

Conflict Cool-Down Plan: A Pause Worksheet for Couples

Print one copy to fill in together. Name: _____ Date: _____

Our pause plan

Our agreed pause signal is...

a word or hand sign, said kindly, such as "pause"

Our break will last at least...

at least 20 minutes, no more than a day

The person who restarts the talk is... and will do it by...

agree who and when; the one who called the pause often restarts

How we each calm down

Use the break to calm your body, not to rehearse the argument. Replaying it keeps you flooded. See emotional flooding.

What I will do to calm down (Partner A)...

a walk, slow breathing, music, a shower

What I will do to calm down (Partner B)...

Signs in my body that I am flooded are...

racing heart, tight chest or jaw, hot face, can't think

When we come back

What I will say when we come back is...

for example, "Thanks for the break. I want to understand you."

We will restart by...

such as taking turns for five minutes each

In-the-moment card

Cut this out or copy it onto a sticky note.

- ☐ Say our pause signal kindly
- ☐ Say when we will talk again
- ☐ Take a break of at least 20 minutes, apart
- ☐ Calm the body: breathe, walk, drink water
- ☐ Do not rehearse the argument
- ☐ Come back at the agreed time and restart gently

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