

Advice and Tips for Parents and Pupils

WHY MIGHT I OR MY YOUNG PERSON BE EXPERIENCING PANIC ATTACKS?

Although panic is a normal reaction to threatening or scary situations, it can also be caused by thoughts or ideas that something bad is going to happen. When these thoughts keep building up they can cause young people to panic, and suffer from panic attacks. Often in young people these thoughts can revolve around assessment, peer relationships, bullying issues or situations at home.

ABOUT PANIC ATTACKS

Feelings of panic are an instinctive reaction to prepare our minds and bodies to react to a life-threatening situation. The feelings usually disappear gradually after the frightening event has passed. However, some people experience panic when there is no threat or frightening event - this can lead to a panic attack.

HOW CAN WE HELP?

This leaflet is designed with both pupils and parents in mind. It provides some information on the symptoms of panic attacks. There are a number of useful tips and practices to help young people to develop strategies to deal with their panic. Of course, Guidance Teachers are always available to help pupils in school, but there is also a list of other helpful websites and resources included.

Warning Signs



The symptoms of a panic attack are very distressing and can include:

- *Pounding and racing heart*
- *Shortness of breath or a feeling of choking*
- *Tremors or violent shaking*
- *Tingling or numbness in your fingers*
- *Feeling sick, dizzy and sweating*
- *Feeling of losing control of your bladder*
- *Fear that you are about to die*
- *A sense that you, or things around you, are not real*
- *Feeling you are losing your mind*
- *Feeling aggressive towards anyone who gets in your way of escape*

Useful link for parents:

Hands On: <https://tinyurl.com/t4pnkva>



Helpful Tips

While young people can "think" themselves into a panic attack, the reverse is also true, and it is possible to manage panic attacks with some simple strategies.

Research shows that most panic attacks peak within 10 minutes - remember that how you are feeling, although really scary, will pass quickly

Practice different relaxation techniques, such as breathing, grounding yourself and tuning into your senses

It is important to take care of yourself after a panic attack for example by taking some time out or eating/drinking something

Useful links for parents and young people:

Childline: <https://tinyurl.com/wmfhyk3>

Relaxation: <https://tinyurl.com/y3eevu9c>