



Coping with Panic and Anxiety: Your Friendly Guide

Hi there! ☀️

Dealing with anxiety and panic attacks can feel overwhelming, but guess what? You're not alone, and there are proven strategies to help you feel more in control. This guide is here to provide you with practical tools, a sprinkle of encouragement, and a little education about what's happening in your body and mind. Let's work through it together—step by step.

1. What is Panic, and Why Does It Happen?

Panic attacks are like your body's alarm system going off when there's no real danger. Your brain senses a threat, even if it's a false alarm, and activates your "fight or flight" response. This causes physical symptoms like a racing heart, shortness of breath, or dizziness. Understanding this can help you remind yourself, *"I'm not in danger. My body is just reacting."* This is the same threat response we used to get when we lived in caves and there was a tiger hunting us. I often get my clients to ask themselves 'is there really a tiger?'.

2. What Triggers Your Anxiety?

Take a moment to reflect on what might set off your anxiety or panic. Is it specific situations, thoughts, or feelings? Knowing your triggers is the first step toward managing them.

- **My Triggers:**

- _____
- _____
- _____

3. How Does Your Body React?

Panic often shows up in our bodies before our minds catch on. Understanding your physical signs can help you take action earlier. Some people notice their teeth grinding, or fiddling with things such as hair or buttons. What do you notice?

- **My Body's Reactions:**

- _____
- _____
- _____

4. Breathing: Your Superpower 🫁

When panic strikes, your breathing often speeds up. This tells your brain things are getting worse—when they're not. Here's how to take back control:

Calm Breathing Exercise

1. **Get comfy:** Sit or lie down where you feel safe.
2. **Breathe in:** Slowly inhale through your nose for a count of 4.
3. **Hold:** Gently hold your breath for 2 counts.
4. **Breathe out:** Exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of 6.
5. **Repeat:** Do this for a few minutes and notice your body relaxing.

Pro tip: Practise this daily so it feels natural when you need it most.

5. Ground Yourself in the Moment 🌍

When panic pulls you into a spiral, grounding can help you reconnect with the present. What we mean by grounding is for you to bring yourself back in to the here and now and feel more in control.

The 5-4-3-2-1 Method

Focus on your senses to calm your mind:

1. **5 Things You Can See:** Look around and name five objects. Its really important to actually say the words
 2. **4 Things You Can Touch:** Notice textures under your fingertips.
 3. **3 Things You Can Hear:** Tune in to nearby sounds.
 4. **2 Things You Can Smell:** Take a deep breath and identify scents.
 5. **1 Thing You Can Taste:** Savour something or imagine a favourite flavour.
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6. Positive Affirmations: Shift Your Mindset

Positive thoughts can be a lifeline when anxiety clouds your mind. Write down three affirmations that speak to you.

- **Examples:**
 - *"This feeling is temporary. I can handle this."*
 - *"I am safe and supported."*
 - *"I am stronger than my anxiety."*

- **Your Affirmations:**

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
-

7. Create Your Safe Space

A calming environment can make all the difference. What does your safe space look like? Some people find having certain items can help, such as a blanket, or a shiny stone to rub.

- **Where I feel safe:** _____
 - **Comforting items:** _____
 - **Relaxing activities:** _____
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8. Build Your Support Network

You don't have to face this alone. Who or what resources can you reach out to for help?

- **My Support System:**
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
-


9. Celebrate Your Progress

Every small step matters. Reflect on what's working and where you'd like to grow.

- **What helps me the most:** _____
 - **What I'd like to improve:** _____
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Final Thoughts

Managing anxiety and panic is a journey, and it's okay to take things one day at a time. Remember, each step forward is a victory, no matter how small it seems. Be gentle with yourself—you're doing great.

Take care, and know that you can do this. 

Carla

