



The Hot Walk & Talk (HWT) is a protocol for supporting others after a difficult, upsetting, or traumatic event. It was developed by Dr. Patricia Fisher in 2012 and it provides three easy-to-remember steps to safely and kindly guide someone through a negative stress reaction.

Important Note: *This protocol applies when there has been no physical injury and the person is not in shock.*

HOT: *“I heard that something difficult or really upsetting just happened – would you like to come with me to talk about it?”*

Move the person away from the location where the incident occurred, if that applies. If possible, go outside.

WALK: *“Here is a bottle of water. How about we go for a walk around the building?”*

Walk beside the person at brisk pace and offer a drink of water. As the walk proceeds, they may naturally slow the pace – let them gradually have more control as their nervous system regulates.

TALK: *“It sounds like what you experienced was really upsetting and what you’re feeling is normal. I’m here for you. Would you like to tell me what happened?”*

Let them know that they are safe, that their reaction to stress is normal, and that you are there to support them.

Invite them to tell you the story of what happened in their own words. If they get stuck on a particular moment, prompt them to move on with a guiding statement such as: “and then what happened?”

The goal is to help them move through the whole narrative from beginning to the end – until they get to the present where they are walking in safety and are no longer feeling overwhelmed.