

TIME OUTS

Time outs are tools individuals and couples use when they need to stop the direction in which a conversation or situation is heading. This direction would be non-productive and potentially destructive. It is important to establish certain guidelines when using them and that both parties agree to these guidelines. The following are suggestions you may find helpful:

- * Use timeouts when you feel your conversations are reaching a dead-end. An example of this would be messages being sent with the intention of winning an argument as opposed to reaching an agreement.
- * Both parties agree, before arguments surface, to a specific length of time for the time outs. It is suggested that timeouts be a minimum of 20 minutes. This allows sufficient time for both parties to cool down and rethink their approach to the situation or conversation.
- * If verbal abuse, name calling, or threats of violence, enter the picture, a timeout should immediately be called.
- * If you recognize you are reaching an anger threshold (physical indicators or communication patterns) and would have difficulty conversing in a productive manner.
- * The discussion involves the following types of communication patterns: kitchen sinking, and\butts, mind reading, or blaming.
- * When you are feeling that you are not sending messages or receiving messages in a productive way.
- * Timeouts should not be used as ways to avoid discussions. Disagreements are a normal and healthy part of relationships. The important factor is how you choose to disagree and resolve problems.
- * If necessary, you may need to physically remove yourself from the situation.

After a timeout, the discussion should be approached a second time. If the same results happen again, the issue should be dropped. Use this time to discuss a more productive way to address your concerns.