Before It Escalates

Who this is for: adults who want a clearer choice in ordinary disagreements with someone respectful. Shared practice must be safe and wanted.

Aim: notice an early sign, prepare a useful pause and return to one issue. A specific request can make the concern clearer; it cannot control the other person's answer.

How to use this sheet

1. Read the fictional example. Choose one manageable disagreement.

2. Prepare on page 2: event, early sign, pause and message.

3. Try only if suitable. Review briefly on page 3. Type in a compatible PDF reader, or print and write by hand.

Guided example: Nadia (fictional)

Event and meaning: Ben forgot an agreed repair booking. I felt alone with the work. I raised my voice and called him useless.

Early sign and pause: I repeated the question louder. I can say: I want to sort the booking. I need to stop for now. Could we talk after dinner at seven?

Return and repair: I should not have called you useless. The repair is still unbooked. Can we decide who will call and when?

Review: Ben agreed to call tomorrow. I stated the request without another insult. I still need to check the practical agreement happened.

Safety first: threats, coercion, fear or violence need appropriate support, not shared communication practice. Respect no-contact requests. You do not owe a return to an unsafe conversation. Harmful behaviour remains the responsibility of the person choosing it.

Prepare a clearer response

Choose one ordinary event. A pause, request, boundary or decision not to continue may be appropriate. Do not use this page as a demand for someone else to talk.

One event and its meaning

What happened? What did it seem to mean? What real issue matters?

My early sign and context

What do I notice? Include tiredness, access, unfairness, safety and consent.

My pause and practical return

What could I say or do? When is a realistic check-in, if appropriate?

One message, request or repair

Name the event and impact. What action is needed? What is mine to repair?

Try, then review briefly

Save a copy and reopen it to check typed entries. Keep notes privately. You can stop the review when it supports a next decision.

What happened?

What did I try and what was the actual response? Or why was it unsuitable?

What did I learn?

Was the concern clearer? Did the practical issue move forward? What is uncertain?

What next?

Repeat, adapt, repair, set a limit, stop or seek support? Why?

Quick reflection: Did I respect both people's limits? Did I take responsibility for my actions without taking all the blame? Optional extension: try one small adjustment only if useful and suitable.

Support: if this increases distress, checking or fear, pause and discuss a different approach with an appropriate professional. If your actions harm others, seek help to change them. Not assessment or treatment.

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