

PAUSE–TRANSLATE–RESPOND (PTR)

Objective

To teach a simple method that helps young people:

- slow down emotional reactions,
- understand what is *actually* being said,
- reduce misinterpretation,
- choose a grounded response.

PTR is a **three-step tool** that prevents instant emotional merging with online messages.

Facilitator Introduction (Script)

Say:

“When young people receive a difficult message, they often react immediately. They feel attacked, embarrassed, ignored, or judged — and they respond from emotion.

Pause–Translate–Respond helps them slow down, see the message clearly, and choose a healthier action.”

Add:

“This tool doesn’t solve the conflict, but it gives young people *control* over their reaction.”

THE TOOL (Explain with 1 short example)

◆ 1. PAUSE

Stop.

Breathe.

Do not answer immediately.

Why?

Emotions peak in the first seconds.

Pausing prevents the automatic reaction.

Example:

Message: "Why are you ignoring me?"

Pause: "This feels intense — breathe first."

◆ 2. TRANSLATE

Rewrite the message in **neutral, factual language**.

This is the **core skill**.

Young people almost never do this on their own.

Example:

"You are ignoring me!" →

Neutral translation: "Someone is asking why I haven't replied."

This instantly lowers emotional charge.

◆ 3. RESPOND

Choose a deliberate action:

- clarify
- set a boundary
- postpone
- ignore
- reply with neutral tone
- move the conversation offline

Example responses:

- "I saw your message, I will reply later."
 - "I need some space right now."
 - No response (intentional silence).
-



Activity Instructions (Step-by-Step)

Step 1 — Demonstrate with a sample card (2 min)

Read the card:

“Answer me now.”

Show PTR:

1. **Pause:** Breathe.
 2. **Translate:** “Someone wants a quick reply.”
 3. **Respond:** “I’ll answer when I can.”
-

Step 2 — Pairs Work (15 min)

Give each pair **two PTR Practice Cards**.

They do PTR for each message:

- What is the emotional reaction?
- What is the neutral translation?
- What is the chosen response?

Short notes only.

Step 3 — Plenary Sharing (10 min)

Ask 3–4 pairs:

- Which message was hardest to translate?
 - How did the translation change the emotion?
 - What responses felt most empowering?
-

Debrief (Key Insights for Facilitator)

Highlight these points:

✓ **Most emotional intensity online comes from interpretation, not content.**

✓ **Translation breaks the emotional fusion and restores clarity.**

✓ **Not every message needs a reply.**

✓ **Neutral responses protect boundaries without escalating.**

✓ **PTR is a skill youth can learn in minutes and apply every day.**

Why This Matters for Youth Workers

Young people often:

- assume the worst tone
- react impulsively
- feel pressured
- feel watched
- merge emotionally with everything

PTR gives them:

- **space**
- **distance**
- **control**
- **options**

It becomes one of the most useful tools in the whole training.