

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE THREE A'S: SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PRACTICE

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Purpose

This handout combines a self-assessment tool and an interactive exercise to support leaders in building emotional intelligence specifically in the context of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). It includes the Three A's framework from Farrah Harris' The Color of Emotional Intelligence and a guided practice to help leaders navigate challenging equity situations.

For each question, rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 5 based on the descriptions below:

- 1 - Not at all: There is little to no evidence of this within the team.
- 2 - Rarely: This occurs infrequently, and when it does, it is not consistent.
- 3 - Sometimes: This happens occasionally, but improvement is needed for it to be reliable.
- 4 - Often: This is common practice for most team members.
- 5 - Always: This is consistently true across the team, without exception.

Section 1: Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment

I can recognize and name my emotions in equity-related situations.	1	2	3	4	5
I pause and reflect before responding to difficult conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
I understand how my emotions impact my responses and behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 1: Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment (continued)

I am able to see situations from other perspectives, even when uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
I take responsibility for my emotions and actions in EDI-related contexts.	1	2	3	4	5
I respond to defensiveness or disagreement with empathy and curiosity.	1	2	3	4	5
I am aware of my emotional triggers, especially in challenging conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
I can address emotionally charged situations in a way that maintains trust.	1	2	3	4	5

Reflection:

- *Which areas are your strengths?*
- *Which areas could benefit from more focus and development?*
- *How might this self-awareness support your EDI leadership?*

Section 2: The Three A's Framework for Emotional Intelligence in Equity Work

The **Three A's** is a practical framework to help you navigate and respond to emotionally charged EDI situations. Use the descriptions below to guide your practice:

1. Aware

- **Definition:** Notice and name your feelings. Be specific (e.g., "I feel frustrated," not just "upset").
- **Practice:**
 - Pause before reacting.
 - Take a deep breath and describe your feelings to yourself.
 - Try to articulate your emotions using "I feel..." statements.

2. Assess

- **Definition:** Reflect on where your emotions are coming from. Ask yourself:
 - Why am I feeling this way?
 - What assumptions or biases might be influencing my reaction?
 - What is the deeper concern underlying my emotion?
- **Practice:**
 - Journal or talk through your emotions with a trusted colleague or coach.
 - Identify any patterns or triggers that appear.

3. Action

- **Definition:** Take action that serves both yourself and others. Choose a response that aligns with your values and fosters a positive outcome.
- **Practice:**
 - Address the situation with respect and clarity.
 - Use language that builds trust and understanding.
 - Set a boundary, ask for clarification, or acknowledge the emotion without escalating the tension.

Source: Farrah Harris, *The Color of Emotional Intelligence*.

Space for your own reflections and notes

Section 3: Practicing the Three A's

Scenario Practice: Below are two scenarios to help you practice applying the Three A's in real-life EDI contexts.

Scenario 1:

You're in a meeting, and a board member makes a comment that feels dismissive of a recent equity initiative. You feel a wave of frustration.

1. **Aware:** Name your emotion (e.g., "I feel frustrated and disappointed").

2. **Assess:**

- Why am I reacting this way?
- What expectation did I have that was not met?
- Am I assuming they don't care about equity, or is something else at play?

3. **Action:** Respond with, "I noticed I felt frustrated by that comment. Can you help me understand your perspective so we can align on our equity goals?"

Scenario 2:

During a staff meeting, a team member becomes defensive when you ask about integrating EDI principles into their project. They respond, "Why are we always focused on this?"

1. **Aware:** Identify your feelings (e.g., "I feel disheartened and a bit defensive myself").

2. **Assess:**

- Where is my defensiveness coming from?
- What outcome am I hoping for in this conversation?

3. **Action:** Take a deep breath and say, "I hear that you're feeling frustrated. I'd like us to have an open conversation about why this is important and address any concerns."

Space for your own reflections and notes

Section 4: Personal Action Plan

Based on today's assessment and exercises, what is one thing you want to focus on to build your emotional intelligence in EDI work?

What will be your Key Focus Area:

(e.g., Practicing more pauses before responding in meetings)

Action Plan:

- *What steps will you take?*
- *Who can support you?*
- *How will you measure progress?*