

# ATTEND INTERVENTIONS

The best and most effective interventions that are successful in helping students with school refusal behaviors (SRBs) involve all parties. When parents, school personnel, therapists, and other invested persons communicate, work together, develop strategies, and implement a plan, the student benefits.

ATTEND believes we need to *Stay the Course*:

- Connect to **Others**
- Utilize mind/body connection for **Regulation**
- Stretch with **strategies** (CBT)
- Enlist **community provider** assistance (when needed)

Connection and community are key in helping students with SRB. When students are connected to their school and have trusted adults who care for their well-being, school becomes a safe place. As students connect within their community and have positive trustworthy relationships with others, their ability to cope improves and anxiety lessens. Humans are built for connection and support from each other.

"Regulation is the ability to manage your own emotions and behavior" (Dr. Perry). A perceived threat causes the brain to release chemicals. When this occurs, the child facing the perceived threat enters the fight, flight, or freeze response. In this mindset, the child will not be able to think and reason, only react. Adults who remain regulated while working with the child can model self-regulation and are more effective than adults who respond with emotion. Regulation skills will help the child learn to work through the onset of emotions when facing a perceived threat.

Trained professionals working with students with SRB use research-based therapies. Exposure therapy and cognitive based therapy (CBT) are two well-known and commonly used methods that effectively address SRB. Exposure therapy slowly introduces the concerning stimulus to build tolerance. Change it to something like: "CBT examines how thoughts, feelings, and behaviors interact, and adjustments to thinking patterns can bring about lasting change.


Pairing effective methods, regulation, and connection with extra community-provided supports increase effectiveness. School refusal behaviors are often associated with co-occurring conditions. Consulting a medical professional can be beneficial. Other community agencies that are helpful for students with SRB are psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, family-based therapists, case management, and others.

Reference:

Perry, B. & Winfrey, O. (2021). What happened to you? Conversations on trauma, resilience, & healing. FlatIron Books.



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