

Emotion regulation pause plan

Use this plan near the start of escalation. The aim is not to suppress emotion, but to create enough space to choose the next response.

1. NOTICE

Catch the earliest signs you can.

- Changes in body heat, breathing, voice, movement or attention.
- Fast, absolute or threat-focused thoughts.
- Urges to attack, escape, shut down or act immediately.

2. PAUSE

Interrupt the automatic sequence without abandoning the issue.

- Delay sending the message or making the decision.
- Move to a safer or quieter place if appropriate.
- Use a brief line such as: I need ten minutes, and I will come back.

3. REGULATE

Choose one physical and one attentional strategy.

- Feet on the floor, cool water, movement or slower exhalation.
- Name what is happening without arguing with it.
- Reduce stimulation where possible.

4. CHOOSE AND CONNECT

Return to the value or outcome that matters.

- What response is least likely to make the situation worse?
- Who can help if the urge remains hard to manage?
- Return to the conversation only when there is enough control to stay safe.

Keep the resource in context

This is not a complete safety plan. If there is a risk of harm, move away from unsafe means, contact a trusted support or crisis service, and call 000 when there is immediate danger.