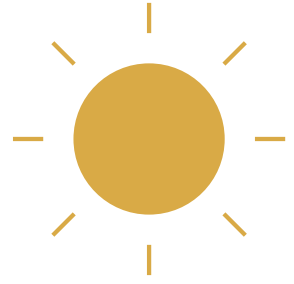


SPACE TO BREATHE



Panic Attack Recovery Workbook

Understand the alarm • Ride the wave • Recover with care

A gentle beginning

Panic intensity today: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What would help me feel supported while I use this workbook?

The sensations are real. The wave can pass.

Understanding the panic alarm

The body is trying to protect you, even when there is no immediate danger.

What happens during panic?

The threat system releases stress hormones and prepares the body to act. Heart rate, breathing, temperature, muscles, digestion, vision and attention may all change. These sensations can feel catastrophic, which adds fear and strengthens the alarm.

Sensations I may notice

- ☐ Racing or pounding heart
- ☐ Breathlessness or tight chest
- ☐ Dizziness, tingling or shaking
- ☐ Heat, chills, sweating or nausea
- ☐ Feeling unreal or disconnected
- ☐ Fear of losing control or dying

The panic cycle

- 1 Trigger or body sensation
- 2 Catastrophic interpretation
- 3 More fear and body alarm
- 4 Escape, checking or reassurance

Short-term escape can bring relief, but repeated avoidance may teach the brain that the situation was dangerous.

A more helpful explanation

“My alarm system has switched on. The sensations are intense, but intensity is not the same as danger. I can orient to the present, allow my breathing to settle and let the wave change in its own time.”

The explanation I want to practise:

Important medical note

Panic symptoms can overlap with physical health problems. Seek medical advice if symptoms are new, severe, unusual for you, or different from previous attacks. Call 999 for a medical emergency.

This workbook supports reflection after appropriate medical assessment; it does not diagnose symptoms.

Riding the panic wave

Use fewer words and one simple action at a time.

Start with orientation, not perfection

Look around slowly. Name where you are, the date and one sign that you are in the present. If a technique feels demanding or increases distress, simplify it or stop.

1. FEET AND SUPPORT

- ☐ Press feet gently down
- ☐ Notice the chair or floor
- ☐ Unclench jaw and hands

2. GENTLE BREATHING

- ☐ Do not force a deep breath
- ☐ Let air flow comfortably
- ☐ Make the out-breath soft

3. ORIENT TO SENSES

- ☐ Name 3 things you see
- ☐ Touch one neutral object
- ☐ Notice one steady sound

Words to borrow during panic

- **This is an alarm wave.**
- **I do not have to solve everything now.**
- **I can let the sensations rise and change.**
- **My next job is one gentle breath or one grounded step.**

My simplest panic-wave plan

Where I can pause safely: _____

One grounding action: _____

Words I want someone to say: _____

Choose one recent episode

Complete this after you feel settled enough. Aim for curiosity rather than a perfect account.

1. What was happening just before?

Place, situation, memory, sensation, thought, caffeine, tiredness or uncertainty.

2. What did my body do first?

Notice the earliest physical change you remember.

3. What did I fear the sensations meant?

For example: "I will faint", "I cannot breathe" or "I will lose control".

4. What did I do to feel safer?

Escape, avoid, check, scan, search online, seek reassurance or hold very still.

5. What happened as the wave changed?

What did you learn about what helped, what did not, and what you survived?

Recovering with care

The body may feel tired, tender or unsettled after the alarm passes.

After a panic attack

Recovery can include rest, food, water, quieter sensory input, gentle movement or contact with someone safe. Try not to demand immediate productivity or a detailed explanation from yourself.

What my body may need

- ☐ A quieter or dimmer space
- ☐ Water or something to eat
- ☐ Warmth, cooling or comfortable clothing
- ☐ Rest without pressure to sleep
- ☐ Slow movement or stretching
- ☐ A familiar sensory object

What my mind may need

- ☐ Simple reassurance, not debate
- ☐ Permission to postpone decisions
- ☐ Less symptom checking or searching
- ☐ A factual reminder about panic
- ☐ Company without many questions
- ☐ A gentle return to routine

Learning without rumination

One thing that helped: _____

One safety behaviour I may gently reduce with support: _____

One kind sentence I need now: _____

A compassionate recovery note

Having a panic attack is not a failure. Your nervous system used an alarm response. Recovery may be uneven, and needing support does not make you weak.

My panic recovery plan

Keep this page somewhere easy to find and update it as you learn.

My early warning signs

What helps me orient

Words that help

People I can contact

During a panic wave I will try

1. Pause somewhere physically safe.
2. Name what is happening: "This may be panic."
3. Use one grounding or breathing action.
4. Reduce demands and allow the wave to change.
5. Seek help if symptoms are new, severe or unusual.

When I will seek professional help

I will speak with my GP or NHS Talking Therapies if panic is recurring, causing avoidance, affecting daily life or becoming harder to manage. In an immediate emergency I will call 999 or go to A&E. For urgent mental health help I can contact NHS 111.

NHS 111: 111 Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24 hours a day)