

Repairing After Conflict



Conflict can leave people feeling hurt, defensive or disconnected. Repair is the process of coming back together after a difficult interaction and trying to understand, take responsibility and reconnect.



WAIT UNTIL YOU CAN ENGAGE

Repair is harder when either person is still highly activated. Taking time to settle can make it easier to listen, reflect and speak more carefully.



UNDERSTAND BEFORE DEFENDING

Try to understand the other person's experience, even when you remember the situation differently. Understanding their impact does not require agreeing with every detail.



OWN YOUR PART

Look for what you can genuinely take responsibility for: your words, tone, behaviour, assumptions or the way you responded. Avoid adding a defence immediately after an apology.



LOOK FOR WHAT COULD CHANGE

Repair is not only about reviewing what went wrong. It can also help you agree on what each person might do differently when a similar situation happens again.

A REPAIR DOES NOT HAVE TO BE PERFECT

Sometimes repair is a sincere apology. Sometimes it is listening, acknowledging hurt, clarifying a misunderstanding, showing care, or agreeing to return to the conversation differently next time.

Repair is about rebuilding connection after disconnection.

It can be small, genuine and repeated over time.

Preparing for Repair



Use this page after a conflict when you feel ready to reflect. The goal is not to decide who was completely right or wrong, but to understand what happened and what may help now.

1. WHAT HAPPENED?

Briefly describe the interaction or conflict. What was the main point of disconnection?

2. WHAT WAS HAPPENING FOR ME?

What was I feeling, needing, fearing or interpreting at the time?

3. WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN HAPPENING FOR THEM?

What might they have been feeling or experiencing? What would I like to understand better rather than assume?

4. WHAT PART CAN I TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR?

Is there something about my words, tone, behaviour or response that I can genuinely own?

5. IS THERE SOMETHING I WANT TO APOLOGISE FOR OR ACKNOWLEDGE?

What impact might my behaviour have had? What could I say without adding blame or a defence?

6. WHAT DO I WANT US TO TRY NEXT TIME?

What could I do differently? What would I like to ask for? Is there a small change that could help interrupt the usual pattern?

A note about safety

Repair requires enough safety for honest communication. Where there is fear, coercion, control or abuse, prioritise individual support and safety.