



Responding to Anxious Behaviors – Avoiding Escalations

- Proximity – Be aware of how close you are
- Approach the student from the side
- Get down on their level rather than standing over their desk

- Avoid power struggles
- Listen first – What is the student saying with their words & body language?
- Use a soft voice
- Remain calm - Think about what zone you (the adult) are in before engaging with the student

- Provide an entry point for the student to begin their work
- Provide visual or written directions (for academic work and behavior expectations)
 - Can be as simple as a sticky note with 3 steps
- Provide direct assistance on academic work
- Split the task into smaller segments – celebrate small successes
 - Checklist – let the student celebrate small accomplishments by crossing off the list
- Accept approximations (of behavior and academic work)

- Ask short questions: “It looks like you are stuck. Can I help you get started?”
- Give short directions
- Walk away and give the student time to calm themselves down and follow directions:
 - “I’ll be back in ____ minutes to see how you are doing.”

- Work to understand the student’s perspective
- Paraphrasing feels validating: “I understand you are feeling ____”

- Be encouraging – Complement what the student is doing well
- Talk about times when the student has been successful in the past
- Model desired behavior

- Provide positive reinforcement
- Offer a preferred activity in an “If...Then...” statement (with a visual)

- Provide space/time for calm breathing/yoga/physical movement during transition times between activities
- If student shows signs of being tired, acknowledge that
- Provide limited choices: “Do you want to do ____ or ____?”
- Remind the student you won’t ask them to do something you know they can’t do

- Show the student that you are interested in them as a person
- Find a topic to connect with the student that is not related to the current task or behavior
- Ask open-ended questions

- Connect the student with a supportive peer
- Minimize distractions from peers and environment
- Read the room – are there triggers or antecedents that may be increasing the student’s escalation?

This list was generated by West Linn-Wilsonville teachers during the Inclusive & Equitable Classrooms workshop on April 10, 2018