

Read The Room: Lead The Room

Unlocking the Hidden Language
of Communication

AAEA Annual Conference 2026



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What's your communication style?
Take the quiz now!



Today's Agenda

Our goal: Leave with **immediately usable tools** to communicate with intention and drive positive organizational impact.

01

Are We Contagious?

How emotions and energy spread through every interaction

02

Positive Cues & Leadership Application

Nonverbal tools to build trust and presence

03

Negative Cues & Deception Signals

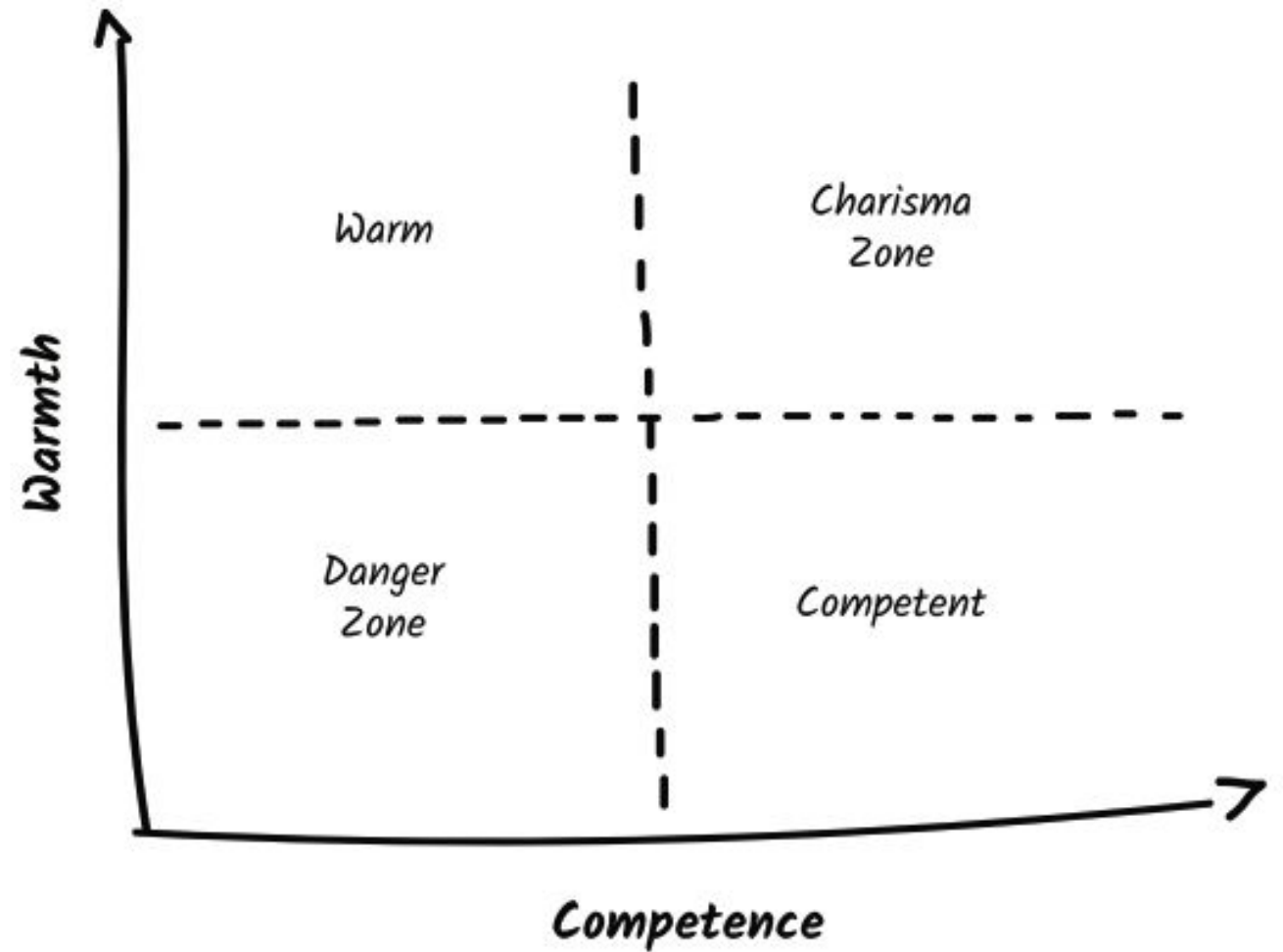
Reading discomfort, dishonesty, and disengagement

04

Pro Tips & Networking Challenge

Bonus strategies to put into practice today

The Charisma Scale



Charisma
Diagnostic





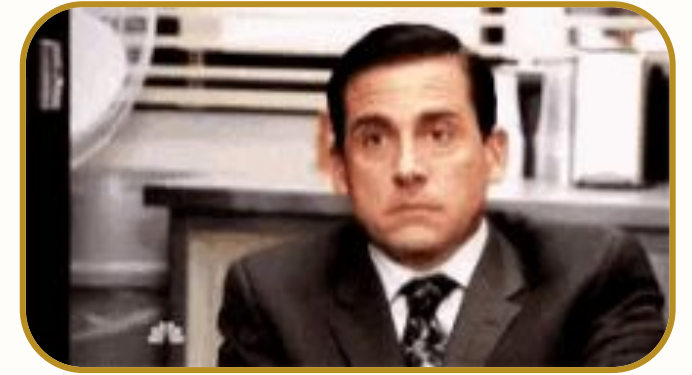
Are you contagious?



Talk with a partner-can you try this during AAEA?

Positive Cues — Body Language

Your nonverbal communication = 65–90% of your total message.



Leaning In

Tilt forward to signal interest and engagement



Fronting

Align toes, torso, and head toward the speaker



Eyebrow Raise

Signal intrigue and delight



Anti-Blocking

Remove obstacles — computers, notebooks — to show openness



Nodding & Head Tilt

Show agreement and active listening



Mirroring

Subtly match gestures to build rapport

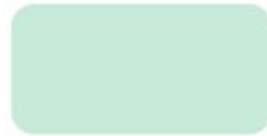
Multi Tasking Does Not Work...



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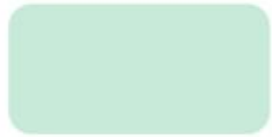
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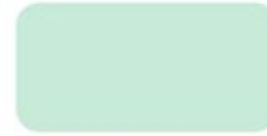
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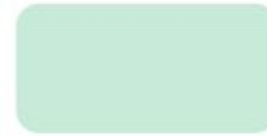
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Positive Cues — Voice & Presence

Confident Pitch

Speak from the low end of your voice. Breathe out, then talk.

Powerful Pause

Pause purposefully to create intrigue and slow the pace.

Volume Dynamics

Quiet for insider info, loud for confidence. Never monotone.

Power Posture

Take up space to project confidence.

Lower Lid Flex

Flex your lower eyelid to show deep engagement.

Hand Gestures

Show your hands — palms up, out, or steeple.



The First 200 Milliseconds



Answering the Phone — Your First Impression

Within **200 milliseconds** of hearing you speak, people judge your confidence and likability. Say "hello" with energy — happy, confident, warm.

- More genuine, the better – people can feel fake

📌 **Pro Tip:** Hang a photo by your phone that makes you smile. Look at it every time you answer — genuine smiles are always heard.

Leadership Application — Positive Cues

What can you use? What tip could help you lead with more intention?

One Thing to Start

Pick one cue to practice this week

One Thing to Stop

Notice a habit that may be closing you off

One Thing to Notice

Watch for these cues in your team



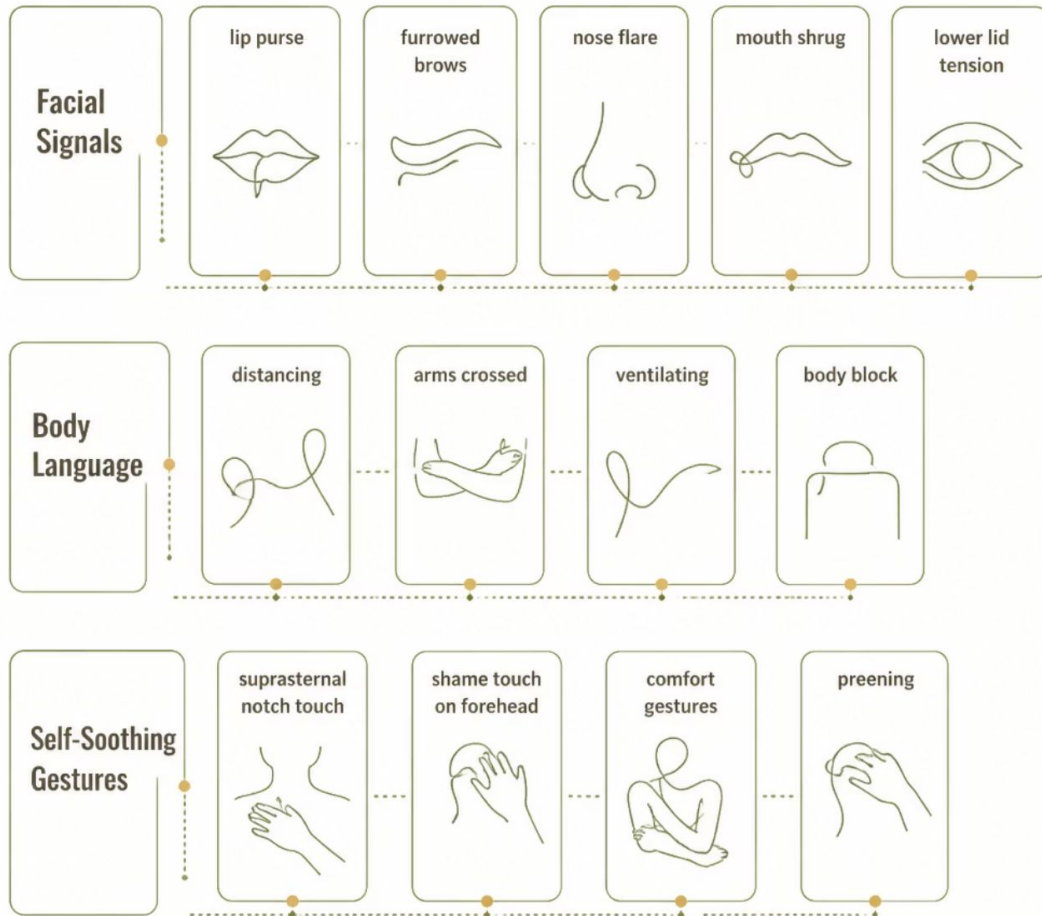
Want to Know Who Is Lying?

Look for **clusters** of signals — not just one.



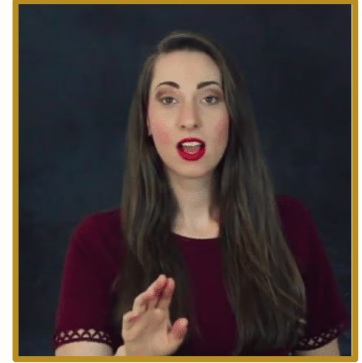
Key Signals to Watch

- **Lip Purse** — withholding or closing up
- **Distancing** — leaning back or stepping away
- **Furrowed Brows** — anger or frustration
- **Arms Crossed** — closed off or self-protecting
- **Suprasternal Notch Touch** — nervousness or self-soothing
- **Shame Touch** — fingertips to forehead when ashamed



Need Someone to Stop Talking?

From subtle to direct — try these techniques:



The Fish

Open your mouth slightly - they'll know you have something to say



The Bookmark

Add a raised hand to signal you want to jump in



The Touch

Gently touch their arm and say it was great speaking with them

 **Preventative Flagging:** To discourage someone from interrupting you, Say *"I have 3 things to tell you"* - it sets expectations and discourages interruptions.

Leadership Application — Awareness

Do you use some of these cues without realizing it?
How can this awareness improve how you lead?

Self-Audit

Which negative cues do you display under stress?

Team Reading

What signals do your team members send in meetings?

Intentional Shift

How will you replace a negative cue with a positive one?



EXTRA Pro Tips!



Color Psychology in Leadership

- **Red** — Take action
- **Blue** — Calm, productive, trust
- **Yellow** — Warmth, optimism
- **Green** — Growth, eco-friendly

Bonus Insights

- Choose meeting seating **purposefully**
- Women who wear makeup are perceived as **more trustworthy**
- Bond easier over a **hot drink**, not a cold one

📅 **Networking Challenge:** Use one positive cue and read one negative cue in your next conversation.



Read the Room. Lead the Room.

Leadership isn't just about what you say.

It's about what people experience when you're in the room.



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Let's stay connected!

Scan to download the
Cue Card & Resources.

Thank You

FOR YOUR TIME.
FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP.
FOR MAKING AN IMPACT.



Questions?

