

Quick Tips for Responding to Distress

during a healthcare appointment or procedure



1 Check Pause & Check-In

- Ask how they are, if they are ok, or if they are un/comfortable
- Ask if they need more information about the procedure, or have questions
- Notice body language + facial cues
- Offer a glass of water
- Take a breath yourself, stay calm and maintain a friendly expression.

2 Calm Try a Calming Strategy

- Keep it simple
 - Use a calm and quiet voice, and speak slowly
- Examples:**
- o Gentle grounding (“Can you look around the room and name 5 things you see” etc)
 - o Offer a short pause or to take a break
 - o Offer meditation (YouTube) or soothing apps (Calm, Aio Māori meditation, Headspace).

3 Choice Offer Simple Choices

- Give the person control and/or choices where possible
- Examples:**
- o “Would you like a few minutes alone?”
 - o “Would you like to sit with your legs up or down?”
 - o “Would you like us to talk or sit quietly?”

4 Care Reassure & Stop if Needed

- Acknowledge efforts
- Reassure: It’s okay to stop and take a break
- Remind that the appointment/procedure does not have to be completed.

5 Close Continuing care and ending appointment

- Invite to stand up/stretch/deep breaths
- If appropriate, discuss next steps together
- Plan how to approach the next appointment.

CONSENT:

Please remember to obtain informed consent before proceeding to the next step, or continuing with the appointment/procedure.