

# How to Manage a Meltdown

## Here are a few steps that could help:

1. Be calm to avoid from escalating the situation.

2. Speak in a calm voice and validate the situation ex: I understand that you are upset.

3. Ask the person if they can practice taking deep breaths with you: ex: Can you do this with me, Take a deep breath and breathe out, Can you try to do that 2 more times for me. If the child says, “no” ask the child to take a break with you and get a drink or water or go to the restroom with you to grab napkins to clean his or her face. If the child says “no,” ask the child to sit quietly and inform him that you are setting a timer to give him 2-3 minutes to calm down and then would like to speak to him about the situation. Other tactics: counting to 10, singing their favorite song, playing some relaxation music, or asking the child to stretch with you.

4. Once the child is calm, validate the situation and then ask what happen. Ex: I seen that you were very upset and I know that your anger and frustration is affecting you today. Do you want to talk about what happen? If the child says “no” ask him to write it or draw a picture of how he feels or repeat steps in 3. Once the child speaks out about his behaviors, listen attentively, give eye contact, and allow the child to speak with no interruptions.

5. Validate the maladaptive behaviors: ex: So you are angry because a student pushed you, therefore you pushed the student back correct?

6. Role-play solutions: ex: So what other alternatives could you have taken? If the student answers or not, give him alternatives: inform an adult, walk away, or ignore.

7. Encourage Thinking before Acting: Most kids do not consider consequences before reacting. Discuss how thinking before reacting could increase a positive situation versus allowing the consequences of anger, frustration and temper tantrums to take over the situation. Ex: What are the consequences of you taking matters in your own hands: (anger, frustration, mad, temper tantrums, aggression etc). Encourage the student to think about consequences before reacting to situations that trigger his or her behaviors.

8. Discuss triggers: Let’s list some things that cause you to have a temper tantrum and let’s put some consequences in place for them ok. Ex:

a. You stated when others touch your belongings it makes you mad and you always get in trouble correct. (Practice the ABC model): Antecedent- the trigger is someone touches your belongings, Behavior you get mad, and Consequence- you react by screaming, hollering or becoming frustrated.

Let’s discuss alternatives to avoid a negative consequence like: asking them nicely not to touch your things, informing them you don’t like when others take your things without asking, or simply raise your hand to inform an adult. b. You stated you get mad when your teacher gives you work in class correct?

Process the ABC model: Antecedent- Work demands, Behavior-get angry or mad and the Consequence: temper tantrum or anger. What are some better ways to manage the situation like: asking your teacher for a break before starting, raising your hand before working to get a clear understanding, asking for choices like may I complete my math work before competing this reading activity.

9. Remember to validate the person, situation, and ways to manage the situation.

10. Praise the child for taking the time to show some effort in understanding his behaviors and ways to improve upon future situations to avoid the behavior from consistently occurring and being a trigger that leads to acting out that leads to consequences. Assure the child understands that all behaviors have consequences by simply keeping the ABC model in mind in addition to thinking before acting by simply practicing the aforementioned interventions frequently with the child.

Thank you Nequetta Alford