

PERSONAL PAUSE PLAN

Preparing for the Moments That Push My Buttons



When student behavior pushes our buttons, it can be harder to access the strategies we know. A Personal Pause Plan helps us prepare before the moment happens, so we can respond with more calm, clarity, and consistency.

1. The behavior that tends to push my buttons is:

2. When this happens, the story I sometimes tell myself is:

Examples:

*They're doing it on purpose. They're disrespecting me.
They don't care. They should know better.*

3. When I am stressed, I may be more likely to:

- ☐ React quickly
- ☐ Redirect publicly
- ☐ Sound frustrated
- ☐ Take it personally
- ☐ Give too many warnings
- ☐ Over-explain
- ☐ Avoid addressing it
- ☐ Send the student out
- ☐ Other: _____

4. My pause question will be:

- ☐ What else could be true?
- ☐ What might this student need right now?
- ☐ What would curiosity sound like right now?
- ☐ What response will keep this small?
- ☐ What can I say that protects dignity and holds the boundary?
- ☐ What is the next smallest helpful move?
- ☐ Other: _____

5. My response script will be:

Choose or create one brief phrase you can use when this behavior happens again.

Sample response scripts:

- "I'm going to give us both a minute, then I'll check back in."
- "I'm not going to argue with you. I am going to help you get back on track."
- "Right now, your next step is ____."
- "You have two choices: ____ or ____."
- "I can see this is hard right now. Let's start with one small step."
- "We'll talk about this after I get everyone started."
- "I care about you and this class too much to let this keep going."
- "Take a minute to reset. I'll come back and check on you."
- "I hear you. The expectation is still ____."
- "You're not in trouble for having a hard moment. We do need to talk about what happens next."

My response script:

6. One small regulating move I will practice is:

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| ☐ Take one slow breath | ☐ Keep my language brief |
| ☐ Lower my voice | ☐ Offer two choices |
| ☐ Pause before responding | ☐ Step away and return |
| ☐ Move closer | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Redirect privately | |

7. The outcome I am trying to create is:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Keep the moment from escalating | ☐ Help the student reset |
| ☐ Protect the student's dignity | ☐ Follow up later |
| ☐ Protect the learning environment | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Hold the boundary calmly | |

Keep this as a go-to tool for the school year. <