

How to Repair After a Family Argument

A guided worksheet for calming down, taking responsibility, and reconnecting after conflict.

Repair does not mean pretending the argument did not happen. It means understanding the impact, owning your part, and choosing a different response for next time.

Step 1: Make Sure Everyone Is Ready

- ☐ My body feels calmer than it did during the argument.
- ☐ I can listen without immediately defending myself.
- ☐ I am willing to focus on my own actions, not only the other person's.
- ☐ I can speak respectfully even if I still disagree.

Step 2: Describe What Happened

What was the argument about?

What happened just before things escalated?

What did I say or do?

How might my words, tone, or actions have affected the other person?

What was I feeling or needing underneath my reaction?

Step 3: Build a Real Repair

A complete repair includes

1. What I did. 2. The impact it may have had. 3. Genuine responsibility without “but.” 4. What I will try differently next time.

What I am taking responsibility for:

What I think the impact was:

What I want the other person to know:

What I will do differently next time:

Repair Language

- ☐ “I am sorry for _____. It was not okay, even though I was upset.”
- ☐ “I can see how my tone made it hard for you to hear what I was trying to say.”
- ☐ “You did not deserve to be called that.”
- ☐ “I still want to discuss the issue, but I want to do it more respectfully.”
- ☐ “Next time I will ask for a break before I reach that point.”

What We Need Going Forward

One thing that would help me feel heard is:

One thing that would help me feel safer during conflict is:

A phrase we can use when we need a break:

How long the break should be:

When and how we will return to the conversation:

Important

An apology does not erase a boundary or consequence. Families can hold accountability and still practice repair and reconnection.