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Community Interest Company

Supporting Someone with Panic Attacks Workbook

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Disclaimer

This workbook has been created by Safe Haven Connect CIC to provide general information and practical guidance for adults supporting someone who experiences panic attacks.

It is intended for partners, family members, friends, carers and volunteers supporting adults aged 18 and over.

This workbook is not a substitute for professional medical or mental health advice. If someone experiences severe or worsening symptoms, or you have concerns about their safety, seek advice from an appropriate healthcare professional.

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Supporting Someone with Panic Attacks

PAGE 1 – Understanding Panic Attacks

A panic attack is a sudden wave of intense fear or anxiety that can feel overwhelming. Although panic attacks can be frightening, they are not usually life-threatening.

During a panic attack, a person may experience physical symptoms such as a racing heart, dizziness, shaking, sweating or shortness of breath. They may feel as though they are losing control or that something terrible is about to happen.

Every person's experience is different, and recovery is possible with understanding, support and appropriate help.

♥ A panic attack may involve...

- ☐ A racing heartbeat
- ☐ Shortness of breath
- ☐ Sweating
- ☐ Shaking or trembling
- ☐ Dizziness
- ☐ Chest discomfort
- ☐ Feeling detached from reality
- ☐ Fear of losing control
- ☐ Other:

♥ What do I hope to learn from this workbook?

♥ How can I become a better supporter?

Remember

Panic attacks can feel frightening, but staying calm and offering reassurance can make a real difference.

You don't need to stop the panic attack—you simply need to help the person feel safe and supported.

Support the person with patience, understanding and compassion.

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Supporting Someone with Panic Attacks

PAGE 2 – Understanding the Person

Every person who experiences panic attacks is different.

Some people may have panic attacks regularly, while others may only experience them in certain situations. Panic attacks can happen without warning or be triggered by stress, crowded places or other personal triggers.

It's important to remember that panic attacks are real, even if you can't see what's happening on the outside.

Things that may help them feel supported

- ☐ Staying calm.
- ☐ Speaking gently.
- ☐ Being patient.

- ☐ Giving them space if they want it.
- ☐ Staying with them until they feel safe.
- ☐ Helping them focus on slow breathing.
- ☐ Listening without judgement.
- ☐ Other:

♥ How can I support them today?

- ☐ Stay calm.
- ☐ Reassure them they are safe.
- ☐ Ask what they need.
- ☐ Respect their wishes.
- ☐ Encourage slow breathing if it helps them.
- ☐ Stay with them if they want company.
- ☐ Check in with them afterwards.
- ☐ Other:

♥ What have I learned about what helps them?

♥ What situations may trigger a panic attack?

♥ Remember

Panic attacks usually pass, even though they can feel frightening in the moment.

Your calm presence, patience and reassurance can help someone feel safer while they work through the experience.

Sometimes the greatest support is simply staying with someone until the panic begins to ease.

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PAGE 3 – Communicating During a Panic Attack

Watching someone experience a panic attack can feel frightening, but your calm and reassuring presence can make a real difference.

Try to speak in a gentle, steady voice and avoid rushing or overwhelming the person with lots of questions.

Remember, the goal isn't to "stop" the panic attack—it's to help the person feel safe while it passes.

Helpful ways to communicate

- ☐ Stay calm.
- ☐ Speak slowly and gently.
- ☐ Reassure them they are safe.
- ☐ Listen without judgement.
- ☐ Give them time.
- ☐ Ask what they need.
- ☐ Stay with them if they want you to.
- ☐ Other:

Helpful things I can say

- ☐ "I'm here with you."
- ☐ "You're safe."
- ☐ "Take your time."
- ☐ "We'll get through this together."
- ☐ "Tell me what you need."
- ☐ Other:

♥ Things to try and avoid saying

- ☐ "Calm down."
- ☐ "There's nothing to worry about."
- ☐ "You're overreacting."
- ☐ Becoming frustrated or impatient.
- ☐ Talking too quickly.
- ☐ Forcing them to explain how they feel.
- ☐ Other:

♥ One thing I can do today to help them feel safe

♥ Remember

A panic attack can feel overwhelming, but it will pass.

Your calm voice, patience and reassurance can help the person feel supported until they begin to feel more in control.

Stay calm, stay kind and remind them they are not facing it alone.

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PAGE 4 – Practical Support During and After a Panic Attack

Panic attacks can feel overwhelming, but they usually pass within a short period of time.

Remaining calm, offering reassurance and respecting the person's wishes can help them feel safer. Some people may want someone to stay with them, while others may prefer a little space.

After a panic attack, the person may feel tired, emotional or embarrassed. Continue to offer support without judgement.

♥ Practical ways I can help

- ☐ Stay calm.
- ☐ Stay with them if they want me to.
- ☐ Help them move somewhere quiet.
- ☐ Encourage slow, comfortable breathing.
- ☐ Offer water once they feel ready.
- ☐ Reduce distractions where possible.
- ☐ Check in with them afterwards.
- ☐ Other:

♥ Things that seem to help them recover

♥ Things that may make the situation more difficult

♥ One practical thing I can do next time

♥ Remember

Every panic attack is different.

The most helpful thing you can offer is your calm presence, reassurance and patience. You don't need to fix the situation—you simply need to help the person feel safe until the panic passes.

Kindness, reassurance and understanding can make all the difference.

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PAGE 5 – Supporting Emotional Wellbeing

Living with panic attacks can affect confidence, relationships and everyday life.

A person may begin avoiding certain places or situations because they fear having another panic attack. They may also feel embarrassed, frustrated or isolated.

Your understanding, patience and encouragement can help them feel accepted and supported as they build confidence over time.

 They may be feeling...

- ☐ Anxious.
- ☐ Embarrassed.
- ☐ Frustrated.
- ☐ Low in confidence.
- ☐ Worried about another panic attack.
- ☐ Isolated.
- ☐ Overwhelmed.
- ☐ Hopeful.

☐ Other:

 How can I support their emotional wellbeing?

☐ Listen without judgement.

☐ Reassure them they are not alone.

☐ Encourage them without pressure.

☐ Celebrate progress.

☐ Respect their pace.

☐ Spend quality time together.

☐ Encourage professional support if needed.

☐ Other:

 What usually helps them feel calmer?

 One thing I can do today to support them

Remember

Recovery takes time, and confidence often grows through small, steady steps.

By staying patient, encouraging hope and reminding someone they are supported, you can help them feel stronger and more confident.

Every act of kindness and reassurance helps someone realise they don't have to face panic attacks alone.

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PAGE 6 – Looking After Yourself as a Supporter

Supporting someone who experiences panic attacks can sometimes feel worrying or emotionally draining.

You may feel unsure of what to do, especially if you've never witnessed a panic attack before.

Looking after your own wellbeing helps you remain calm, patient and able to continue supporting the person when they need you.

Remember, it's okay to seek support for yourself too.

♥ How am I feeling today?

- ☐ Calm
- ☐ Hopeful
- ☐ Tired
- ☐ Worried
- ☐ Stressed
- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Frustrated
- ☐ Emotionally drained
- ☐ Other:

♥ This week I will...

- ☐ Take regular breaks.
- ☐ Get enough sleep.
- ☐ Eat healthy meals.
- ☐ Spend time outdoors.
- ☐ Talk to someone I trust.
- ☐ Make time for activities I enjoy.
- ☐ Practice self-care.
- ☐ Accept support when it's offered.
- ☐ Other:

♥ People who support me

1.

2.

3.

♥ One thing I will do for myself this week

♥ Remember

Supporting someone with panic attacks doesn't mean you have to carry everything on your own.

Looking after your own wellbeing helps you continue offering reassurance, patience and understanding when it's needed most.

When you care for yourself, you're better able to care for someone else.

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PAGE 7 – Encouraging Recovery and Building Confidence

Recovery from panic attacks is possible.

Many people learn ways to manage panic attacks, reduce their frequency and regain confidence over time. Progress may be gradual, and there may be setbacks, but every positive step matters.

Your encouragement can help someone believe in themselves and feel more confident facing everyday life again.

 Ways I can encourage recovery

- ☐ Celebrate small achievements.
- ☐ Encourage realistic goals.
- ☐ Be patient during setbacks.
- ☐ Support healthy routines.
- ☐ Encourage enjoyable activities.
- ☐ Focus on progress, not perfection.
- ☐ Remind them of their strengths.
- ☐ Other:

♥ Things that help build their confidence

♥ One positive goal for this week

♥ How can I encourage them without putting on pressure?

♥ Remember

Recovery isn't about never feeling anxious again.

It's about learning to cope, building confidence and recognising that panic attacks do not define who someone is.

With patience, support and hope, people can continue to live full and meaningful lives.

Celebrate every step forward—no matter how small it may seem.

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PAGE 8 – My Panic Attack Support Plan

Everyone experiences panic attacks differently.

What helps one person may not help another. The best support comes from listening, understanding their preferences and working together to create a plan that helps them feel safe and supported.

Remember, your calm presence can make a meaningful difference.

 What helps them most?

- ☐ Calm reassurance.
- ☐ A quiet place.
- ☐ Slow breathing.
- ☐ Having someone stay with them.
- ☐ Gentle encouragement.
- ☐ Time without pressure.
- ☐ Talking after the panic attack has passed.

☐ Knowing they are not alone.

☐ Other:

♥ My Three Priorities

1.

2.

3.

♥ People and Services That Can Help

1.

2.

3.

My Personal Reminder

When supporting someone with panic attacks, I want to remember...

Remember

Supporting someone with panic attacks isn't about making the fear disappear.

It's about helping them feel safe, understood and supported while reminding them that panic attacks always pass.

Your calmness, patience and kindness can become one of their greatest sources of reassurance.

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PAGE 9 – My Commitment as a Supporter

Congratulations on completing this workbook.

Supporting someone who experiences panic attacks takes patience, understanding and compassion.

Although panic attacks can feel frightening, your calm presence and encouragement can help someone feel safer, more confident and less alone.

You don't need to have all the answers. Simply being there and listening without judgement can make a meaningful difference.

I Will Remember To...

- ☐ Stay calm during a panic attack.
- ☐ Listen without judgement.
- ☐ Reassure them they are safe.
- ☐ Respect their pace.
- ☐ Encourage healthy coping strategies.
- ☐ Celebrate progress and confidence.
- ☐ Continue learning about panic attacks.
- ☐ Look after my own wellbeing too.

My Personal Reminder

When supporting someone with panic attacks, I want to remember...

My Support Promise

"I will support this person with kindness, patience and compassion. I will remain calm, listen without judgement and respect their experiences. I will encourage hope, celebrate progress and remind them that they are not alone as they continue their journey towards recovery."

Signature: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Final Thoughts

Living with panic attacks can be challenging, but recovery is possible.

With understanding, reassurance and the right support, people can regain confidence and continue to live full, meaningful lives.

Thank you for taking the time to learn how to provide compassionate, person-centred support.

Explore our growing library of free workbooks and wellbeing resources at:

 safehavenconnect.org/workbooks

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 Supporting adults, families, carers and communities with compassion, dignity and hope.