How to Stop the Violence - NOW!

Steps in Taking a Time-Out

Whenever you feel your anger rising, your body getting tense as if it were going to explode, or you begin to feel frustrated or out of control, say out loud to yourself and to your partner:

"I'm beginning to feel angry and I need to take a Time-Out for _________________ (a given length of time)."

How Time-Outs Work:

1. **Use the statement above**
   When you begin by talking about yourself by making "I" statements, you immediately take charge of yourself. Name-calling and blaming should be avoided. Plus, saying you feel angry can actually make you feel less angry. Taking a Time-Out can give you an alternative and more constructive way to manage your feelings than by using violence.

2. **Leave for an amount of time that will allow you to cool off**

3. **During a Time-Out, do not drink, use drugs, or drive**

4. **Do something physical -- Go for a walk, run, ride a bike, exercise, etc.**

5. **Come back in the length of time you said you needed**
   When you come back after a designated amount of time, you are living up to your agreement, which can help build trust with your partner.

6. **Check-In -- If possible, talk about what it was that made you angry**
   If you do no more than check-in, you have completed the exercise. If you go on to talk about what made you angry, you get experience and practice in communicating and discussing emotional issues.

Things to Remember:

*Time-Outs not only help to stop violence, but also help to rebuild trust. Remember, trust takes time to rebuild. One or two Time-Outs will not make everything okay. Be patient!

*Time-Outs can be hard to do. "Practice" Time-Outs can be helpful. Try taking "Practice" Time-Outs during times when you're not angry. About half an hour will do. When you take a “Practice” Time-Out, tell your partner, "I'm NOT beginning to feel angry, but I want to take 'Practice' Time-Out." The more you practice, the easier it will be to take a real Time-Out when you need it.

*It may be helpful to put "Time-Out Reminders" in places in the house and wherever else you might need one. For example, write on a post-it pad or piece of paper, "Do I need a Time-Out?" or "Am I feeling angry?"