

Fact vs. Interpretation

When heightened emotions and thoughts collide, it's far more difficult to think clearly, much less be rational. Your thoughts are clouded, and logic takes a back seat. What are your options?

Any time you notice a thought or a response is accompanied by an emotion, pause and consider the origin. In other words, what *created* the thought that LED you to the emotion? What is it based on? Do you have enough information to assess the situation? Are you jumping to conclusions? Can you determine whether it is fact or interpretation? Making this distinction means you have a better chance of maintaining emotional equilibrium. By literally asking yourself, "Is this fact or interpretation?" will start the thought process and diminish the likelihood of flying off the handle and/or saying or doing something you may regret later. More importantly, considering fact vs. interpretation allows you to be at cause (taking responsibility) as opposed being at effect (victim mentality).

Reflect on the situation. Notice what thoughts or images first entered your mind. Assess how you were able to de-escalate. Acknowledge yourself for doing so. This is a great opportunity to also use A.C.A.R.