

Healthy Time Out Script

How to Pause an Argument Without Causing More Damage

Step 1: I care about us and I'm getting overwhelmed. I need a short break so we don't say things we regret.

Step 2: I'm not leaving the conversation. I just need time to calm down.

Step 3: Let's come back to this in 20 minutes.

Step 4: Move your body, breathe slowly, or write down what you want to say calmly.

Step 5: Thanks for waiting. I'm ready to talk now.

Healthy Time Out: Rules That Build Trust

- Always state a return time
- Keep breaks under one hour when possible
- Do not punish or withdraw
- Do not rehearse arguments during the break
- Return even if you still feel uncomfortable
- Trust is built when breaks are predictable and respectful

Healthy Time Out: What NOT to Say

- I'm done talking.
- Whatever.

- You always do this.
- Silence with no explanation
- Leaving without a return time
- Use respectful replacements that preserve connection

Disclaimer

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