

The Shutdown Plan

For when one of us shuts down in fights.

Weekly, 20 minutes: our signal, our return time, where we each go, our soothing menus, and how the last pause went.

In a fight:

1. **Notice the flood.** Racing heart, hot face, blank mind.
2. **Signal and return time.** "Pause. I am flooded. Back at ____." Partner: "Okay."
3. **At least 20 minutes of real soothing.** Both of us. No rehearsing the argument.
4. **Come back on time.** "I am back. Can we try again?"

Our rule: a pause is not a punishment. We always come back.

From CoupleCareRoutine.com