

Panic attacks can be scary and overwhelming for both the person experiencing it and those around them. This resource provides information on how to help someone who is experiencing a panic attack.

Remain Calm

It's important that you appear calm and relaxed in order to avoid escalating the person further. Appearing calm can also help model behavior that you want the person to follow. Keep your voice quiet, relaxed and talk slowly. Although panic attacks are intense and can look scary, they are not life threatening. Keeping this in mind may help you remain calm and be a positive support for the individual.



Talk to Them

People get lost in their thoughts when having a panic attack. Talking can help distract them from their thoughts. Ask them questions, but keep them brief and simple. You don't want to overwhelm them. Ask them to describe what they see or hear around them in that moment. You can also ask what you can do to help to make sure you're providing them with the type of support they need.

Walk Them Through Coping Skills

A person may have racing thoughts when experiencing a panic attack, making it difficult to remember to use their coping strategies. One way you can help support them is by reminding them of strategies that help them relax. Prompting them to take slow, deep breaths and modeling it for them may be helpful. Remind them that they are safe. Prompt them to think of a place that makes them happy and have them describe every detail.



Reassure Them

A little comfort can go a long way in a panic attack. Remind them that what they're experiencing is not dangerous and it will not last forever. Be sure to be positive and give positive feedback about how they're handling the attack. Keep your statements short and clear. They can only handle so much while they're experiencing panic symptoms.

Stick with Them

Being alone can be frightening during a panic attack. Staying with them as they gradually come out of the panic attack will help them get through it and may also help strengthen your relationship with that person. Once the panic attack stops you'll want to acknowledge how difficult the experience must have been and praise them for getting through it.