

Persons with Prader-Willi syndrome may have difficulty transitioning, problems with changes in routine or expectations, or difficulty managing feelings of frustration and disappointment. To help the person with PWS during these times, get into their mindset and address their concern from a place of empathy before attempting to help them problem solve. At its most basic form, an empathetic response can simply be repeating the exact words used by the individual. The use of empathy can avoid, reduce, and even stop unwanted behavior mid track. For more information about PWS or to request a PWS Training, contact the Prader-Willi California Foundation.

Reduce or eliminate stressors in the environment.

1. Utilize Food Security Checklist.
2. Create No Doubt/No Hope/No Chance regarding access to food, items, rules, boundaries, and routine.
3. Create a calm environment including your own emotional reaction to the situation.
4. Avoid all power struggles. Rephrase differences, "You might be right" or "That's interesting".
5. Utilize positive reinforcement. Praise! Praise! Praise!
6. Ensure that there is no medical reason for the behavior.

Tantrum Behavior/Disappointment/Frustrator

Provide EMPATHY

Repeat the individual's words exactly as you heard them. Clarify the individual's want or need and repeat it:

***"You want XYZ" "XYZ won't work" "You think XYZ"
"It sounds like you would like to XYZ. Is that right?"
"I understand you would like to XYZ" "What a bummer XYZ"***

Continue to provide empathetic responses until the individual calms or indicates that you are on the right track. Return to empathy as often as necessary. Use empathy with broken record technique.

Individual is Responsive:	Individual says, "Leave me alone":	Individual is Unresponsive:
<p>Keep the individual thinking, not going into feeling mode: <i>"What do you think we can do about this?"</i></p> <p>Collaborative problem solving. Guide to conclusions rather than solving the problem for them. Focus on compromise. Praise ALL ideas.</p> <p>Offer preferred choices.</p> <p>Distract to keep the person thinking rather than focusing on their upset. Change in environment may be helpful.</p>	<p>Back up and give this person space. Calmly state, <i>"OK, let me know when you're ready."</i> Allow individual to 'cool down' while maintaining a safe distance and minimal eye contact.</p> <p>Do not say anything or interact with individual until they verbalize they are ready.</p>	<p>Guess at frustrator. Continue empathy.</p> <p>If unsuccessful, stop trying. Sit with individual in silence.</p>
		<p>Individual is unresponsive to empathy and continues to escalate:</p> <p>You're in meltdown mode. All focus is on keeping the person safe. Keep those around person safe.</p> <p>Back up and maintain a safe distance. Do not interact with the individual at all.</p>