

Pause and regulate

A complete anger-management session from Breaking the Bond with Anger

FOR COUNSELORS WORKING WITH ADULTS

Try a structured session for noticing an early cue, planning a safe pause, and choosing a tolerable grounding skill.

What is included

- Page 2: safety guidance and group agreements.
- Pages 3-4: 90-minute facilitator guide with a 50-minute individual adaptation.
- Pages 5-6: safe pause plan and coping skills experiment worksheets.
- Pages 7-8: two illustrated visual handouts.
- Page 9: weekly practice log. Page 10: optional counselor feedback form.

Use the sample thoughtfully

Read the safety page before use. Work within your training and setting requirements. Use mild fictional examples, offer passing, and adapt for access needs. These educational resources are not a validated treatment protocol or a substitute for individualized care.

Free sample permission

Download and print for your own professional sessions with your own clients. Do not resell, publicly redistribute the PDF, or share templates. You may share the webpage link so others can download their own copy.

Optional feedback

If you try the session, we welcome practical feedback about clarity, preparation time, and what you changed. Use the contact link on the sample webpage. Please do not send client names, identifying stories, or health records.

Prepared for Kayla Bond, LCDC | October 2026

Review sample - original material with AI-assisted drafting and AI-generated illustrations.

Safety and group agreements

Group agreement to read together

OPENING AGREEMENT

Speak about your own behavior. No threats, insults, intimidation, unwanted contact, or demonstrations of aggression. Share time. Do not name other people. Passing is allowed. Ask for a pause early. Respect others' privacy; group confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The facilitator will explain its limits and safety responsibilities.

During escalation

Stop the exercise and use a calm, direct voice. Reduce the audience and demands when feasible. Offer space and choices consistent with setting policy. Do not process blame, force eye contact, or insist on role-play while someone is escalating. Seek staff or emergency support for immediate danger, and follow organizational procedures.

When a different response is needed

Threats, stalking, coercive control, intimate-partner violence, serious aggression, acute intoxication or withdrawal, or severe psychiatric instability require individualized assessment and appropriate specialist care. A general anger group is not a substitute for a violence intervention or crisis response. Do not assign joint confrontation, mediation, or couples exercises where coercion or fear is present.

Choice and consent

Use low-intensity scenarios rather than reenactments of violence. Do not require closing eyes, disclosing trauma, practicing with an unsafe person, or delivering an apology. A pause or repair plan must respect unwanted-contact limits, protective restrictions, and the other person's choice. Return to a conversation only when appropriate and safe.

Facilitator redirect

WHEN SAFETY COMES FIRST

I hear how strong the feeling is. We are stopping this practice now. Let us focus on space, support, and the next safe action. We can review the pattern later.

Pause and regulate

90 minutes | Materials: W7, W8, pens, timer, optional board

Observable objectives

- Demonstrate two regulation options without forcing breath work.
- State a pause request with a safe destination and follow-up plan.
- Identify one strategy to avoid during escalation.

0-10 min | Check in and reconnect

Ask for a current rating and one practice attempt since the last session. Invite one thing that helped and one barrier. Offer passing; reinforce effort and accountability without ranking participants.

10-25 min | Teach the core idea

A pause is a purposeful interruption that reduces the chance of harm. It is different from disappearing to punish someone. Agree on safe space and a follow-up when appropriate. Regulation options include orienting to the room, feeling supported by the chair, gentle movement, and comfortable slower breathing. Choose what is tolerable; stop an exercise that causes distress or dizziness.

TRY SAYING

You do not need to feel perfectly calm before you can act responsibly. The first goal is enough space to avoid harm. You can keep your eyes open, observe, or use a different grounding option.

25-40 min | Model before asking for disclosure

Lead three brief trials: name three neutral objects in the room; press feet gently into the floor or notice chair support; take several comfortable breaths without breath holds. After each, ask what changed or did not change. Movement should be optional and accessible.

40-60 min | Guided worksheet practice

Complete W7 and W8. Use a mildly frustrating scenario. Each person practices a pause statement, names a safe destination, chooses a skill, and rehearses a return or check-in. In residential settings, align the destination and contact person with program rules.

Practice, process, and follow through

60-80 min | Rehearse and process

Spend about 10 minutes rehearsing the skill with a low-intensity example and 10 minutes processing. Coach one change at a time, repeat once, and invite a volunteer or private reflection. Use these prompts:

- Which option felt usable rather than merely familiar?
- How will you communicate a pause without blaming or threatening?
- If you are not ready to return, how will you check in safely?

Worked example

"I am getting too activated to talk respectfully. I am taking a pause in the courtyard. I will check in at 4:30 if it is safe." During the pause: no hostile messages, substance use, or rehearsing retaliation. If the situation is unsafe, prioritize separation and support rather than return.

80-90 min | Homework and closing

Practice one regulation option once per day on five days, including when calm. Record before/after anger ratings and usefulness. Rehearse the pause statement twice when safe.

Ask each participant to name one next step and check readiness to leave. Offer an individual check-in if activation remains high. Confirm where to seek support and when the next session occurs.

If participants get stuck

If grounding increases distress, stop. Offer eyes-open orientation, a neutral conversation, or quiet observation. Do not insist that one technique works for everyone.

Individual-session adaptation

Individual format: 5-minute check-in, 10-minute skill menu, 15-minute trials, 15-minute pause rehearsal, 5-minute plan. Review accessibility, pain, sensory preferences, and whether privacy is available.

Optional recovery connection

Pair the pause with a recovery support contact if anger and craving rise together. Choose a location without easy access to substances when feasible. Use the person's existing treatment plan.

Observe before moving on

Can the participant state and rehearse a safe, specific pause with a backup option?

My safe pause plan

Session 4 | Adapt this to your setting and any individual safety plan.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

My early cue and the words I will use to request a pause:

My safe location and any program rules or access needs:

Two things I can do during the pause that reduce harm:

If appropriate and safe: when and how I will check in or return:

If I cannot return safely or my first plan fails: support and backup:

Coping skills experiment

Session 4 | Try a tolerable option. Stop if it increases distress.

Name or initials: _____ Date: _____

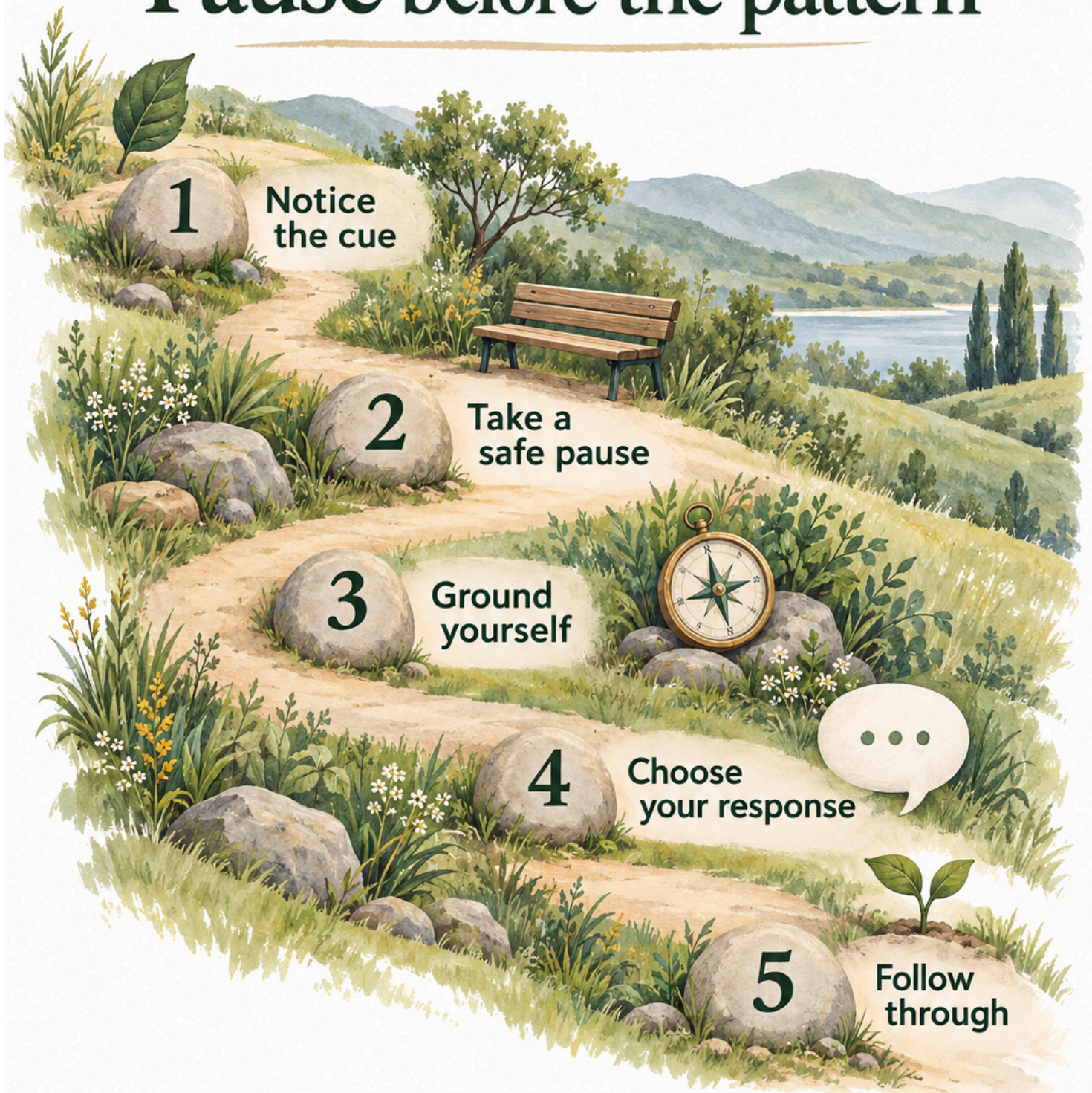
Trial 1 - Skill, situation, rating before/after, and what I noticed:

Trial 2 - Skill, situation, rating before/after, and what I noticed:

Trial 3 - Skill, situation, rating before/after, and what I noticed:

Most usable option and when I will practice it next:

Pause before the pattern



I can feel angry and still choose a safer action.

BREAKING THE BOND | ANGER MANAGEMENT

Build your coping menu



Feel support

Notice the floor or chair beneath you.



Look around

Name three things you can see.



Breathe comfortably

Slow gently, without forcing.



Move gently

Choose movement that works for you.



Write it down

Separate the facts from the story.



Reach for support

Use your support plan and a backup.

Choose what feels usable. Stop a skill if it increases distress.

BREAKING THE BOND | ANGER MANAGEMENT

Weekly skill practice

Notice practice and impact rather than aiming for perfection.

Skill I am practicing and the cue that will remind me:

Practice 1 - Date, situation, what I tried, and what happened:

Practice 2 - Date, situation, what I tried, and what happened:

Practice 3 - Date, situation, what I tried, and what happened:

What helped? What will I adjust next week?

Help make this easier to use

Pause and regulate | No client-identifying information, please.

Reviewer name or code (optional): _____ Date: _____

Setting: _____ Reviewed only / Tried individually / Tried with a group

Preparation time in minutes; total session time; materials you added:

Rate your experience

1 = poor; 2 = needs work; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = excellent. Use N/A if not tried.

Instructions were clear. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

The session was practical to deliver. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

The worksheets were understandable. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

The visuals supported learning. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

The allotted time was realistic. 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

What did you need to explain, change, or create yourself?

Would you use this again? Why? What is the most important change?

Would you pay for a single-session kit or full series? At what price, and why?

Optional follow-up permission: You may contact me for clarification: Yes / No

This form does not grant permission to publish my name, comments, or a testimonial.