

HOW TO MANAGE A MELTDOWN

by Lisa Damour, PhD

Pause between each step to see if it's done the trick. If not, move forward to the next step.

1) Listen without interrupting

2) Offer sincere empathy

"That stinks!" or "I'm so sorry that happened."

3) Validate distress

"You have every right to be mad/sad/upset." or "A good cry is the right thing right now."

4) Support coping

"Is there anything I can do that won't make this worse?" or "Would some tea help?"

5) Express non-dismissive confidence

"This is tough, and so are you." or "As hard as this feels right now, I do think that you'll get through it."

6) Offer to help problem-solve

"Do you want my help trying to tackle this?" or "Any ideas about what might work to make this better?"

7) Divide the problem into two buckets

Things that can be changed and things that can't.

8) For the things that can be changed, brainstorm possible solutions

9) For what cannot be changed, support acceptance

"There's always some stuff we just have to live with." or "Let's focus your energy where it can make a difference."