

BUILDING DISTRESS TOLERANCE

Situation	Your Thoughts & Feelings	Leaning In/ Rescuing	Leaning Back/ Allowing Space
<p>Child/teen is crying, asking me for more information (“What if...?”)</p>	<p>“I need to help.”</p> <p>“Crying equals pain, my job is to reduce pain.”</p> <p>“I can’t watch this.”</p> <p>“I’m a bad parent if I let this continue.”</p>	<p>Telling my child/teen everything will be OK.</p> <p>Reducing the stress to reduce the distress.</p> <p>Promising a fix.</p>	<p>Saying nothing.</p> <p>Label this as “anxiety talking” and ask my child to use their skills.</p> <p>Walking away and offering assistance once calmer (allowing anxiety/ distress to pass).</p>

*Resource provided by Anxiety Canada’s Scientific Advisory Committee member, Dr. Daniel Chorney

“Don’t Just Do Something, Stand There.”

Keys to Remember:

- 1) Is my way of “helping” actually “helpful?”
- 2) Has what I’ve been doing actually been working? If no, why am I continuing to use this strategy?
- 3) Are my own thoughts and feelings (and resulting distress) not allowing my child to experience distress? Is this removing their chance to building tolerance and coping skills? Can they build a skill if never allowed to practice using it?
- 4) Am I choosing **short-term** pain/distress relief instead of working towards **long-term** relief?