



HEATHER MEISELMAN, MSW, LCSW

25 YEARS OF PROVIDING SERVICE



## Surviving a Panic Attack

Panic attacks can be terrifying! Those who have experienced them will understand how difficult it is to endure them. Often, they come out of nowhere. They can stop you in your tracks and disrupt your daily life. I've always encouraged clients to create an environment and approach that puts you back in the driver's seat. Panic attacks render you feeling helpless & feeling out of control. You may be feeling helpless about your ability to control the panic attacks, but I assure you...you CAN do it. I have seen it happen, but it takes a little time & work.

Below are some steps you can take to maintain a healthy sense of calm & peace that can help you in your efforts:

1.

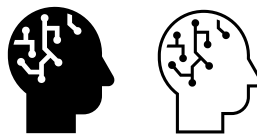
**If you are on medications, stay consistent.** Keep taking your medications. Don't try to change things around without consulting with your psychiatrist first. If your medications do not seem to be working, don't be alarmed. Some medications are helpful for daily anxiety, but not sufficient to address specific triggered panic attacks. Talk to your prescribing doctor to find out if there are medications that might be taken as an adjunct to your SSRI in emergencies like traveling on an airplane or speaking in front of a group or to help with a specific event that triggers these attacks.

2.

**Think ahead and be prepared!** Be aware of triggers you experience related to anxiety and panic. What coping mechanisms have helped you in the past? Some people use foods like mints and gum. Others use something tactile to hold in your hands like a ball a spinner, or other object that distract. There are many options: breathing exercises, calming music, being with nature, guided imagery, journaling, exercise and deep breathing to name a few.

3.

**Have a self-talk narrative ready to use.** Self-talk is your best coping tool to address anxious thoughts. Your brain cannot process two opposing thoughts at the same time ("I am safe" versus "I am in danger"). The thought that wins is the loudest one! That means verbally saying something that is positive, calming, and accurate will override anxious and fearful thoughts. Using your voice will overpower any inner negative dialogue every time. This takes practice. Remind yourself you will be ok. You will survive your episode.



Please reach out to me know if you continue to experience panic attacks and we will work together to get you to further develop strategies to conquer your panic episodes. It's important to know you are not alone. Many suffer in silence. You don't have to. I am here to help. Heather Cohen Meiselman, MSW, LCSW

(561) 703-3401

HCMeiselmanLCSW@gmail.com