



COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES COUNSELING



Parent and Teen Conversation Reset

A shared guide for returning to a hard conversation

When a conversation becomes heated, everyone may begin protecting themselves instead of hearing one another. This reset is designed for a parent or caregiver and teen to pause, reflect separately, and return when both people have enough steadiness to listen.

• Decide Whether to Pause

A pause is not the same as avoiding the conversation. Agree on when you will return so the issue does not disappear without resolution.

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| ☐ Voices are getting louder | ☐ Someone has shut down |
| ☐ We are repeating the same points | ☐ Someone is using hurtful words |
| ☐ We are no longer listening | ☐ We need time to calm our bodies |

We will pause for

We agree to return to the conversation on *Choose a realistic time*

• Before You Return

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Get water | ☐ Take a short walk |
| ☐ Breathe slowly | ☐ Write down the main point |
| ☐ Reduce noise and distractions | ☐ Ask for support if safety is a concern |

Do not use this worksheet to continue a conversation that feels unsafe. Seek appropriate support when there are threats, violence, abuse, or an immediate safety concern.

• Parent or Caregiver Reflection

What happened from my point of view

What emotion was underneath my reaction

What was I worried might happen

What do I most want my teen to understand

What part of my response could I own or repair

What boundary or expectation still matters

• Teen Reflection

What happened from my point of view

What emotion was underneath my reaction

What did I feel was not being heard or understood

What do I most want my parent or caregiver to understand

What part of my response could I own or repair

What support or change am I asking for

• Return to the Conversation

Take turns. One person speaks while the other listens and reflects back what they heard before responding.

• Use This Listening Pattern

Speaker: The part I most want you to understand is...

Listener: What I hear you saying is... Did I understand that correctly?

Speaker: Yes and I would add... or Not quite what I mean is...

What we understand better now

What still needs more conversation

• Create One Agreement

The next time this happens the parent or caregiver will

The next time this happens the teen will

We will check in again on

• Repair

One thing I appreciate or want to repair

• A Gentle Reminder

The goal is not to agree about every detail. The goal is to understand more clearly, take responsibility where needed, and create one workable next step together.

This resource is for education and personal reflection. It does not provide diagnosis, treatment, medical advice, or crisis care. If you are in immediate danger, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department. You may also call or text 988 for crisis support.

Created by Raven Thomas, MA, LPCC-S | Color Outside the Lines Counseling

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