

Some Supportive Responses

to anxious behaviours

- ✓ Give a clear directive with a calm voice
- ✓ Use if/then or first/then language
- ✓ Offer a stress ball or fidget toy
- ✓ Allow wait time to process
- ✓ Listen & probe; seek clarification
- ✓ Limit language; avoid repetition
- ✓ Simplify the task/reduce the quantity
- ✓ Redirect to positive outcomes; offer reassurance
- ✓ Respect the student's need to have a question answered (e.g. don't penalize for 'not listening')
- ✓ Warn in advance of transitions (change in activity, location, routine, person, etc.)
- ✓ Offer continuous praise and encouragement
- ✓ Ask: "What do you need?" or "How can I help?"
- ✓ Offer snack, drink, movement break, purposeful job
- ✓ Use a timer for tasks or remove time constraints
- ✓ Use specific language to help student start the task
- ✓ Listen to music, read, draw or colour
- ✓ Work in a different position (e.g. standing)
- ✓ Distract by changing to a subject of interest
- ✓ Rub hands together; rub hands on tops of legs
- ✓ Take deep belly breaths; clench & release fists

