

How to Say the Right Thing at the Right Time

OFTEN PEOPLE WITH ADHD have a history of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time. Maybe we make a cringe-worthy comment we wish we could immediately take back. Other times we don't know what to say and we just fumble along. Or we monologue and stumble into inappropriate comments. This history makes us afraid to make a social faux pas, causing us to be jittery in social interactions—and, unfortunately, prone to repeat all of this again.

If our mindset is that we must share and add to a conversation, we may not have time to think and filter appropriately. Here's how to tame that desire to blurt out comments and speak too much.

1. Get to know your past patterns.

With a little self-evaluation, ask yourself why you often say the wrong thing. When does this happen most

frequently? Consider the following. Do you hate silence? Are you too vehement about certain topics? Does lack of food or sleep play a role? Do you have triggers or social anxiety that tend to trigger the situation?

2. Practice mindfulness.

Whether speaking to new or old friends, people with ADHD often struggle with being present, calm, and mindful. Listening, paying attention, reflecting, and responding to what the other person is saying can help you be more aware and avoid pitfalls such as blurting out. Social faux pas most frequently occur when we are dysregulated.

Practice, every day for a week, trying to center yourself while engaging in conversations. Concentrate on being present. Listen intently, then reflect and respond thoughtfully. Engage in small daily, mindful exercises that help you remain centered and connected.



3. Watch self-criticism and self-deprecation.

Self-talk can turn negative, and that negative voice in your head can derail your intentions and cause you to lose confidence. First, be sure you have activities in your life that emphasize your strengths. Then, have some positive self-talk and some counter-messages to combat that negative inner voice. *Everything will be okay; I am smart, I am capable; I have so much to offer; my superpower is my creativity.*

4. Create an emotional dashboard.

Emotions, impulsivity, and self-regulation often prompt people with ADHD to say the wrong thing. Create your own emotional dashboard by becoming aware of your triggers and the situations that make you struggle with emotions. By becoming more aware of your body signals, you begin to quickly recognize when your levels of activation are rising and you are starting to lose control.

5. Read the room.

Pausing to consider to whom you are speaking, what you know about them, and what they are saying verbally and nonverbally can help you read your audience. Often saying the wrong thing occurs when you forget to think about your level of intimacy with the person and how much you know about them. As you enter a situation or conversation, be curious. Explore the surroundings and individuals' history before plunging forward and talking at people.

WHAT YOU SAY MATTERS, whether it's to yourself or others. Saying the right thing, at the right time, has a direct and positive impact on how you feel about yourself and how others feel about you.

If you try and try and yet the wrong thing comes out, that is okay. A simple "I'm sorry" goes a long way. 🗣️



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