

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT MOMENTS USING THE 5 A'S

When someone is asking you questions you can't answer, disagreeing in a heated manner, or taking the conversation off-topic into areas you're not there to discuss, the best thing is to redirect or get out gracefully. If the conversation is overly negative, or the direction you're going is unproductive, put a pause in the conversation, find time to communicate with your Justice Ambassador Specialist, and—when appropriate—get back to the person with some answers later.

We've created a tool to help you remember how to avoid the awkward and the argument. Use this tool to craft a response in the moment. Just follow the 5 A's: Avoid, Acknowledge, Agree, Action, and Appreciate.

AVOID: **Avoid** an emotional or provocative response—first, check yourself and don't react emotionally.

ACKNOWLEDGE: **Acknowledge** their position, concerns, and/or feelings.

AGREE: Seek to **Agree** with something they have said or a shared belief.

You should try to find some common ground, no matter how basic or small, to build a bridge with this person.

ACTION: Offer offline **Action**, meaning a follow-up outside of this conversation, as appropriate and as soon as is practical. There's almost always something you can offer as a follow-up. For example, you could offer to get their contact information to correspond via email where you can introduce them to Sammy, or you could make an offer to send them a relevant document or statistics or a source, etc.

APPRECIATE: **Appreciate** them. Thank them for their time, their concerns, their honesty, their questions, and then move forward.

