



Information for clients to manage Anxiety and Panic attacks

During this coronavirus pandemic, people may feel their anxiety rise. They may be living with anxiety or panic attacks and this might be heightened during the crisis. Below you'll find information on symptoms of Anxiety and Panic Attacks and several links and websites that will help you manage those symptoms. Anxiety is a normal response and is the brain's way of keeping you safe.

This quick information leaflet explains panic attacks, how to respond to them, and links to some useful videos and tools. Please be mindful and responsible for your own safety and wellbeing. If you need crisis support please call a Listening Line: [HERE](#) or a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence helpline: [HERE](#)

Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, that can be mild or severe.

Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life. For example, you may feel worried and anxious about sitting an exam or having a medical test or job interview. During times like these, feeling anxious can be perfectly normal.

However, some people find it hard to control their worries. Their feelings of anxiety are more constant and can often affect their daily life.

Anxiety is the main symptom of several conditions, including panic disorder, phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder and social anxiety disorder (social phobia).

Panic Attacks

A panic attack is an exaggeration of your body's normal response to fear, stress or excitement. It is the rapid build-up of overwhelming physical sensations.

Symptoms:

- a pounding heartbeat
- feeling faint
- sweating
- nausea (feeling sick)
- chest pains
- feeling unable to breathe
- shaky limbs, or feeling like your legs are turning to jelly
- feeling like you're not connected to your body
- Fear you're losing control
- Fear you're going to faint
- Fear you're having a heart attack
- Fear you're going to die

Please note: If you are experiencing chest pains or shortness of breath, it could be a sign of something more serious. If you are at all worried, please call the emergency services as it is always better to be safe. "Paramedics would rather be called out to find an honest mistake has been made than be too late to save a person's life."

Managing your panic:

- Acknowledge it, try not to fight it
- Stay still, or go somewhere nearby that feels safe
- Breathe slowly and deeply
- Remind yourself it's not life threatening and it will pass
- Focus on positives – images, smells, sounds, people
- Use some of your usual coping methods if you have them (self-soothing, distraction, grounding, tapping etc)

How to Respond to someone else's panic:

- Be calm and patient
- Reassure them
- Give them space/time
- Breathing exercises – count or time your breathing for them, give them a visual to follow of a breathing pattern (using your hands for example). Breathe in for 8 counts and out for 10 counts
- Shift Focus – distract their mind and body (encourage them to walk in a circle and count their steps; tap their foot and sing to their favourite song; ask them to touch 3 surfaces in the room and describe how it feels; or some people respond to music or conversation)
- If it's a regular occurrence; ask them what they'd like you to do in future

Tapping

Tapping is a mixture of ancient acupressure techniques and modern focussing techniques. Tapping can help relieve the symptoms of anxiety and panic attacks and is easy to do.

Let's give it a go! Click on the link below.

<https://youtu.be/pAclBdj20ZU>

Other grounding/breathing techniques for anxiety are below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk>

<https://youtu.be/ohOWm2lhQps>

https://youtu.be/C_1v4W5wrSI

https://youtu.be/MoQVgJx_QN4

More information on mental health and ways to access support are below:

Mental Health Foundation- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

MIND- <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

NHS UK- <https://www.nhs.uk/>

NHS Inform- <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>

HealthyPlace.com- <https://www.healthyplace.com/>

Our clients and anyone who has experienced trauma can also access our Trauma Self-Care resources here: <http://www.newpathways.org.uk/resources/>