

Supportive Statements

When our kids are anxious, our go-to is often to reason, rationalize, and try to convince them not to worry. But, as you may have experienced, these attempts are usually unsuccessful.

The problem is, anxiety isn't logical, so it doesn't respond to logic.

What does it respond best to? Practice.

And the key to getting kids to practice tolerating anxious feelings is talking with less words, and using words that are more effective...think of it as a shot of espresso rather than a cup of coffee.

We can do this with supportive statements, where we:

- (1) validate their feelings, and
- (2) confidently communicate that we believe they can handle it!

Step 1

Start by validating their feelings, remembering that defensive kids won't hear what we're trying to say.

- "I hear," "I see," or "I know" are great ways to start.
- Make sure your tone is saying it like you mean it!

Examples:

- I hear that ___ feels really scary for you.
- I see that it feels hard to _____.
- I know that you want (or don't want) ___.

Step 2

Communicate that you are absolutely confident that they can handle it.

- Remember here that we aren't communicating that our kids will like tolerating, or that it will feel good. We are simply expressing that they can do it - they'll get through it!
- Sometimes as parents we aren't quite confident that our kids can handle it - but if you don't express confidence, they won't feel it.

Examples:

- And I know you'll be ok!
- But I know you can handle this!
- And I know you've got this and I can't wait to hear all about it.
- But you've done this before and I know you'll get through it again

Examples:

- I know you're nervous about going to school tomorrow and I know you're going to get through it!
- I see that it feels really hard for you to raise your hand and ask for help, but your teachers want to help you and I know you can do it.
- I know you don't want mom to leave, goodbyes can be hard! But you'll see her soon and I know you'll be ok.

Putting It Together

If this was helpful and you have questions, or you would like more individualized support, please contact me at:

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