

The LEADS Method Worksheet



SPECIFIC SCENARIO: _____

Composure: what methods would you use to relax and compose yourself, to help you engage professionally?

LISTEN

How will you show them that you're listening? What is the key message or need you could be listening for?
What am I noticing might be going on for them (and yourself) in this situation?

EMPATHISE

What words or phrase would help you to empathise and engage them? [based on what you're listening for and noticing]

ASK

What questions would you ask them to find out more or get them talking with you? How would you ask them about their needs or expectations?

DISCUSS

What sort of things need to be discussed or might come up? How will you engage with the other person?

STEPS

Based on your role, what steps would you suggest taking, to help resolve mutual needs. What role expectations and boundaries are important here?

The LEADS Method for Defusing & Helping Conversations

The information level is about 'what information do I have? what interpretations (assumptions) am I making?'

info	Listen	Empathise	Ask	Discuss	Steps
KEY ACTION	Listen with full attention, paraphrase and check for understanding	Empathise with feelings using simple phrases and body-language	Ask questions to clarify what they want, need, expected	Discuss the details, background and solutions - in a 2-way manner	Step out what action you both can/ will take and what you may agree on
"Defusing phrases" formula for when they are in the RED zone	I'm listening, how can I help?	I can see you're frustrated by this, let's go over it together	What did you expect would happen in this situation? How can I help you? Tell me more about...	Let's identify the key issues and talk each through, and share viewpoints	Can I suggest that we try... What I can do (within my role) to help you is..
Self-reflection questions to help you respond, versus react. Also, to plan a future interaction with a known person	How will I show them I'm listening? What is the key message or need I could be listening for? What am I noticing might be going on for them (and me) in this situation?	What words or phrase would help me to empathise with and engage them? [based on what I'm listening for and noticing]	What questions would you ask them to find out more or get them talking with you? How would you ask them about their needs or expectations?	How will you engage with the other person? Are you composed and ready to talk about it 2-way?	Based on your role, what steps would you suggest to take, to help resolve mutual needs. What role expectations and boundaries are important here?
RATIONALE: About this element and why it's important to help defuse emotional conversations	Giving your full attention and active listening sends the signal that you're open versus defensive. It gives time for them to settle and focus, and you time to 'listen' for the message [the LEAD]	Empathy works both ways, giving them the signal you're trying to understand the human side and helps 'validate' concerns as important to them and also for us, creates a 'reframe' for their behaviour whereby promoting composure versus conflict	Asking them what they want can show you're serious about helping, help them clarify and focus and also takes the pressure out of you 'figuring' out what the 'best thing to do and say is'. It helps clarify realistic expectations and potential misunderstandings	2-way discussion allows an exchange of information that generates options and clarifies perceptions and misconceptions. It facilitates agreement and a sense of 'working together'	Outlining action steps shows commitment to being helpful, facilitates change and agreement and 'moves the conversation onwards'

When to use the LEADS method:

- ☐ When they are giving feedback or complaining
- ☐ When they are emotional or frustrated and you want to defuse the intensity
- ☐ As a safe starting point for resolutions and early intervention
- ☐ When you're not sure what to do or you're put on the spot
- ☐ **When you want others to feel heard and respected**