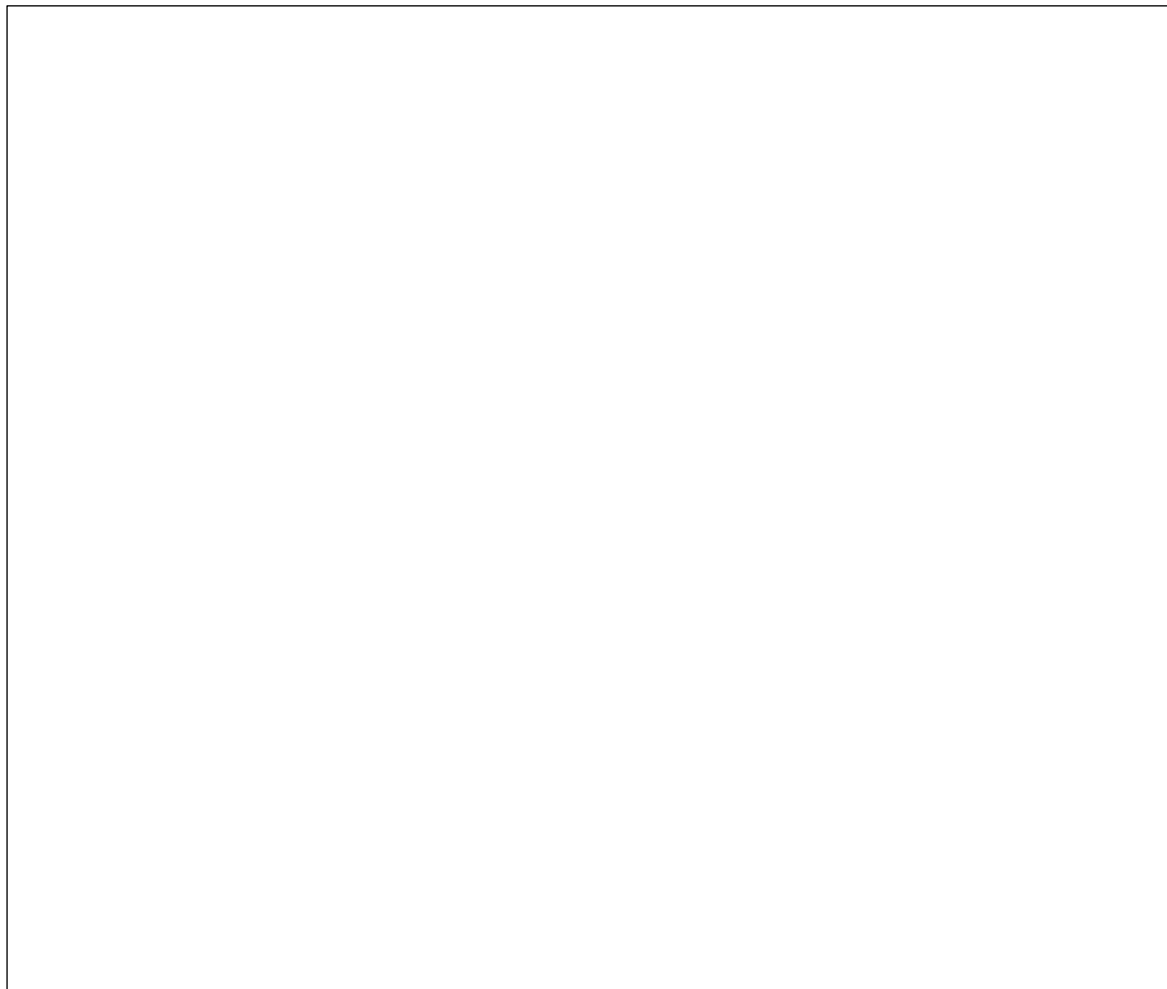
- Document your experiences in planning, executing, and monitoring research projects.
- Reflect on your project management strategies and the effectiveness of your oversight.
- Describe any challenges or obstacles you encountered during project management and how you addressed them.
- Identify lessons learned and areas for improvement in your project management approach.



5. Community Engagement:

Reflective Prompt:

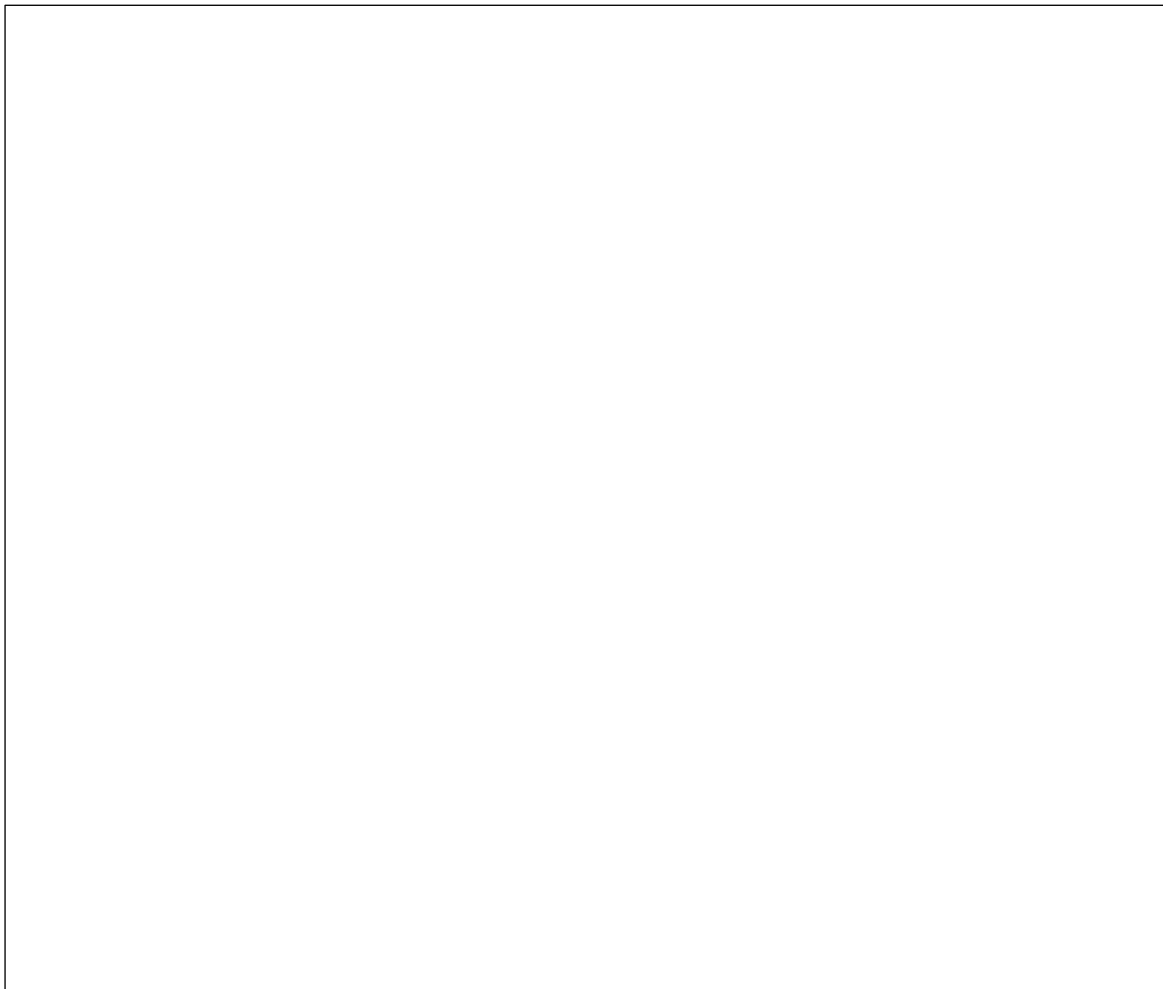
- Reflect on your engagement efforts with external audiences, stakeholders, and the broader community.
- Describe recent interactions or initiatives aimed at connecting research with the community.
- Analyse the impact of your community engagement activities and any lessons learned.
- Identify opportunities to enhance your community engagement strategies and build stronger connections.



6. Line Management and Talent Development:

Reflective Prompt:

- Document your experiences in managing teams and developing talent within your organization.
- Reflect on your leadership style and the effectiveness of your management approach.
- Describe any challenges or successes you encountered in managing team performance and development.
- Identify areas for growth as a leader and strategies for supporting the professional development of your team members.



7. Communication:

Reflective Prompt:

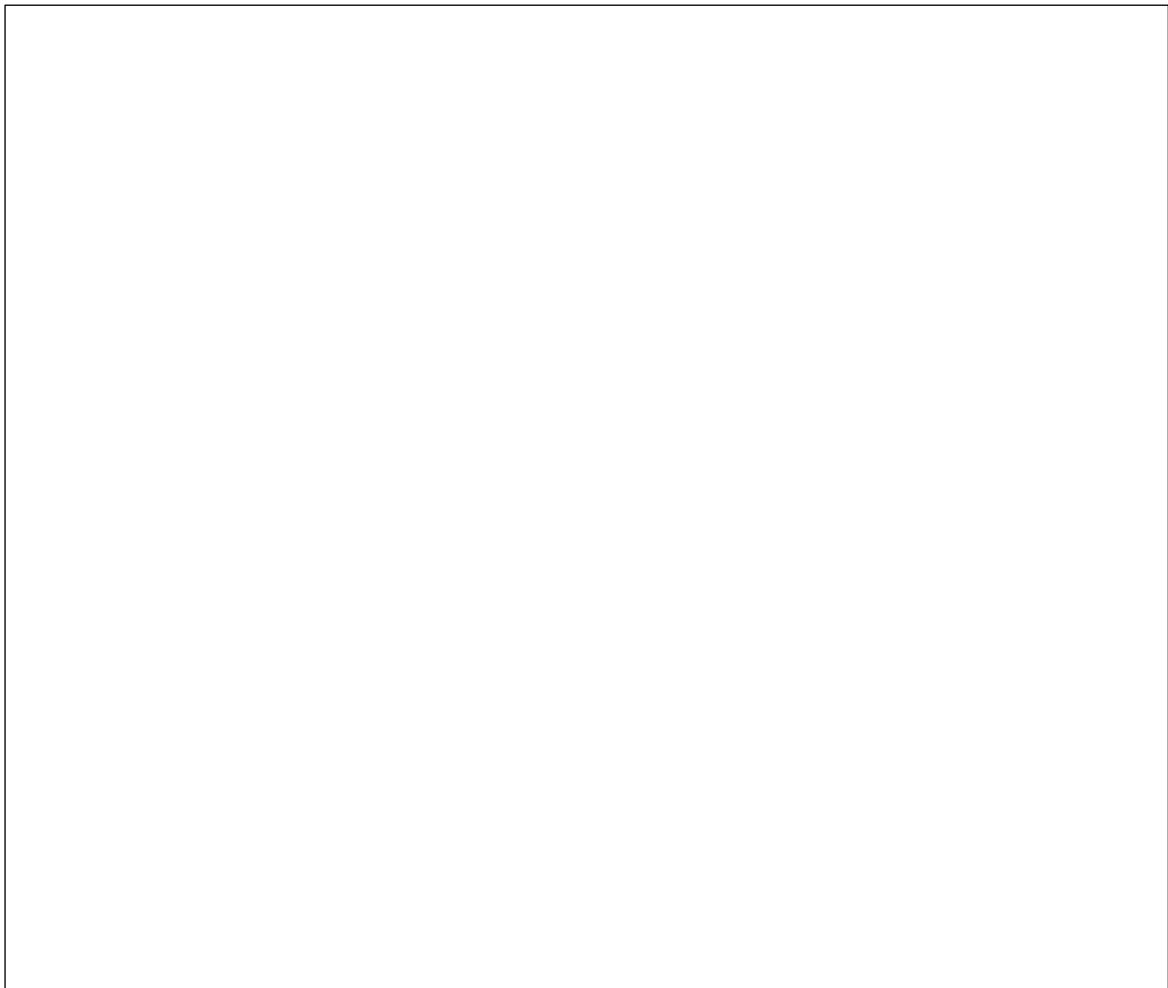
- Reflect on your communication efforts within and outside the research team.
- Describe recent interactions with stakeholders, funders, partners, and media.
- Analyse the effectiveness of your communication strategies and the impact on project outcomes.
- Identify areas for improvement in your communication skills and strategies for enhancing information exchange and collaboration.



8. Relationship Management:

Reflective Prompt:

- Document your efforts in building and maintaining relationships with various stakeholders involved in research initiatives.
- Reflect on recent partnership-building activities and interactions with stakeholders.
- Analyse the strength of your relationships and any challenges you faced in managing them.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen your relationship management skills and foster productive collaborations.



6. Generic Templates

Generic templates for structuring reflective journal entries:

Template 1: Situation-Reflection-Action

Situation:

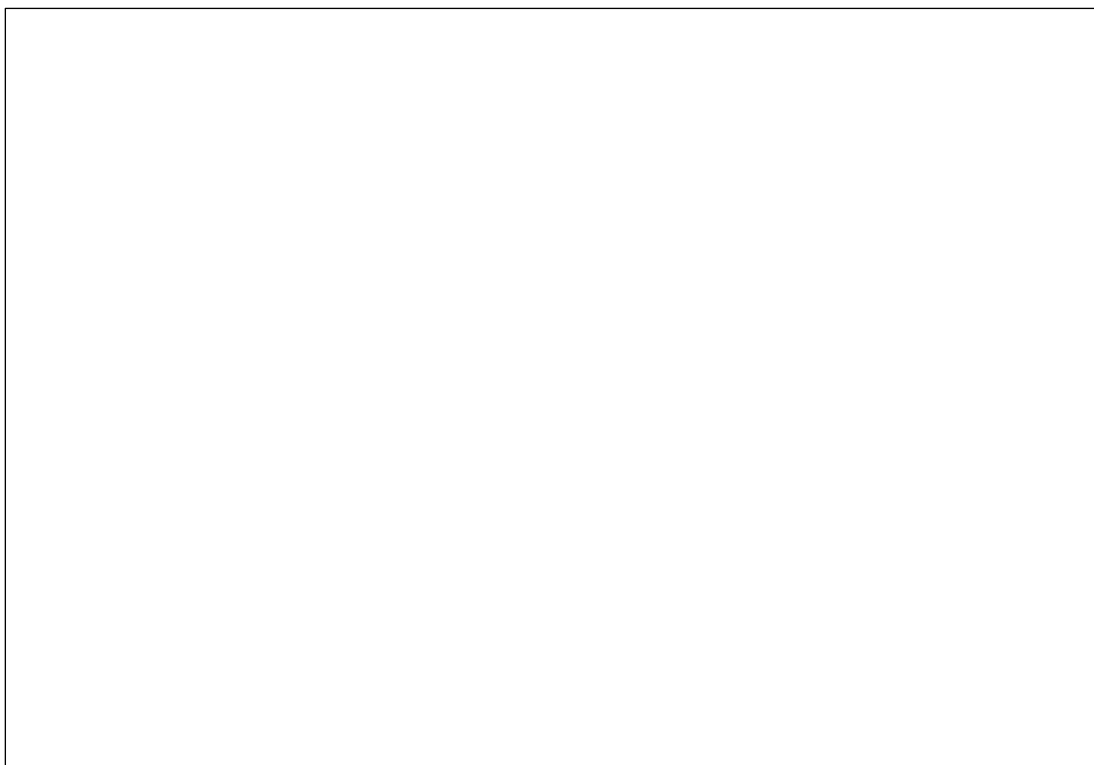
Briefly describe the situation or experience you're reflecting on.

Reflection:

Explore your thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the situation. Consider how it aligns with your values, beliefs, and goals. Analyse what you learned from the experience and any insights gained.

Action:

Identify specific actions or changes you intend to make based on your reflection. Consider how you can apply what you've learned to similar situations in the future.



Template 2: What-So What-Now What

What:

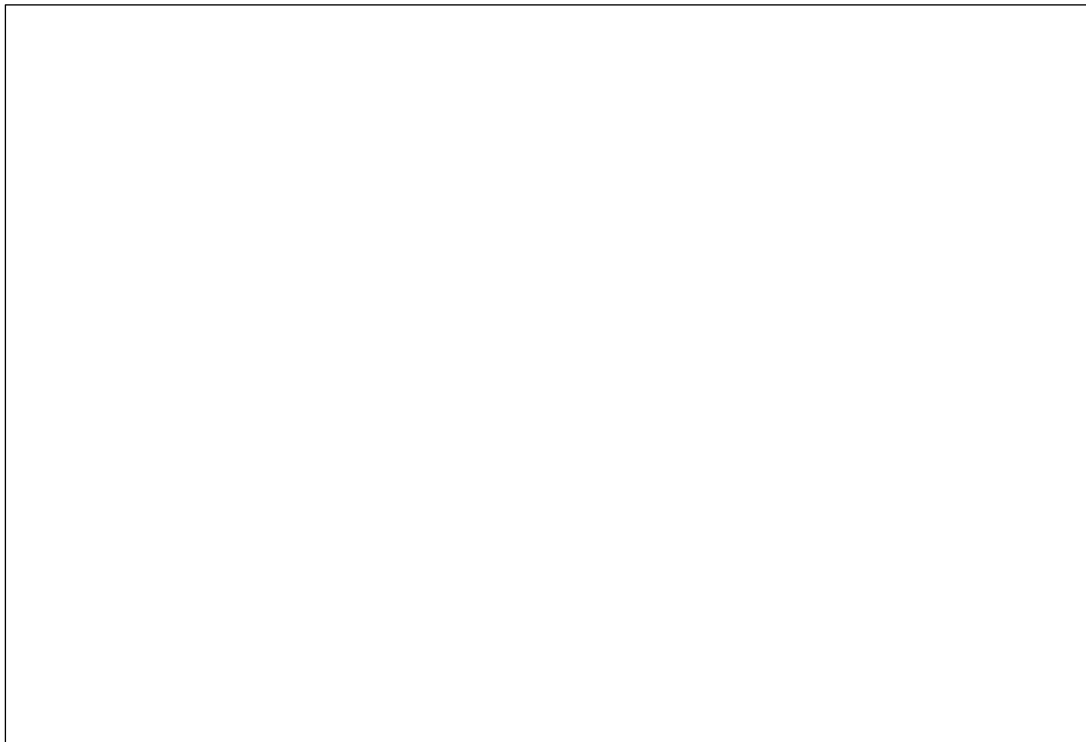
Describe the event or situation you're reflecting on in detail. What happened? Who was involved? What were your thoughts and feelings at the time?

So, What:

Reflect on the significance of the experience. What did you learn about yourself, others, or the situation? How does it relate to your personal or professional development?

Now What:

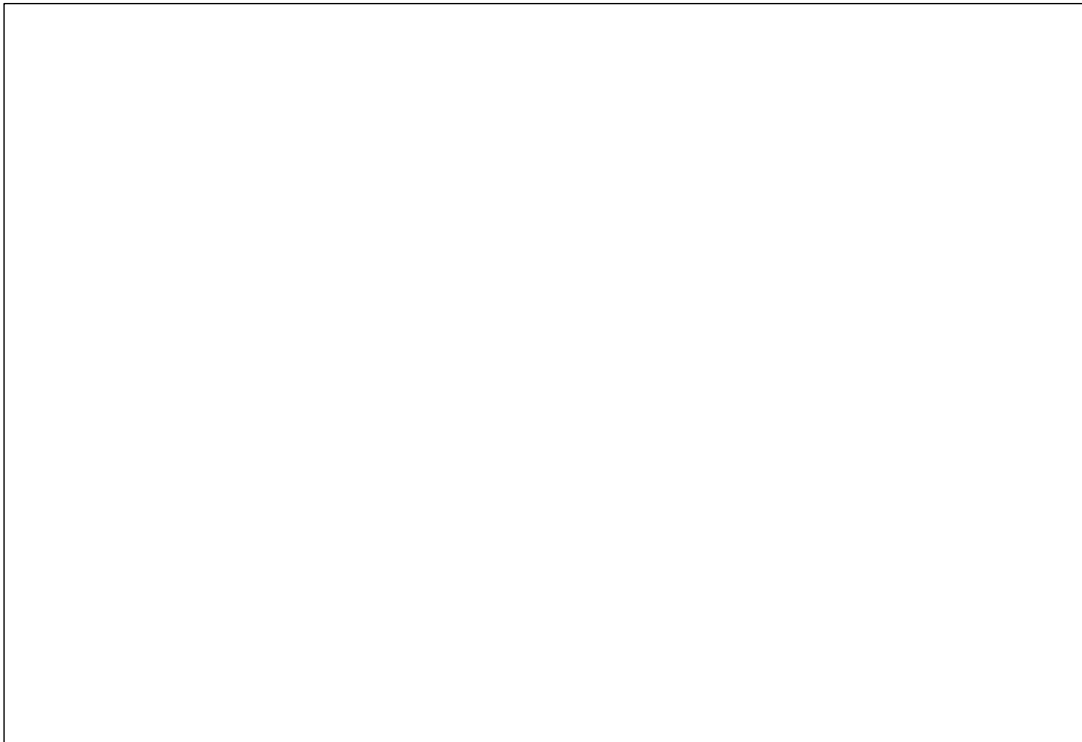
Consider the implications of your reflection. What actions will you take moving forward? How will you apply what you've learned to future situations?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their reflection. It occupies the lower half of the page.

Template 3: Journal Prompts

Use open-ended prompts to guide your reflection. Some examples include:

- *What was the most challenging part of today?*
- *What am I grateful for right now?*
- *How did I respond to conflict today, and how could I handle it differently in the future?*
- *What did I learn about myself from today's experiences?*
- *What are three things I can do tomorrow to improve my well-being?*

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their journal entries in response to the prompts above.

