

Leading with Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is what empowers leaders to guide with empathy and clarity, and to remain calm under pressure—while being accountable to their staff and decisive in their actions. The ACS Leading with Emotional Intelligence Tool helps leaders move beyond reacting to listening, adapting, and leading with insight. To get even more out of this tool, take a look at our [Summer 2025 Newsletter](#), which outlines other ways to elevate your EI game.

The most effective leaders are those who consistently lead with both compassion and purpose, and this tool provides leaders with a practical EI roadmap that can be used to:

- ▶ Build deeper understanding
- ▶ Communicate with clarity and care
- ▶ Lead with confidence, compassion, and fairness

Follow these step-by-step instructions to get the most out of the Leading with Emotional Intelligence Tool.

Step 1: Understand the Three Leadership Qualities

The chart focuses on three key EI-driven leadership qualities:

- ▶ **Empathy**—Recognizing and responding to others' emotions and challenges.
- ▶ **Accountability**—Setting clear standards and following through.
- ▶ **Decisiveness**—Making informed, timely decisions while respecting others.

Step 2: Use Each Row as a Practical EI Strategy

Each row gives an actionable behavior for each quality. The first column lists various “Actions,” with each subsequent column showing how that behavior relates to one of the three EI-driven leadership qualities.

EXAMPLE:

ACTION: Clarify Expectations

When clarifying expectations, you can lead with:

- ▶ **Empathy** by understanding the challenges team members may face.
- ▶ **Accountability** by communicating standards clearly.
- ▶ **Decisiveness** by setting clear, measurable objectives.

Step 3: Apply the EI Tool in Real Situations

Use the chart during:

- ▶ **Team meetings**—Choose one row and model all three behaviors.
- ▶ **1-on-1s**—Practice empathy, accountability, and decisiveness using a specific row.
- ▶ **Crisis moments**—Refer to the “Address Issues” row to stay calm, caring, and clear.

Step 4: Reflect and Track Growth

At the end of an interaction, reflect:

- ▶ Did I show empathy when offering feedback?
- ▶ Did I model accountability or just expect it?
- ▶ Was I decisive without being dismissive?

Pick one row to focus on during the next interaction.

Step 5: Use the Chart as a Team Training Tool

- ▶ Share the chart during a leadership workshop or meeting.
- ▶ Discuss how each action looks in your team’s daily work.
- ▶ Role-play scenarios using one row (e.g., “Provide Support”).

ACTION	EMPATHY	ACCOUNTABILITY	DECISIVENESS
Clarify Expectations	Understand challenges	Communicate standards	Set clear objectives
Set Boundaries	Respect situations	Uphold goals	Define limits
Provide Feedback	Offer support	Address issues	Guide and expect
Lead by Example	Demonstrate empathy	Model commitment	Make timely decisions
Seek Input	Listen to concerns	Involve in decisions	Consider and act
Maintain Consistency	Treat fairly	Apply policies	Ensure fairness
Address Issues	Approach with care	Act decisively	Resolve promptly
Provide Support	Offer assistance	Empower responsibility	Give guidance
Celebrate Successes	Recognize efforts	Reinforce performance	Acknowledge achievements

