



Time out guidelines

Do... Do the following

- **Talk about time out with people around you before you need to take it.** Negotiate a contract and what your time out signal will be.
- **Leave when you feel unsafe and are about to become abusive.** State clearly: "I am beginning to feel unsafe to be around and need to take time out. I will go for a walk (in such and such a place) and I will be back in (x number of minutes) once I have calmed down, worked out what is going on and know I can be safe towards you."
- **Do something physical to use up the charge of adrenaline from your conflict.** Go for a walk, run or bike ride. This will give you some distance from the situation and time to think through what was going on.
- **Phone a friend or one of the telephone counselling services** available in your community and talk over what is happening.
- **Phone the person who you were unsafe with** and find out whether the other person feels safe having you back.
- **Return at the time agreed to.** This helps to build trust in the relationship and shows that you are genuine in trying to act respectfully.
- **Negotiate a time within the next 24 hours to talk about what happened.** Talk about what it was you were reacting to in a non-abusive way, using 'I' statements but avoid statements such as 'I think that you...' or 'I feel you...' which are really blaming statements. Also avoid unhelpful strategies such as dragging up the past, blaming, not listening, and so on.

Don't... Do the following

- **Don't drink or take drugs.** Alcohol and drug-taking has a high degree of association with abusive behaviour. While alcohol does not cause abuse, it can be used as an excuse. Being affected by alcohol, even slightly, makes it harder to make safe and non-abusive decisions as alcohol and drugs interfere with our ability to think clearly. Time out is for serious thinking and trying to understand what is going on. If you make responsible choices around this issue this will communicate to others you are serious about your decision to deal with your abusive and violent behaviour
- **Don't drive.** When people are highly aroused emotionally their ability to think and co-ordinate actions is affected. There are enough dangerous drivers on the road without you becoming another one.
- **Don't do anything to harm yourself or others.**