

What to Do When She Shuts Down Mid-Conversation - Checklist

Use this before or during a hard conversation to catch a shutdown early.

Before You Start

- ☐ Know your own default pattern (Connector, Defender, Escalator, Withdrawer) going in
- ☐ Pick a realistic return time before you start, in case you need it
- ☐ Remind yourself: quiet is overwhelm, not defiance

What to Watch For

- ☐ Answers shrinking to a word or two
- ☐ Eye contact dropping to the floor or counter
- ☐ Her tone going flat
- ☐ Physical distance, turning away, arms crossed
- ☐ She stops asking anything back

What to Say

- ☐ "Hey, you went quiet. Do you want a minute, or should I keep going?"
- ☐ "I can see you're done for right now. I'm going to stop pushing."
- ☐ "Can we come back to this around eight tonight?"

What Not to Do

- ☐ Don't repeat your point louder
- ☐ Don't say "you're overreacting"
- ☐ Don't say "fine, whatever" and walk off without a return time
- ☐ Don't skip the return, even if the topic feels unresolved

Repair Move

If you missed the cues and kept pushing, name it later without relitigating the topic:

"I kept talking after you'd already checked out earlier. That wasn't fair. I'll try to catch it faster next time."

Success Check

- ☐ She responds to your check-in instead of staying fully silent
 - ☐ The conversation, or a related one, comes back within a day
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