

The Power of the Pause



Sometimes the most powerful, trauma-informed strategy is simply a pause.

The pause is not weakness.

The pause is leadership.

Why the Pause Works

A pause can prevent escalation.

It gives the adult time to avoid reacting out of frustration.

A pause can protect the relationship.

It keeps the moment from becoming a power struggle.

A pause can model self-regulation.

Students learn regulation by seeing adults practice it in real time.

A pause can create space for better decisions.

A few seconds can change the direction of the entire interaction.

1. Stop

Do not immediately correct, argue, lecture, or raise your voice.

2. Settle

Take a breath.

Lower your voice.

Relax your posture.

3. Respond

Use a calm phrase.

Offer a next step.

Keep the student's dignity intact.

"Give me a second to think about how to respond."

"Let's slow this down."

"I'm going to pause before I answer."

"I want to respond in a helpful way, so I'm going to take a breath."

"We do not need to solve this in anger."

"I'm not ignoring this. I'm making sure we handle it well."

"Let's take one quiet second, then we'll decide the next step."

"I hear you. I'm going to pause so we can keep this respectful."

In one breath, you can change the direction of the whole moment.