

## Self-Help Resources for

# PANIC ATTACKS

### What are panic attacks?

Panic attacks are a brief but intense period of overwhelming fear or anxiety, and can include physical symptoms that can cause people to fear they are having a heart attack, cannot breathe, or are dying. Although they feel scary and uncomfortable, they do not cause physical harm, and are usually intense but brief.

Symptoms typically peak within 10-30 minutes, though some may linger over an hour.

Panic attacks may seem to occur randomly, or they may be linked to a specific source of anxiety. When a person has frequent attacks, experiences great worry or fear of future attacks, and changes their behavior in order to avoid having them, they may be experiencing Panic Disorder (PD). PD is highly treatable with a variety of available therapies.

### Typical symptoms

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Racing heart
- Sweating
- Shaking or trembling
- Numbness or tingling sensations
- Fear of "going crazy"
- Breathing difficulties
- Nausea
- Feeling dizzy or faint
- Fear of dying

This handout includes information from TherapistAid, the American Psychological Association, the Anxiety and Depression Association of America and "The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook" by Edmund J. Bourne.



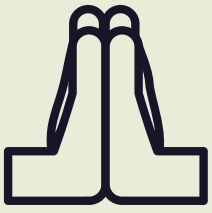
## Helpful Tips

### Take deep breaths



Practice deep, abdominal breathing, to help calm the nervous system when it goes into "fight or flight" mode. Breathe in through the nose, out through the mouth.

### Practice grounding strategies



Ground yourself in the present moment by using all of your senses: Take note of things you can see, hear or touch. Chew peppermint gum, take a drink of cool water, or sniff some lavender essential oil.

### Practice distraction



Engage in an activity you enjoy, watch a favorite TV show or movie, call a friend, get a change of scenery

### Self-reassuring coping statements



"This feeling isn't pleasant, but I know it's temporary." "I'll just let my body do its thing. I can take the time I need in order to let go and relax."

## Resources

**Check out our full resource list via QR code!**



## Counseling Center Services

The AppState Counseling Center offers a variety of services including short-term individual counseling, group therapy, workshops, self-help resources, referral coordination, and more! To get started, schedule an initial consultation at 828-262-3180.

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