UNSTUCK

Conflict Cool-Down Worksheet

Step back from a conflict while it is still warm. Separate what happened from the story about it, own your part, and pick one small next step.

How to use this sheet

1. Wait until the adrenaline has dropped a notch. This sheet works best warm, not boiling.
2. In 'Just the facts', write only what a camera would have recorded. No motives, no adjectives.
3. In 'The story I am telling', write the interpretation, mind-reading and all. Naming it as a story loosens its grip.
4. Finish with one small step. Repair usually starts with something modest, not a summit meeting.

Why separate facts from story

In conflict, the mind fuses what happened with what it means. 'She left the meeting early' becomes 'she does not respect me.' The first is a fact. The second is a story that may or may not be true. Most of the heat lives in the story, and stories can be checked.

PLEASE READ: EDUCATIONAL USE ONLY

For educational and personal reflection use only. This worksheet is not therapy, counseling, medical advice, legal advice, diagnosis, or treatment, and using it does not create a clinician-patient relationship. It is a general template that may not fit your situation or your jurisdiction. You are responsible for checking the laws and requirements that apply where you live and for creating your own documents where needed. If you are struggling, please talk with a licensed clinician. In the United States, call or text 988 in a crisis, or call 911 in an emergency.

Just the facts

Only what a camera would have recorded.

The story I am telling about it

Interpretations, motives, meaning. Write it all down.

What I can own

My part, even if it is 10 percent. Owning it is leverage, not surrender.

What I actually need

Underneath the position. Respect? Rest? To be consulted?

One small next step

A text, a question, an apology for your part, or a scheduled talk.

If this conflict repeats

A conflict that keeps returning in the same shape is a pattern, not an incident. Patterns are worth bringing to a licensed clinician or counselor, especially when the same fight keeps costing you the same relationship.

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