HOW TO MANAGE A MELTDOWN
by Lisa Damour, PhD | drlisadamour.com

Pause between each step to see if it worked. If not, move forward to the next step.

1. **Listen without interrupting**

2. **Offer sincere empathy**
   a. “That stinks!” or
   b. “I’m so sorry that happened.”

3. **Validate distress**
   a. “You have every right to be mad/sad/upset.” or
   b. “A good cry is the right thing right now.”

4. **Support coping**
   a. “Is there anything I can do that won’t make this worse?” or
   b. “Would some tea help?”

5. **Express non-dismissive confidence**
   a. “This is tough, and so are you.” or
   b. “As hard as this feels right now, I do think that you’ll get through it.”

6. **Offer to help problem-solve**
   a. “Do you want my help trying to tackle this?” or
   b. “Any ideas about what might work to make this better?”

7. **Divide the problem into buckets:** things that can change and things that can’t.

8. **Brainstorm possible solutions to the things that can change.**

9. **Support acceptance of what cannot be changed**
   a. “There’s always some stuff we just have to live with.” or
   b. “Let’s focus your energy where it can make a difference.”