



FACT FILE

PANIC DISORDER

WHAT IS PANIC DISORDER?

Panic Disorder is when an individual regularly has acute levels of anxiety and sudden panic, with the fear that they might experience a panic attack.

A panic attack can feel distressing both physically and psychologically.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Psychological Symptoms:

- Fear of dying
- Feeling on edge
- Fear of losing control

Physical Symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing
- Dizziness
- Stomach aches
- Trembling

STRATEGIES

Breathing Techniques

Support the student to take slow, deep breaths. Ask them to imagine a balloon. As they breathe in the balloon inflates, as they breathe out the balloon deflates. Provide verbal reassurance, 'It's okay, it's a panic attack that you're having.'

Safe Spaces

Ask the student to identify a safe, calming visual space. Guide them to imagine that place, the colours, smells, sounds and textures.

Grounding

Guide the young person to sit down, place their feet on the floor and let them clench an object or your hand.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Guide the young person to progressively tense and relax each muscle group throughout their body. Tense each muscle for 5 seconds, ask them to pay attention to the feeling of tension and release.