



Therapeutic Time-Out

What is a time-out?

When conflict occurs and escalates there is often little that is being accomplished to resolve the problem. Heated arguments can even lead to physical and verbal abuse. A time-out provides a chance for all parties involved to leave the room and re-group or calm down. A time-out is not running away from the issue but taking a break from it to better handle the next step. Time-outs can last several minutes to several hours depending on how much time is needed for all parties to come back together to work on a resolution.

Why use time-out?

- Allows for de-escalation
- Allows for physical space
- Allows for more time to process the problem at hand
- Prevents impulsivity

Tips for an effective time-out:

1. Plan ahead where you will take your time-out (in your bedroom, outside, the Study, etc.).
2. Make all parties aware of what a time-out is and how to use it.
3. Give each other plenty of time to calm down before returning from a time-out.
4. Discuss the issue that is at hand after the time-out has taken place. Don't ignore the problem completely.
5. Respect each others' right to call a time-out for themselves.
6. If violence occurs take action to make yourself safe- a time-out is not the option in this case.