

## JUST THE FACTS: Anger

## Time-Outs

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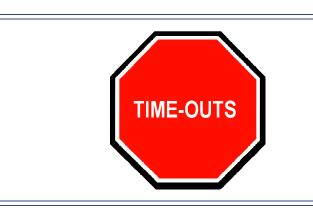
- Taking a *time-out* means that an individual removes herself/himself from a stressful or anger-provoking situation. This gives the individual an opportunity to calm or cool down rather than act aggressively.
- Taking a time-out is the most basic anger management tool to use and practice.
- Time-outs are self-imposed; they are not imposed by others.
- Time-outs can be especially effective in the "heat of the moment" to stop from reaching a "10" on the anger meter.
- Time-outs are also effective when used with other tools such as taking a walk, or talking to a trusted friend or family member.
- Using time-outs is a skill that takes practice.
- Using time-outs is a skill that can help stop the escalation of anger from annoyance to extreme upset to rage.

#### When to Call a Time-Out:

- Before calling a time out, make sure everyone involved in the discussion has agreed beforehand that time-outs are okay.
- Anyone calling a time-out can physically leave the discussion.

**Note:** When someone calls a time-out, everyone understands that you'll resume the discussion when everyone's feeling calmer.

 It's okay to take more than one time-out. Take as many timeouts as you need to maintain a reasonable level of discussion that has the potential to solve the problem.





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#### Steps to Taking Time-Outs:

- 1. First, identify the anger cues, such as feeling increased bodily tension that let you know your anger is increasing.
- 2. Second, say out loud, "I'm beginning to feel really angry, and I need to take a time-out."
- 3. Third, tell the other person (or people) that your time-out may last for about an hour.
- 4. Fourth, physically leave the situation.
- 5. During the time-out:
  - Do not use alcohol or drugs.
  - Do not drive.
  - Do something healthy to reduce your anger (such as going for a walk, exercising, or talking to someone who wasn't involved in the situation who can help you calm down).
  - Use relaxation skills, such as muscle relaxation or deep breathing.
  - Take a "mental" time-out, too, which means deliberately avoiding any thoughts that might fuel your anger.
  - Consider doing something physical, such as gardening, or working in a shop with tools, or cooking.
  - This can help shift your thoughts to the manual activity and away from the original cause of your anger.
- 6. When the time-out has ended, check in with the other person (or people) to determine if the time is right to resume your discussion.
- 7. Continue to monitor your anger level as you resume the conversation.
- 8. Don't hesitate to take another time-out if your anger increases to the point it interferes with the discussion.
- 9. Never pressure or coerce someone into resuming a discussion if he/she prefers not to. Some topics are too "charged" to discuss without another person being there to serve as a moderator. If a moderator is needed, postpone further discussion until the moderator can be available.



**Remember:** The first priority is to prevent violence and other aggressive behavior.