

## Exercise sheet

# PANIC ATTACK



**Panic attack is a crisis of intense anxiety, of sudden appearance, of which the maximum intensity is reached very quickly, in a few minutes.**

There are **many physical signs** such as palpitations and fast heartbeat, a feeling of oppression or suffocation, chills or hot flushes, dizziness and a feeling of instability.

It's sometimes accompanied by a feeling of derealization or depersonalization. Sufferers have the impression that what happens to them is unreal or that they are watching from outside, as if they've left their body and are watching themselves feeling bad.

**During a panic attack**, we have the feeling that we might die because of the physical symptoms, or we're going crazy or losing control (ridicule in public, risk throwing yourself through a window, provoking a car accident...) due to psychological symptoms.

**You can't protect your life by always thinking about problems and dangers. It won't help you and it's exhausting!** The best way to deal with it is not a total absence of anxiety, but normal anxiety: think about how to solve any problems, prepare for them just in case, then move on and live.

Fear-related thoughts are automatic and come very fast. In some cases they can lead to a real spiral of panic: we start to feel physically bad (heart palpitations, feeling of dizziness, breathing difficulty and other physical signs). At that moment, we interpret these signs as a threat (« »something's going to happen to me » »), which further increases our basic anxiety and aggravates the symptoms, which we then start to monitor very carefully. By focusing on them, we perceive them even more.

Clearly, what we interpret as their getting worse (« »they've been coming on for a while now, there's no doubt, they're worse, it's a bad sign « ») drives the emotions from anxiety to panic.

## Very important...

A panic attack never goes further than itself. You never go crazy, you never die. But those who have these attacks know that they're incredibly painful...

We may be afraid that they'll start again so we start avoiding certain situations to avoid having another panic attack.

## Exercise sheet

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It can go so far as to be afraid of what you feel, afraid of yourself.

When panic attacks are repeated, we talk about panic disorder. By avoiding places or situations, panic disorder can lead to agoraphobia.

The problem is the avoidance:

- avoidance of situations
- avoidance of sensations

## The solution: to avoid avoiding

- As long as you avoid what you fear, fear persists in the long term.  
Healing goes through progressive confrontation to fear.
- To start living and acting again, there will be a question of disobeying his fear.

