RELATIONSHIPS & FAMILY • EMOTION-FOCUSED & SYSTEMIC FAMILY THERAPY

# Parent-Teen Communication & Conflict Repair Script

De-escalate power struggles and repair emotional disconnect without defensiveness.

CLINICAL INSTRUCTIONS: One line per step in your own words. Short, honest answers are easier to trust.

**Participant Name:** _____ **Date:** _____ **Target: 20m**

## 1 COOLDOWN & REGULATION CHECK

Never attempt repair when heart rates exceed 100 bpm. Agree to pause: 'I care about our relationship too much to yell. Let us take 20 minutes to cool down.'

*CLINICAL HINT: A pause is not silent treatment. Give an exact time you will re-engage.*

## 2 THE VULNERABILITY OPENING (NO BLAME)

Parent opens with: 'I got reactive earlier because I was feeling worried about your safety/future, not because I want to control you. I am sorry for raising my voice.'

*CLINICAL HINT: Notice the difference between 'You made me angry' and 'I got scared and reacted.'*

## 3 REFLECTIVE LISTENING WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION

Ask teen: 'How did that feel for you?' Listen for 2 full minutes without defending, explaining, or interrupting. Mirror back: 'What I hear you saying is...'

*CLINICAL HINT: Validation is not agreement. It is acknowledging their emotional reality.*

## 4 THE MICRO-CONTRACT FOR NEXT TIME

Identify one specific behavior both parties agree to change next time tension rises. Write it down in one sentence and post it collaboratively.

*CLINICAL HINT: Focus on agreements you can both keep 80% of the time, not perfection.*