



CONNECT & CORRECT™

TECHNIQUE FOR ENGAGING

Understand first, explain later.

Step 1: CONNECT (Build trust)

P- Presence (focus on the person and the conversation)

E- Empathy (consider what is going on for the other person)

A- Acknowledge (reflect back what you hear, acknowledge what matters to them)

R- Reflect and Reframe (notice their response; consider a reframing statement)

L- Listen openly (listen to what they are saying below the surface)

A- Ask questions (ask questions to clarify and build trust)

Step 2: CORRECT (Address the problem)

D- Describe the behavior, be specific

E- Explain the impact

S- Seek alternatives and agreement

C- Clarify consequences



Tips and Tools for Connecting- *PEARLA*

This simple tool provides some tips for improving your ability to connect using the *PEARLA* technique.

Presence-

The 3-breaths technique-

1. Take a deep breath and say to yourself as you exhale- “I am present and focused”
2. Take a second deep breath and say to yourself as you exhale- “I am letting go”
3. Take a third deep breath and say to yourself as you exhale- “I wonder what’s next?”

Adapted from: Christina Baldwin, Calling the Circle- The First and Future Culture, 1998, Bantam Books.

Empathy-

Shifting your mindset so that you are open to what may be happening for the other person without making judgments about them is difficult when they are behaving badly. Engaging from a place of empathy is a good way to respond when strong emotions are present. It allows you to both support the person and manage your own reaction to their emotions.

Here are some more tips to think about when you are faced with strong emotions...

Tips for engaging when there are strong emotions:

- Use the 3 breaths technique
- Use silence and remain supportive
- Focus and notice your own reactions- are you calm?
- Be empathetic- try to understand what is happening
- Ask questions with concern for their well-being
- Listen openly
- Acknowledge- let them know you see how upset they are
- Apologize if appropriate
- Take a time out
- Set limits on abusive or attacking behavior
- Arrange to talk together when everyone is less stressed

Remember-

You can be empathetic without agreeing with what the other person claims is true.

Empathy humanizes the situation so that it is less about winning and more about working together.

Empathy is particularly important when connecting in high conflict situations.



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Acknowledgement-

There are many ways to acknowledge what is happening for someone. Effectively acknowledging what matters is a way to build trust, deescalate the situation and help the person to feel understood.

Remember, **Understand first- Explain later!**

Acknowledging *what* matters to someone shows respect and invites collaboration.

Acknowledging *why* it matters to them demonstrates empathy and understanding

Example:

- *I know it is important for you to have input into this decision.*
- *I know it is important for you to have input into this decision so that it feels like a fair process.*

Try the following reflection exercise to practice this technique.

Scenario:

Mary comes in late to work and starts giving people the stink eye; she is muttering to herself about the idiot on the freeway who cut her off and nearly caused an accident; she does not make eye contact with anyone and she is tossing her things around and giving off a very negative vibe making it difficult to approach her.

Q1: What could be going on for Mary? What would cause her to behave this way? Come up with several options.

Q2: What is your initial reaction to this type of situation? Are you concerned that if you say something you will make things worse?

Q3: Come up with three responses you could make that would acknowledge what Mary might be experiencing. A sample is provided for you. Practice saying the responses out loud to a friend- it takes a while to be comfortable with this.

Sample: It sounds like you had trouble with the traffic today- it is frustrating to run late. Now you try...



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Reflecting and Reframing

Reflecting and reframing are key engagement techniques. The goal is to reflect back what may be important to the person who is making the statement and provide an alternative way to view the situation that captures what matters most to that person.

This takes a great deal of practice to do well and to do in the moment. Here are some practice statements to work with. Try to come up with two options for each statement.

Sample Statement 1: “Doesn’t anyone know what they are doing around here?”

Reframe:

1) It sounds like there is information that you feel you are not getting- what information would be helpful to you right now? (*reframe from incompetence to lack of information*)

2) It sounds like you are not able to rely on the staff- tell me what would make you more comfortable. (*reframe to reliability and support*)

Sample Statement 2: “He is the most incompetent doctor I have ever seen!”

Reframe:

1) Having trust in the people you rely on is essential.

2) You sound upset. What would help you feel assured that you have the support you need from the team?

Now you try:

Statement 3: *Don’t you think she should be fired for what she did?*

Statement 4: *I don’t want to have any more conversations about this, they just need to follow through and do what I say.*

Statement 5: *No one ever listens to what I have to say anyway so why should I speak up and say anything?*

Some good reframing resources:

D. Stone, B. Patton, and S. Heen, *Difficult Conversations- How to Discuss What Matters Most*, 1999, Penguin Books

B. Mayer, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution- A Practitioner’s Guide*, 2000, Jossey-Bass.



Tips and Tools for Connecting- *PEARLA*

Listening

Listening is the key for deescalating a situation, for gaining insight into what is important to the other person, for demonstrating respect, and for building trust. It is the best way to create connection. Listening is a healing practice.

“The opposite of listening, is preparing to speak.” Bill Isaacs

Some guidelines for listening effectively:

- Listen for at least 90 seconds without interrupting with asking a question or saying anything
- Notice if the person repeats a word or information- repetition indicates importance
- Notice if there is extra energy or emotion around a particular part of their story
- If you start problem-solving, rather than just listening, notice the tendency and go back to listening
- Listen openly - try to understand rather than to try to fix
- Listen below the surface- what is behind the facts of the story? What might be of concern? What might they value?
- Do whole-body or deep tissue listening- how is your own body responding to what you are hearing or seeing? How is that impacting what you are hearing? How is that impacting how you interpret what you are hearing?
- Listen for projections and notice your own projections

Listening to a conflict story:

Conflict stories typically include the following characteristics-

1. Attribution or blame of others
2. A simple explanation for a complex situation
3. Fixed conclusions or judgments- strong positions
4. All or nothing thinking or wishful thinking
5. Strong or polarized words or phrases
6. Emotional energy

Remember:

- Initial positions are rarely the final position when someone is upset
- When someone is emotional, they have difficulty processing information or hearing explanations
- Listening openly gives you time to become present and monitor your own reactions



Tips and Tools for Connecting- *PEARLA*

Ask Clarifying Questions

One way to deescalate a situation, to get a better understanding and to create connection is to ask Questions of Curiosity rather than give Advice. It is also a form of perspective taking. Questions of Curiosity are questions you don't know the answer to that help the other person clarify what is going on for them. They are particularly useful if the person is upset.

Try to avoid “why” questions- they tend to feel judgmental. For example:

- *Why are you behaving this way?*
- *Why can't you be more civil?*

Here are some samples to compare:

Questions of Curiosity	Advice
What has gotten you so upset?	You just need to calm down.
How does yelling get you what you need?	Stop yelling- no one is listening to you.
I am wondering- do you notice a pattern in how often you seem to be frustrated lately?	Maybe you just need a break so you aren't so frustrated all the time.
What have you tried so far to address this?	Have you tried just telling her to stop?
What do you think is the impact on the team of your current behavior? Do you want to know?	If you don't stop, no one is going to want to work with you.
What is behind your question? It feels like there is more to it than what you are saying to me.	This is just a power play- or- Don't try to control everything that happens.
What does support (respect) look like to you?	I do respect you –or- I am very supportive.
Of all the things you mention, what do you feel is the priority issue?	We can't fix everything at once. –or- You are never going to make everyone happy.
What has changed since the last time you tried to have this conversation?	He clearly didn't get it when you talked to him last time.
What do you think you have done to contribute to the situation? Is there anything you wish you would have done differently?	You shouldn't have been so direct with her. –or- Maybe you should have gone to her supervisor. -or- I wouldn't have brought it up- it just made things worse for you.