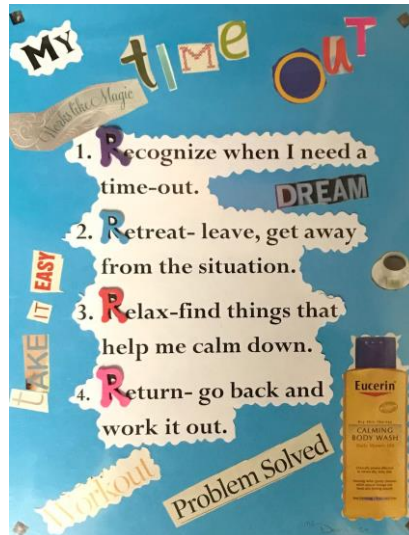


## **My Timeout Rules**

1. **R**ecognize when I need a time-out.
2. **R**etreat- leave, get away from the situation.
3. **R**elax- find things that calm me down.
4. **R**eturn-go back and work it out.

# My Timeout Rules



First things first, I did not come up with the three Rs of a time-out. I read it around 2004 in a book that I cannot remember but, I made this activity for an inpatient group project to help them identify how to properly take a time out.

**Materials:** (some things are optional)

A copy of the My Timeout Rules for each person participating.

Construction Paper

Scissors

Glue

Stickers

Foam Letters

Markers, colored pencils, crayons

**Instructions:**

Have the client pick a piece of construction paper and cut out and paste the rules for the time-out. They will decorate the the paper around the rules by drawing or cutting things out of magazines that will remind them of the rules. For example: pictures or words of their coping skills and things that remind them to remain calm.

**Talking points:**

I want you to view a time out as a choice and not a punishment. YOU make the decision to take a time-out before you do or say something that could get you into trouble. You take responsibility for your behavior and actions by taking a temporary break so that you can regain control of your emotions and body.

I'm going to teach you the four Rs of a good time-out. This memory aid is called alliteration and should help you remember how to take a good time-out.

**Recognize, Retreat, Relax, Return.** ( Have them repeat.)

1. **Recognize** when I need a time-out. Let's write down 3-5 warning signs that let you know you are losing your temper. Things you realize that happen to your body and mind before you explode. For example, fists clenched, sweaty palms, head/upset stomach, thinking about how you want to hurt someone or break something.
2. **Retreat.** This means leave. Leave the room, the area. You need to let an adult know that you are leaving. Never walk away while they are talking to you. Take deep breathes. When they take a break ask them calmly if you can leave the room for a10 minutes. Let them know that you need a time-out and that you will return to talk calmly. This will take a lot of practice and self-control but I know that you can do it.
3. **Relax-** Go to your somewhere (away from your trigger) and do something that helps you relax. Read, shower, listen to music, exercise, mindful breathing, talk to someone who will calm you down not fire you up. Let the anger cool down. If your first activity isn't working do something else.
4. **Return-** When calm return. This will be incredibly hard but it is very important that you do it. If you don't go back you haven't taken a time-out. You have run away. Running away will not solve anything. If the other person is not calm yet don't absorb their anger. Practice breathing and listen. Don't go back until you are calm and can remain calm even if the other person can't.

Hope you and your clients enjoy!

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