My Panic Cycle

Map one recent panic episode. Panic grows when normal body sensations are read as danger, and the fear makes them stronger.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. Trigger: what set it off? (a place, a thought, a sensation, coffee, a hard day)

_____

2. Perceived threat

For example: Something is wrong. I'm in danger.

_____

_____

_____

How strong? 0 to 10: _____

3. Anxious, on alert

For example: Worry, fear, scanning my body

_____

_____

_____

How strong? 0 to 10: _____

4. Body sensations

For example: Heart, breath, dizzy, hot, tingling

_____

_____

_____

How strong? 0 to 10: _____

5. What I thought it meant

For example: Heart attack, fainting, losing control

_____

_____

_____

How strong? 0 to 10: _____

the loop

What I did to feel safe

Sat down, left, checked my pulse, held on, called someone

_____

_____

_____

_____

What actually happened

Did the feared thing happen? How long did it last?

_____

_____

_____

_____

A more accurate reading of the sensations

What else could explain them? What would I tell a friend? How much do I believe it now, 0 to 100%?

_____

_____

Belief in the scary meaning now (0 to 100%): _____

New chest pain, fainting or symptoms unlike your usual panic: get medical care, call 911 if severe.

Thoughts of ending your life? Call or text 988 (US) · Emergency: 911

Original layout by Lotus & Tulip, based on the cognitive model of panic (Clark, 1986). Not therapy.

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Panic Episode Log

Log each episode soon after it ends. Patterns show up over a few weeks, not in one entry.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Day and time	Where and trigger	First sensations	What I feared would happen	What I did (safety moves)	Peak 0 to 10, minutes	What actually happened

Last episode: tick what you noticed

The 13 symptoms on the DSM-5-TR panic attack list. A panic attack involves 4 or more, peaking within minutes.

- ☐ Pounding or racing heart
- ☐ Sweating
- ☐ Trembling or shaking
- ☐ Short of breath, smothering
- ☐ Choking feeling
- ☐ Chest pain or discomfort
- ☐ Nausea or stomach upset
- ☐ Dizzy, unsteady, faint
- ☐ Chills or hot flushes
- ☐ Numbness or tingling
- ☐ Unreal or detached
- ☐ Fear of losing control
- ☐ Fear of dying

Practice with sensations (only as planned with my clinician)

Exercise	Seconds	Sensation 0 to 10	Anxiety 0 to 10	Like panic? 0 to 10	What I learned

For the clinician

A self monitoring aid based on the cognitive model of panic (Clark, 1986), not a diagnostic test.

Panic attacks occur in many conditions. Panic disorder needs recurrent unexpected attacks plus 1 month or more of worry about attacks or a change in behavior (DSM-5-TR).

Rule out medical causes before treating panic as the explanation, and refer back if symptoms change.

Plan interoceptive exercises together; check heart, lung, seizure, pregnancy and other medical limits first.

Use the safety moves column to plan dropping safety behaviors step by step. Breathing practice is a skill, not a shield.

Crisis: call or text 988 (US) · Emergency: 911

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