



SUPPORTING

Big Emotions

one



Build Rapport (Connection First)

- Spend regular time together in ways they enjoy – shared meals, car chats, casual activities.
- Show genuine interest in their world (friends, music, hobbies).
- Small, consistent moments of connection matter more than big, one-off talks.

two



Recognise Early Signs

- Notice changes in body language: clenched fists, tense jaw, fidgeting, avoiding or intense eye contact.
- Spot emotional signs: sudden mood swings, irritability, withdrawal, defensiveness.
- Tune into your own signals of stress (e.g., racing heart, frustration rising) so you can model calm.

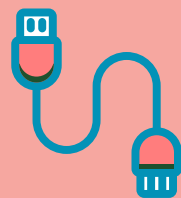
three



Respond, Don't React

- Step in early if you see escalation starting.
- Slow your pace, lower your voice, and keep your body language open and non-threatening.
- Use supportive phrases: *"I'm here for you"*, *"When you're ready, we can talk"*.
- Offer choices where possible (e.g., *"Do you want to take a walk or sit quietly?"*).

four



Help Them Reconnect

- Support calming before problem-solving: Regulate → Relate → Reason.
- Encourage grounding strategies: deep breathing, squeezing a stress ball, listening to music, movement, or quiet time.
- Gentle sensory tools (fidgets, weighted blankets, a hot drink, or a cold face cloth) can help soothe heightened emotions.

five



Validate Feelings

- "Name it to tame it" – putting feelings into words helps calm the brain.
- Validation means acknowledging what they feel, not necessarily agreeing.
- Phrases like *"I can see you're upset"* or *"That sounds really tough"* help teens feel understood.

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six



Restore Connection

- After conflict, repair the relationship with warmth and openness.
- Talk about what might help next time, without blame.
- Model self-care – let them see you take breaks, rest, or talk things through.

seven



Know The Triggers

- Common triggers: school stress, friendship issues, rejection, big changes, sensory overload, grief, or feeling shouted at.
- Help them identify their personal triggers and plan strategies together.

eight



Seek Extra Support When Needed

- Reach out if their distress is ongoing, severe, or stopping them from daily activities (school, sleep, friendships).
- Trusted supports can include whānau, friends, school staff, GPs, counsellors, occupational therapists, or Youthline.



Remember the 4R's

- **R**apport
- **R**ecognise
- **R**espond
- **R**estore

Big emotions are normal. They're signals, not problems to fix. Your calm presence, empathy, and consistent support are the most powerful tools your teen can have.

