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# Time-out Agreement (Sample)

**Couple:** \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

We agree to use time-outs whenever either person's anger has reached such a level that additional interaction would probably be negative and harmful to the relationship. We will not use time-outs to avoid, escape, or punish each other, but rather to protect our relationship from unnecessary harm. With this purpose in mind we agree to the following process.

Each of us will monitor our anger level and will call for a time-out as soon as the anger is obviously escalating toward a dangerous level. We will use the "T" sign to signal a time-out. We both will honor the time-out even if the other person would prefer to continue with the discussion. We will say nothing further (except perhaps "Time-out" and "Okay"). We will each immediately walk away from each other with no comments, gestures, or hostile actions. We will go to different places for our time-out.

We will use our time-out to "cool off" and calm down. We will not use alcohol/drugs, and we will not drive our vehicles. We will do something physical or relaxing to drain off the anger's energy. We will try not to focus upon resentments or hurts during the time-out.

The one who requested the time-out will return and check in with the other person no later than \_\_\_\_ minutes (plus/minus 5 minutes). This person will say, "I appreciate the time-out. I'm sorry that I \_\_\_\_\_." The partner will respond with "Thanks, and I'm sorry that I \_\_\_\_\_." Through these apologies we will try to renew the discussion in a positive manner.

If the time-out needs to be extended (Phase II), the one requesting it will ask for the extension and will specify a time frame. That person will accept responsibility for returning, checking in, and renewing the discussion at the time chosen. Other features of a Phase II time-out will be negotiated at that time.

Other specific items:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**