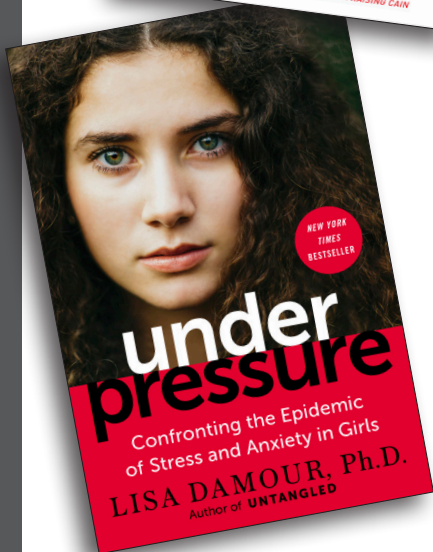
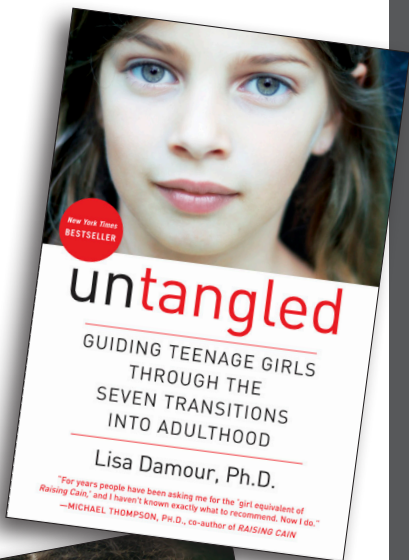


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HOW TO MANAGE A MELTDOWN

by Lisa Damour, PhD

Pause between each step to see if it worked. If not, move forward to next step.

1. Listen without interrupting

2. Offer sincere empathy

“That stinks!” or “I’m so sorry that happened.”

3. Validate distress

“You have every right to be mad/sad/upset.”
or “A good cry is the right thing right now.”

4. Support coping

“Is there anything I can do that won’t make this worse?” or “Would some tea help?”

5. Express non-dismissive confidence

“This is tough, and so are you.” or “As hard as this feels right now, I do think that you’ll get through it.”

6. Offer to help problem solve

“Do you want my help trying to tackle this?”
or “Any ideas about what might work to make this better?”

7. Divide problem into buckets

Things that *can* change and things that *can’t* change

8. Brainstorm possible solutions to the things that can change

9. Support acceptance of what cannot be changed

“There’s always some stuff we just have to live with.” or “Let’s focus your energy where it can make a difference.”