



## EMOTION COACHING SAMPLE SCRIPT SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

*In this situation, a teen expresses anxiety about going to school.*

- **Teen:** "I can't handle going to school today. I'm staying home."
- Parent:** *[Noticing and naming the emotion]* "I've noticed you were a bit quieter over the weekend, and you didn't even want to see your friends. I was wondering if maybe you were feeling anxious about returning to school after the break. I get why you'd feel that way because I know there's a few big projects due soon. It makes sense that you'd want to avoid it."
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- **Teen:** "Yeah, it's just too much. It's overwhelming. I just can't deal with it. I always feel like I'm behind everyone else."
- Parent:** *[Labeling emotions]* "So you're feeling anxious and maybe a little doubtful about whether you can handle school right now?"
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- **Teen:** "I'd rather just stay home. I'll figure it out tomorrow."
- Parent:** *[using "because" statements and offering emotional and practical support]* "If I put myself in your shoes, it makes sense to me why you'd want to stay home because of how anxious you're feeling about being behind on assignments, and because I know you're worried about failing the course and how this may affect your college applications."
- [emotional support]* "I want you to know that I'm here to support you and that I know you're doing the best you can."
- [practical support]* "So how about this: What if you go in this morning just for the first two periods, and then if you're still feeling anxious by lunchtime, I'll come get you and we can try that new sandwich place we've been wanting to try."
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- **Teen:** "I don't know. Maybe."
- Parent:** *[Problem-solving together]* "After lunch, we can sit down and look at the homework and upcoming projects and work together on mapping it out – let's just take it one step at a time. We can also come up with strategies to help you while you're at school, like reviewing your IEP with your teacher and guidance counsellor."