

Evidence-Based Practices to Create the Best Chance of a Positive Impact or Outcome

The ADD + ACT Approach

STEP 1: ADD (Assess, Defuse, Decide)

[A] Assess if you, or anyone you are speaking with, are having an automatic threat response.

- How do you know when your automatic threat response is too high to be fully effective?
- How might you determine if the other person's (or people's) threat response is too high?

[D] Defuse and soothe if necessary

- Pause, at a minimum. What will you do or say to help everyone take a moment and pause?
- Consider other rapid emotion-shifting strategies. What could you role model, and what might you invite others to do in the moment?

[D] Decide on your goal.

- What considerations will help you decide on the best outcome you can hope for in the situation?

STEP 2: ACT (Ask, Connect, Talk)

[A] Ask questions. First, seek to understand.

- What open-ended questions might you ask? Questions should be designed in a way that allow you to respectfully learn about the other person's perspective, concerns, needs, and ideas.

[C] Connect with those around you.

- Practice finding the understandable part in everyone. Practice validating their motives or goals whenever you can. Reflect on what you have in common.

[T] Talk. State your view or make your points with humility and respect.

1. Ground everything in values. Ideally, lead with values.
 - How does the topic link to your values, shared values, and/or organizational values? Always ground what you say in values by directly connecting the topic to those values.
2. Make a statement that reflects awareness and understanding of systemic inequities. In many cases, also acknowledge the realities of partners/employees from marginalized groups and affirm your commitment to being part of the solution.
 - What might you say? Have a few statements at the ready. Review examples but prepare your own.
 - What *authentic* message do you want to send about yourself and your commitment?
3. State a few key points simply with authenticity, humility, and respect.
 - What key points are most important?
 - Practice and ask for feedback from diverse listeners. Ask if what you are trying to say is what people are hearing. Are you conveying authenticity, humility, and respect?
4. Stay on-topic (on message).
 - How will you handle derailing or distracting messages? Identify the things that have sent you off-topic in the past and prepare for those situations.
 - Validate distracting or derailing statements if appropriate. Restate key message.