

Supporting Your Child

Through Anxiety & Building Resilience

NOTICE

When you are feeling like you want to give up.

PAUSE

Use a calming strategy.

TRY

Try at least 3 times on your own. Make adjustments based on what you learn with each attempt.

STUDENTS PRACTICED:

In 7th grade, feeling anxious when facing new tasks or tricky problems is completely normal. However, when students instantly seek adult help at the very first sign of discomfort, their brains miss the opportunity to learn: "I am capable of figuring things out on my own." Students worked through a puzzle designed to make them feel temporarily stuck, practicing strategies to push past panic without relying on an adult safety net.

Instead of giving the answer when they ask for help, try asking:

- "What are 3 things you've already tried on your own?"
- "What part of this problem does make sense so far?"

Discreet Calming Strategies

Strategy	How Students Do It	Why It Works (The Science)
5-Finger Breathing	Trace fingers on one hand while inhaling up and exhaling down each finger.	Distracts the Brain: Physical touch signals interrupt racing thoughts, forcing the brain to focus on physical reality.
5 Senses Reset	Silently identify 5 blue items, 4 physical textures, and 3 background sounds.	Crowds Out Panic: Fills short-term working memory with room facts so anxious "what-if" loops get pushed out.
Muscle Squeezes	Press hands under the desk or curl toes tightly for 5 seconds, then release.	Burns Off Stress: Releases built-up fight-or-flight adrenaline, signaling muscles that the threat has passed.

How You Can Support at Home

Normalize Discomfort

Resist rescuing them immediately. If they say "I can't do this!", reframe it: "You can't do it YET. Feeling frustrated just means your brain is learning."

Praise the Process

Instead of praising quick success, focus on effort: "I noticed how stuck you were on problem #3 and how you tried 3 ways before asking for help."