

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 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 experience!

Other symptoms of panic attacks include shortness of breath, numbness or tingling in fingers, hands, or other parts of the body, dizziness, sweating, fear of losing control, and 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 you can do to alleviate the symptoms.

Two things are critical to managing a panic attack: one is to keep gently reassuring yourself that you are not going to die (even though you may feel like it) and to dramatically slow down and deepen your breathing. These behaviors will get you through initial stages of panic attacks but won't 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 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 it should also include cognitive and behavioral methods that have been proven to be highly effective. The Wellness Center is a resource for you to find help.



Wellness Services

(660)562-1348

health@nwmissouri.edu