



# Surviving the First 30 Minutes of a Training Emergency

**So the training's due next week, your ID just quit, and the only thing the SME is contributing is radio silence.** Fan-tastic! We love it!

Have you ever spilled a full bag of Goldfish crackers between the seats of your car and just...sat there in utter horror and disbelief?

Welp, that's kind of the same situation you're finding yourself in right now.

**We beg you, do not panic.** And don't eat Goldfish crackers that landed under your car's floor mats. Trust us. Not worth it.

**The first 30 minutes after a project goes sideways are not about jumping into action.** They're about getting clear, so you don't waste time rebuilding something that didn't need to be torn down in the first place.

Here's how to spend that critical half-hour like the calm, capable L&D genius you are:

## Minutes 1–10: Breathe + Brain Dump

Not to be all “woo woo” on you, but you'd be amazed by the power of some slow breaths in and out of your nose.

**Set a 10-minute timer and just dump everything in your head onto a doc and define each of these things:**

- What's broken
- What's still fine
- What you *think* the problem is
- What you're *afraid* the problem is
- Who's involved
- Who's missing
- What's due and when

You're not making a to-do list. You're clearing the fog!

## Minutes 10–20: Gut-Check the Stakes

Okay, the initial brain dump is out of your head and onto a doc. Good work! Now it's time to **sort through the mess and figure out what actually matters.**

This isn't about solving everything just yet; it's about figuring out what kind of mess you're in.

**Start with a few deceptively simple questions:**

- **What deliverable(s) are actually at risk right now?** Is it the whole course? Just the facilitator guide? The video you haven't even started yet?
- **Is the timeline hard or just assumed?** "Launch date is July 1" doesn't always mean it must launch July 1. Sometimes it means "we put that in a deck and hoped for the best."
- **Who will be the most impacted if nothing changes?** Learners? Leadership? Your reputation? The person who keeps emailing "any updates?" every 36 minutes?
- **Has anyone outside your brain been alerted?** It's tempting to fix it before you flag it, but waiting too long to say something usually just makes the "something" worse.

You're either in a "we need a new plan" situation or a "we just need support" situation.

## Minutes 20–30: Gather Your Team

Now that you've cleared your brain and gut-checked the stakes, it's time to bring in your people.

Or person. Or imaginary friend named Debra who helps you process chaos. (We love Deb!)

Call a quick 5- to 15-minute reset huddle with whoever's still in the game. Maybe that's your project manager, a key stakeholder, or the lone SME who hasn't vanished into the fog.

This isn't a status meeting. It's a chance to pause, realign, and stop the chaos from spiraling.

**Use this script to keep things focused and non-panic-y:**

*"Hey, I want to reset together quickly so we don't spin our wheels. I've done a quick assessment of where things stand.*

*Here's what I know, what's missing, and what I think our immediate priorities need to be.*

*I want to make sure we're moving forward in the smartest way possible, so please give me your input!"*

**This simple check-in does a lot:**

- **Gives people confidence that someone's steering (beep beep, it's you!).**
- **Brings roadblocks and alternate perspectives to the surface.**
- **Creates shared ownership, so the meltdown isn't just on you.**

And if you're a team of one, say it out loud to your dog or your desk plant. It still helps!

## The Goal of the First 30 Minutes

The first half hour after things go sideways isn't about having all the answers, because you definitely won't!

Focus on slowing the spin, getting clear on what actually matters, and shifting from panic mode to triage mode. We watched Season 1 of *The Pitt*, so we know what "triage" means. Not to brag.

Remember, you're not rebuilding yet! You're laying the ground so that when you do move, it's on purpose.

**Once you've grounded yourself (and your team, or your dog), you're ready to:**

- **Re-scope smartly:** Prioritize what's essential and let the rest go.
- **Bring in help if you need it:** Internally or externally, now you know what to ask for from people like IDLance.
- **Communicate clearly and early:** Keep stakeholders in the loop, even if all you say is "We're resetting, and here's what you can expect next." Silence is not always golden.

And if you're staring at the mess thinking "I could use a hand," you know where to find us.

We've jumped into mid-project chaos more times than we can count!

## Schedule a Free Call With Us!

You don't have to do this alone. Book a free strategy call with us now!

 **Give Us a Buzz**