



Interventions for Emotionality

Accommodations:

- **Provide specific steps the student can take to relax, or provide a relaxation ritual**

Example:

Take three deep breaths; tense fingers or toes for five seconds, then relax.

- **Provide alternative foci to distract the student from somatic symptoms**

Example:

If the student complains of a recurrent headache without medical etiology, provide the student a phrase to think of or an activity (doing three problems then standing up, 10 problems then walking to the fountain). Have the student hold a stress ball and practice squeezing and relaxing his/her arm while breathing in and out at an even pace.

Specialized Instruction:

- **Have the student identify antecedents/precipitants to anxiety**

Example:

Have the student identify what preceded or led to emotionality when it occurred, look for what leads to escalations, and then identify how he/she can avoid exposure to that precipitant and/or steps to slow escalations, such as distracting him/herself with another task, talking to other students, or waiting two minutes before accessing the teacher.

- **Help the student address stressors through art activities**

Example:

Ask the student to draw a picture of what stress or fear looks like to him/her and suggest various coping strategies, then draw pictures of solutions so the student can "visualize" enacting the solution.

- **Help the student devise and practice problem skills**

Example:

Practice steps to decide how "dangerous" the current situation is, what resources are available (staff, book, music to distract), and what is most likely to help quickly ("If I look at a book, I'll stop noticing my sweaty hands"). Ask the student to describe/draw a picture of what serenity and calm look like to him/her and suggest actions to achieve calmness (look at the sky, hum a song silently, or touch a soft felt strip in his/her desk).

- **Design and post visuals for the student to review and use when solving a problem**

Example:

Create a simple pictorial diagram of problem solving steps ("what is the problem? what are some solutions? what should I do? give it a try!") For additional examples, click here: www.csefel.uiuc.edu [top](#)

Behavioral Planning:

- **Identify a hierarchy of safe places for the student to de-escalate emotionality symptoms**

Example:

Stay at his/her desk; move to another part of the classroom; go to the edge or outside of class; go to a designated room (other classroom, library, office). Reward the student's use of lower level places, and more time

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staying on task, by allowing the student to eat with a peer or help the teacher with a special task. [top](#)

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