

five modes of thinking

Five Modes of Thinking



Sense

What's really going on?

Useful when: Untangling issues

Do: Listen deeply, gather perspectives

Don't: Jump to solutions

Activities: Interviews, mapping

Methods: 5 Whys, Rich pictures



Imagine

What might be possible?

Useful when: Exploring options

Do: Generate options, build on ideas

Don't: Settle on first idea

Activities: Co-design, sketching

Methods: "How might we...?", 3 Horizons



Design

How will we make it work?

Useful when: Planning the approach

Do: Get specific, test assumptions

Don't: Over-plan, lock in early

Activities: Prototyping, testing

Methods: Blueprints, Logic models, Backcasting



Learn

What did we discover?

Useful when: Understanding what worked

Do: Reflect honestly, capture insights

Don't: Make it a judgement

Activities: Retrospectives, analysis

Methods: Learning loops, reflection



Act

Let's make it happen

Useful when: Ready to deliver, know your approach

Do: Start small, learn fast

Don't: Wait for perfect conditions

Activities: Implementation, check-ins

Methods: Sprints, project teams, working groups

These aren't linear steps but modes you move between in an ongoing cycle