



Canucks
Autism
Network

Supporting Individuals During Difficulty



Before

Notice signs of anxiety **before** the situation escalates.

- » Offer breaks.
- » Ask how you can help.
- » Decrease challenge level.
- » Offer a quiet space.
- » Support calming.
- » Collaborate with caregivers (as appropriate).



More Escalated

Prompt **safer** behaviour. Direct the person to take a **break**.

- » Stop instruction.
- » Be calm, specific, and provide clear, supportive directions.
- » Recruit assistance from caregiver or another staff.
- » "We're going to hop out and take a break."
- » Avoid getting into a power struggle – this is not a 'teachable moment.'



Crisis Situation

Create **safety**.

- » Remain calm.
- » Remove all instructional demands.
- » Recruit assistance: collaborate with the caregiver, if possible.
- » Move others away.
- » Reduce verbal interaction: Have one person take the lead.
- » Avoid touching the individual as much as possible.
- » Debrief at another time, when the person is calm.



Calming Strategies

Find out from the individual and/or their caregivers what works for them.

- » Quiet, safe space.
- » Sensory toys or fidget toys.
- » Noise cancelling headphones, sunglasses.
- » Calming objectives.