



DON'T BE TOO QUICK TO REACH FOR THE TISSUES

In psychology, we are trained to **resist the reflex to reach for the tissue box** as soon as a client starts crying. If we dash for the tissues, the message we are giving the client is “pull yourself together.”

This might be a helpful tool to use with students and parents who are upset. I am not saying all your parents or students will cry, but you are a professional reaching out with kindness in a time of stress. **You are likely to get some tears. That might be awkward, but it’s okay.**

Some parents and students will need extra resources - but nearly everyone will be struggling in some capacity, and you can’t “make it great”. **It’s not school, it is what it is.**

What you can do is:

- reassure (it’s okay, this is really hard),
- normalize (lots of parents/students are having the same struggles, you’re not alone)
- give some perspective (it will end/they will catch up/everyone is in the same boat).

Try and avoid the reflex to jump into “how can I fix this for you” mode (leave the tissue box alone). Give them the message it's okay to struggle, this is hard, they don't need to "pull themselves together" right now.

Breathe, be aware of your reflex to throw a bucket load of resources in to fix it (teachers ... problem solving that’s what you do). Here are a few ideas that might help you in these conversations.

- Students all over the world are in the same boat; everyone is finding it hard, it’s okay
- I’ve spoken to lots of students/parents who are finding this hard; you’re not alone
- Even parents who are teachers are finding it hard to help their kids learn from home, no wonder you find it hard
- We have kids who miss terms of school for travel or illness, and they catch up
- It’s okay; it's hard, we’re all just doing the best we can with the situation we are in.

And it’s okay to leave a conversation with no follow-ups, or a "let's check in next week". **Remember you need to look after yourself too.**

Please give me a shout if I can help at all.

This is hard. Take care out there.

Meredith