

How to respond to reassurance seeking questions

Reassurance seeking involves a child or teen asking many questions, or the same question over and over again, in order to hear from you that things will be “okay”. Engaging in a child’s reassurance seeking behavior can lead to ongoing patterns. Here are a few ways to create an environment that reduces the potential for reassurance seeking.

- Give the student an opportunity to answer the question themselves: **WHAT DO YOU THINK?**
- Limit the number of worry questions/day/hour: **e.g., ONE WORRY QUESTION / HOUR**
- Insert a predetermined length of time before answering questions to increase tolerance for uncertainty: **DELAY REASSURANCE (ask student to rate their fear)**
- Earn rewards to increase motivation to tolerate anxiety and resist their urges to ask for reassurance: **COLLECT TOKENS TO REDEEM FOR A REWARD AT A LATER DATE**
- With compliancy issues, perform a cost-benefit analysis to increase insight: **Getting reassurance provides temporary SHORT TERM relief versus the LONG TERM benefits of resisting the urge to ask for reassurance, which leads to a reduction in anxiety.**
- Practice responding to reassurance questions in session: **ROLE MODEL RESPONSES**

