

4 Tips for Managing Reentry Anxiety

Opening the doors is step one in returning students to the classroom. The next steps involve addressing a year's worth of isolation and anxiety. Here are some tips to help students manage the reentry process.

1 Create a good learning environment

- **Set up classrooms** to be warm and welcoming.
- **Minimize distractions** and obstructions to effective learning.
- **Establish routines** that place students in a consistent, familiar structure.

2 Listen empathically

- **Give them your undivided attention** and show that you're prepared to hear them.
- **Don't trivialize or pass judgement** on what they perceive as a major life moment.
- **Focus on feelings, not just facts** to possibly uncover a different, underlying issue.
- **Allow silence for reflection** and they may share additional information or insight.
- **Restate what you heard** to give them an opportunity to clarify or expand their message.

3 Rebuild trust

- **Set expectations** and communicate them clearly and consistently.
- **Find opportunities to connect** with students to show they are cared for and appreciated.
- **Encourage students to share** their feelings and concerns, and be open to sharing your own.

4 Acknowledge your own anxiety

- **Watch for changes in behavior:** pacing, clicking a pen, holding your breath, withdrawing.
- **Listen carefully to your anxiety,** reflect, and restate what your anxiety is telling you.
- **Engage in a positive outlet** that you have committed to yourself.