

## The Five As

### 1. Aware – With awareness, there is choice!

- As soon as you see yourself (or the other person) being reactive, stop and pay attention.

### 2. Accept Responsibility

- My heart is MY deal!
- “The only one I can change is ME!”

### 3. Ask Self and Others

- How can you (Self) validate yourself (your parts) even when someone else cannot?
- Invite in more of the 8 Cs: Curiosity, Connectedness, Calm, Compassion, Clarity, Confidence, Creativity, and Courage; extend one or more of these to yourself.
- Talk to other trusted mentors/counselors, or, depending on your faith background, spend some time in prayer.

### 4. Attend – Ask these questions:

- What am I feeling? (Name it.)
  - Self-observation and self-empathy calm down reactivity and the “fight, flight or freeze” responses that come with emotional flooding.
- Where am I feeling that emotion in my body? (Our feelings are held in our body but often we aren’t aware of it.)
- How can I be curious about what is happening in me and others? (Curiosity is the opposite of judgment.)
- Is it familiar? (Especially from childhood or other past hurts.)
- What is my automatic thought related to my feeling?
- What are my “buttons” – my core negative beliefs?
  - Core Beliefs are what feeds your automatic thoughts. They are reinforced by the negative messages we’ve received about ourselves, usually developed in childhood. Things like: “I’m Defective”, “I’m responsible: it’s all up to me”, “I’ll never be good enough”, etc.
- What am I doing to turn up the heat on my “button”?
  - What you feed grows!
  - Often shows up as either **blame** or **shame**
  - Am I rehearsing the offense?
- Is my automatic thought or core belief true?
  - Is it helpful for me to focus on this thought?
  - How can I rewrite it to be more accurate and helpful?



- i. What are some personal affirmations that counter my automatic thoughts/core beliefs? What would trusted mentors/friends/God say about me or my emotion? (Shame messages are unhelpful here.)

**5. Act –** by asking these questions:

- a. How do I show up differently, with integrity?
- b. Who do I want to be in this relationship?
  - i. The goal is to honor yourself and the other person, and to live consistently with your values and commitments.

