

# Panic Attacks!

**Panic attacks** are sudden and overwhelming episodes of terror that seem to strike out of nowhere. Probably the scariest sensation is feeling like you are having a heart attack or that something is crushing your chest. Many people report feeling as though they are going to die. Needless to say, a **panic attack** is a tremendously scary thing to experience!



Other symptoms of **panic attacks** include shortness of breath; numbness or tingling in fingers and hands or other parts of the body; dizziness; sweating; fear of losing control; nausea. For people with **panic attacks**, the body is responding to apparently non-threatening situations as though there was a genuine threat. This does not mean that you are crazy because the physiological responses are real. There are physical things that you can do to alleviate the symptoms.

Two things are critical in beginning to manage a **panic attack**. One is to keep gently reassuring yourself that you are not going to die (even though you might feel like it). The other is to dramatically slow down and deepen your breathing (also a challenge). These behaviors will get you through initial stages of **panic attacks** but will likely not cure them.

Once you have had one **panic attack**, others may follow. It is almost as though your brain has created a short circuit. For this reason, it is best that you seek professional help with managing the **panic attacks**. There are specific things that you can do, under the guidance of a professional, to essentially eliminate a recurrence. Sometimes medication plays a role in the treatment but you really should also include cognitive and behavioral methods that have proven to be highly effective. Both the **Health Center** and the **Counseling Center** will help you work with your **panic attacks** and you can call to make an appointment at either office.

**Don't Panic!**

**Help is available!**

**Counseling Center – 562-1220**

**Health Center – 562-1348**