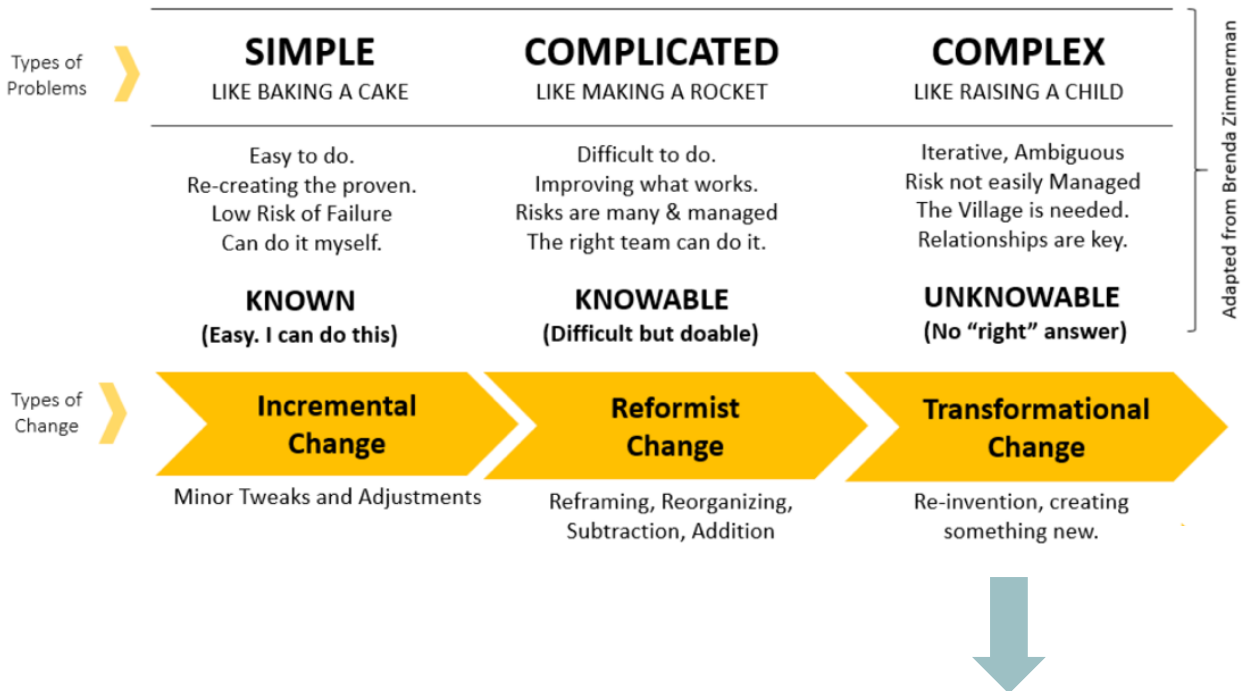# Assessing Readiness for Collective Impact

Determine if Collective Impact is an appropriate approach

Collective Impact is an appropriate and needed approach for addressing complex, large scale social issues. But **not all problems are complex and thus, may not require a Collective Impact approach to solve.** Before diving in, it's helpful to determine if Collective Impact is the most appropriate approach for the problem you are trying to address.

Start by defining the problem you are trying to address and determine what type of problem it is. If it's a **simple** problem, you can address it by researching best practices (what's known to work) and implement a programmatic solution. **Complicated** problems will likely require collaboration and new or different ways of operating, but collaboration likely looks more like cooperation and coordination on the Collaboration Spectrum, not Collective Impact. If the problem you are trying to address is **complex**, you'll need an approach like Collective Impact requiring cross-sector partners learning together to deeply understand the problem, try new things together, change systems and structures, and continually adapt and evolve approaches based on learning.

Problems, Change, Learning, and Thinking

Types of Problems	**SIMPLE** LIKE BAKING A CAKE	**COMPLICATED** LIKE MAKING A ROCKET	**COMPLEX** LIKE RAISING A CHILD
	Easy to do. Re-creating the proven. Low Risk of Failure Can do it myself.	Difficult to do. Improving what works. Risks are many & managed The right team can do it.	Iterative, Ambiguous Risk not easily Managed The Village is needed. Relationships are key.
	KNOWN (Easy. I can do this)	**KNOWABLE** (Difficult but doable)	**UNKNOWABLE** (No "right" answer)

Adapted from Brenda Zimmerman

Types of Change	**Incremental Change**	**Reformist Change**	**Transformational Change**
	Minor Tweaks and Adjustments	Reframing, Reorganizing, Subtraction, Addition	Re-invention, creating something new.

If you determine that the problem you are addressing is **complex**, the next step is to assess your community's readiness for Collective Impact.
(see next page)

Assess Community Readiness for Collective Impact

The readiness of a community to implement Collective Impact can be determined by assessing the extent to which **four pre-conditions** exist within the community. Use the template below to assess your community across each of the four pre-conditions identified by the Collective Impact Forum as important conditions to have in place to successfully launch a Collective Impact initiative. Based on the evidence you see existing in your community for each pre-condition, check the box of the rating you would give your community. Then, identify the areas where you can continue to build readiness and the steps you will take to strengthen those areas.

Pre-Condition for Collective Impact	Rate this Pre-Condition	Evidence of this Pre-Condition in our Community	Next Steps to Strengthen this Pre-Condition
Urgency for Change • Critical, complex problem in the community • Frustration with existing approaches	*Check One:* ☐ *None* ☐ *Some* ☐ *Quite a bit* ☐ *A lot!*		
History of Collaboration • Trusted relationships among cross-sector partners • Presence of existing collaborative efforts	*Check One:* ☐ *None* ☐ *Some* ☐ *Quite a bit* ☐ *A lot!*		
Availability of Resources • Partners committed to investing time, talent, and treasure ($) in the initiative for at least 12 months, ideally multiple years.	*Check One:* ☐ *None* ☐ *Some* ☐ *Quite a bit* ☐ *A lot!*		
Influential Champions, Supportive Leadership • Champions are respected by and have the ability to engage cross-sector leaders • Government Leadership is engaged	*Check One:* ☐ *None* ☐ *Some* ☐ *Quite a bit* ☐ *A lot!*		