

# What to Say to Families When Pausing Engagement

## *Trauma-Informed Script Template for Clinicians*

Purpose: When family dynamics become counterproductive or harmful to a client’s recovery, pausing engagement may be necessary. But that doesn’t mean abandoning the family—it means hitting pause with **compassion, clarity, and clinical responsibility**.

---

### Option A: Neutral Clinical Framing

“At this point, I want to pause on including family members in sessions—not because you're not important, but because I want to make sure the space remains supportive and productive for [**Client Name**]. This pause is about recalibrating, not exclusion.”

### Option B: Trauma-Informed Reframe

“Sometimes, continuing in this format can cause more distress than healing—for everyone involved. I’m recommending we pause family involvement temporarily while we re-establish safety and readiness for those discussions.”

### Option C: Empowering the Family

“This pause gives us all space to reflect and come back into the room when we’re better equipped to move forward. In the meantime, I can provide support tools, education, or even one-on-one check-ins if that’s helpful.”

---

### Tips for Framing the Pause Without Shame

- Use “we” language whenever possible.
  - Emphasize safety, not blame.
  - Normalize that pauses happen in the recovery process.
  - Offer clear next steps or future re-engagement plans.
- 

Notes:

How will this decision be revisited?

---

---

What resources can be provided to family members during the pause?

---

---

What signs would indicate readiness to re-engage?

---

---

*Note: Print and keep on-hand for family-based sessions, use during supervision, or include in your trauma-informed clinician toolkit.*

---

© 2025 The Underrated Superhero LLC. All rights reserved.  
This worksheet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended as a  
substitute for professional advice. V1.0