Session 4

COOL-DOWNS

A cool-down is simply a tool to use to prevent you from losing your temper and regretting it later. This will give you an opportunity to think through how you want to respond to your child to most effectively teach your child what it is you want him or her to do.

If you feel like you are going to lose your temper, STOP and take a cool-down. A cool-down is like preventative medicine. Before you get to that place where you say or do something to your child that you will regret later, remove yourself from the situation. You won't be failing to discipline your child because you took a cool down, but how you deal with your child may change totally.

STEPS TO TAKE

1. Talk to your child and spouse/partner about cool-downs right away. Let him or her know that you are going to take a cool-down in order to relax when you feel yourself becoming angry. Let him or her know that when you are calm, you will return to the issue again. You may also want to have your child and spouse agree to take a cool-down when they are angry.

2. Take a cool-down every time you think your anger is starting to climb by recognizing your physical and emotional cues and leave the situation (place or person).

3. Do not swear, raise your voice, threaten, or use any intimidating behavior. Calmly state “I need to leave now” or “I need to calm down.”

4. Go somewhere and try to relax and think positively about yourself. Remind yourself of what your goals are in the program. It may help to walk, jog, or do deep breathing to get some tension out. Also, think about your goals for your child and how you can best respond to your child to get him or her to do what you want.

5. When you are calm, return to briefly address the issue with your child. Use some of the useful parenting strategies that you have been learning in session.