

Creekside Psychology Ltd.

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WAYS TO IMPROVE ALIGNMENT

STP-A TECHNIQUE

STEP 1. STOP

When a situation suddenly occurs, such as your child's other parent calling and saying he/she want to change the visitation schedule this month, the first thing to do is to STOP yourself from reacting immediately. Try to block out any thoughts and just get yourself to stop temporarily. Take a breath and focus on calming yourself. Try saying to yourself, "Oh a chance to practice STP-A."

STEP 2. THINK

Now is the time to start thinking. Think about the long-term goal for your child. Envision the words "long term" in front of your eyes as you consider the situation. Next think about what you would do in a business relationship. Picture how you would act if you were both in business suits in the middle of a group of business people. Now double-check your thinking by then asking yourself, "Am I trying to get something for myself here or can I put my interests aside temporarily to put my child's interests first?"

STEP 3. PAUSE

Now take another breath while you pause. Let it out slowly. Keep yourself from reacting. A fast comeback is not useful. Act as if you are almost in slow motion. The pause will seem longer than it really is. Clear your head by exhaling your emotions.

STEP 4. ACT

Now you are ready to take action:

- Ask for time to consider the situation. If in doubt, ask for time.
- Request an appointment to discuss the matter.
- If you do respond, remember to use non-blaming "I" statements.
- When meeting, consider alternative actions and use problem-solving techniques.