Time out plan

Stepping away before things are said or done that cannot be taken back.

Name _____ Date _____

A time out is not storming off, and it is not avoiding the issue. It is a planned pause to let your body calm down so the conversation can go better. It works best when the people close to you know about it in advance.

The steps

1. **Notice.** I am at my step-away level.
2. **Say it.** Use the agreed words, calmly. No parting shot.
3. **Leave.** Go somewhere else for the agreed time. At least 20 minutes: the body needs that long to settle.
4. **Cool down.** Walk, breathe, stretch, splash cold water. Do not rehearse the argument. Do not drink or drive.
5. **Come back.** Return when I said I would. If I am not ready, say so and name a new time.
6. **Talk, or agree when to talk.**

My step-away level (0 to 10) and how I know I am there

The words I will use. For example: "I am getting too angry to talk well. I am taking 30 minutes and I will come back."

Where I will go

What I will do to cool down

How long, and how I will come back

Agreed with the people I live with

What they will do when I call a time out

☐ Let me go ☐ Not follow me ☐ Not have the last word

When we will come back to what the row was about

If there is any risk of violence, safety comes first. Talk to me, your GP or a support service.

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