

? WHAT

🔍 WHY

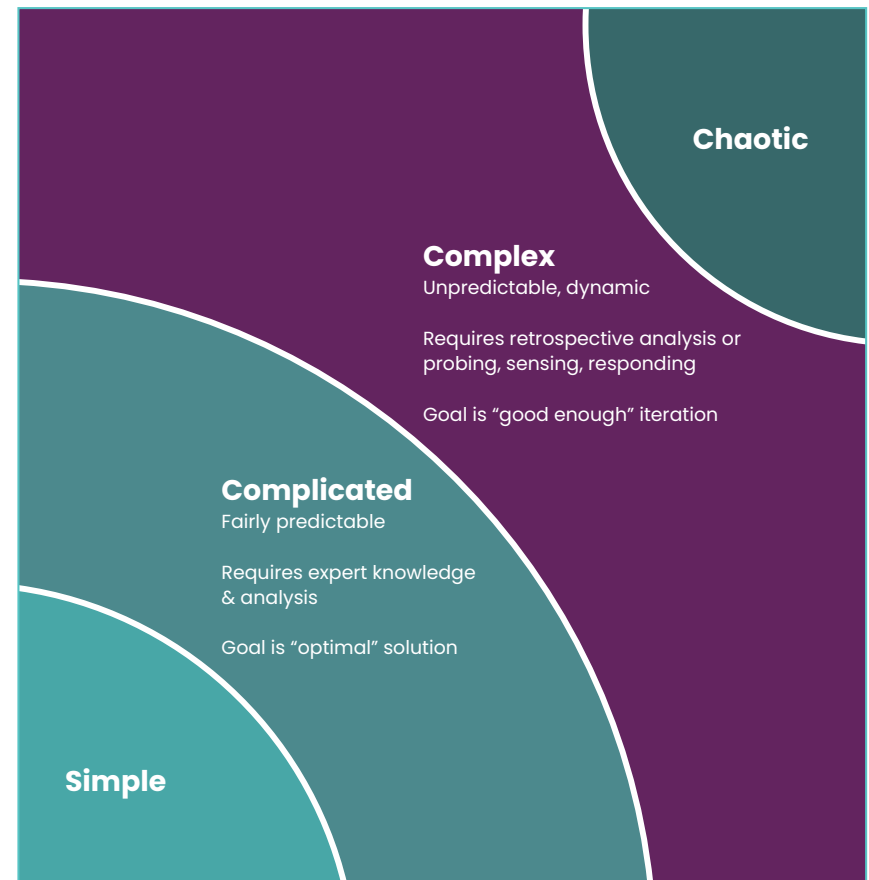
☑️ HOW

What

Ideas, priorities, aspirations and enthusiasm in a community emerge in different places at different times which are impossible to predict. New influences, both positive and negative, from multiple sources both inside and outside the community can have profound impact on community building efforts. Facilitating processes in this kind of complexity requires a specific skill set that sees emergence, nimbleness and adaptability as core strengths.

Why

Community ecosystems are complex, there are many moving parts, many players with their respective mandates, and systems are always changing. You are working in an existing ecosystem with conflicting priorities, historical tensions, and entrenched power dynamics; even the best laid plans can be derailed by forces out of your control. This complexity is one of the main reasons why the Connected Community Approach introduces a local network weaver, facilitator or integrator: to help connect the dots across the messiness. This role is not designed to control the behaviour of others, but rather to understand the dynamic relationships at play, surface underlying assumptions and tensions and to help networks design resilient and adaptive strategies.



How

Key Question(s)

How can you use your purpose and guiding principles to foster resilience in the network? How does adaptability and nimbleness in the face of ongoing “messiness” help you if your work is disrupted by “shocks” such as a pandemic, a weather crisis or a dramatic change in government?

Actions

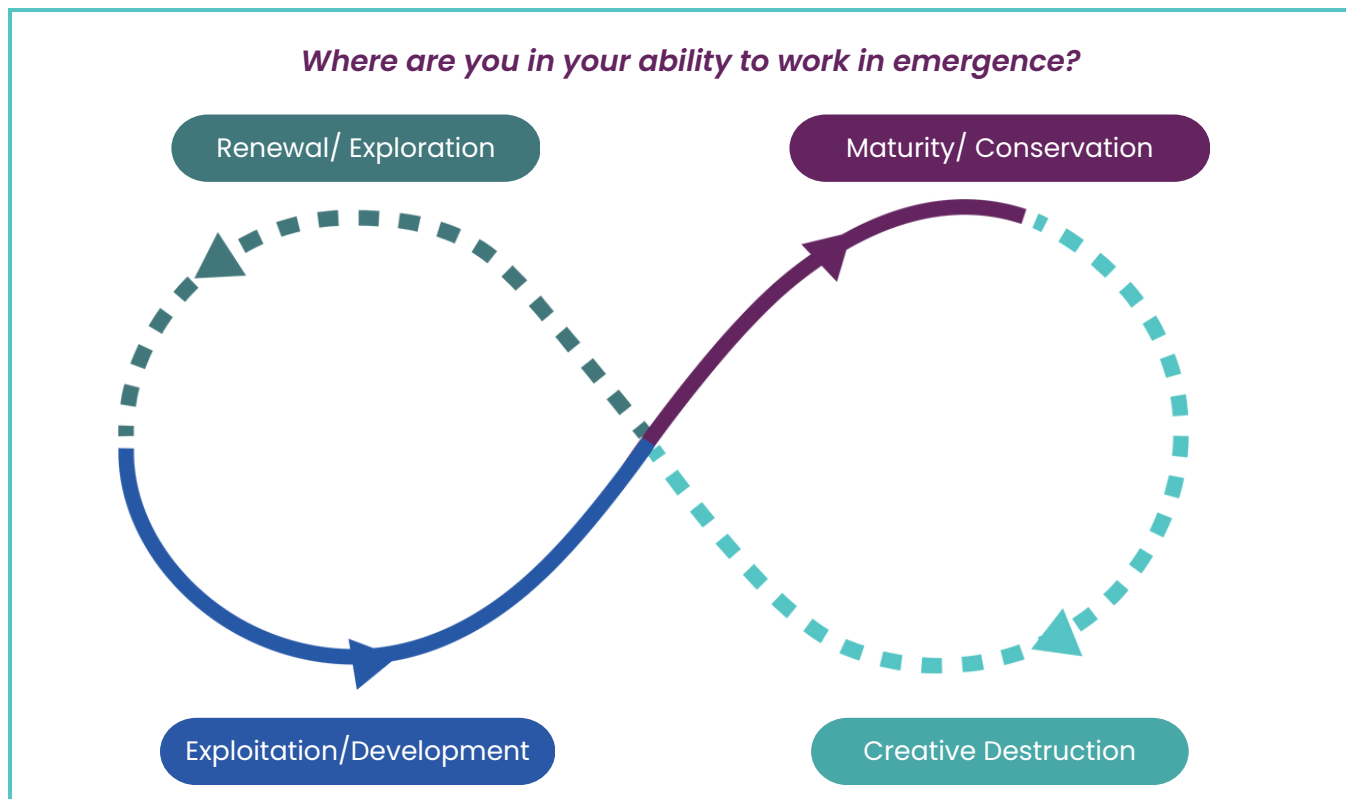
- Make sure that your initiatives are grounded in and guided by a [shared purpose and principles](#)
- When designing projects or initiatives, [the role of the facilitator, integrator, network weaver or community backbone organization](#) can make all the difference in ensuring nimbleness and adaptability.
- Assess the issue you are trying to address and explore whether it is [simple, complicated or complex](#). This will give you a sense of the kinds of skills and approaches to take.
- Surface [the polarities](#) in your work. Complexity often involves polarities: situations where there is truth and wisdom on more than one side of an issue; each side is incomplete without the wisdom and input of the other, for example:
 - Top-down AND Bottom-up Leadership
 - Individual AND Team
 - Centralization AND Decentralization
 - Loose AND Tight Leadership
 - Continuity AND Change
- CCA is founded on the idea of emergence: paying attention to momentum and connecting the momentum to opportunities. Explore [these 6 practical tips for working in emergence](#) to help you hone your skills
- Prioritize relationships and trust as the foundation of all your interactions, that way when things shift and change people will know that together they can embrace the messiness. Here are 6 tips for [building trust in community collaboration](#)
- Use [tools like this interval planning approach to design strategies](#) and plans that are grounded in your purpose, guided by your principles and adaptable to change.

Indicators of Success

- ❑ Your network/team is able to keep focused on its purpose and be guided by shared principles even as actions and plans shift
- ❑ Members of your network/ team are confident in their ability to navigate changing contexts
- ❑ Changing plans and actions are considered part of an emergent process rather than a failure of planning
- ❑ Your network/ team is resilient and able to learn and grow from unexpected disruptions to their plans and actions
- ❑ Your network/ team is able to keep focused on its purpose and be guided by shared principles even as actions and plans shift

Reflection Questions

- What are the tensions or polarities you, your network/ team are grappling with?
- Where is the momentum coming from for your work? What are the opportunities you are leveraging to support the momentum?
- How are you using purpose and guiding principles to navigate changing/ challenging contexts?



We hope you find these tools useful in continuing the momentum to build on local strengths, facilitated collaborative processes and learn together. Catalysts' Circle offers workshops, coaching and strategy design services that can further help you dig deeply into these keys and explore the others that can help you make a truly Connected Community.



Catalysts' Circle can be found at www.connectedcommunities.ca or email agloger@catalystscircle.ca for more information