



BHS Medical Department

Prevent Panic

Panic behaviour is contagious, so containing personal panic helps mitigate collective panic in communities. Individuals and communities can channel stress into positive action without inciting panic during crisis situations. Difficult times can amplify all potentials within our personality and the foundation of who we are. When you find yourself in a panic, for example, not only does that have negative consequences for other people but it also fuels your own anxiety because it reinforces this message that we are in a state of urgent threat.



There are best practices individuals can use to lessen panic within their communities and to decrease panic during emergencies:



- Demonstrate compassion, empathy, joy and commitment to help others during these times.
- You can be a strong example of strength and steadiness that can inspire others.
- Focusing on factors in your control and using other calming interventions can provide a sense of empowerment.
- The ability to use past experiences and information about our current state to predict the future allows us to increase the odds of desired outcomes, which tells us that we can do it even though it's hard.



- Building tolerance for uncertainty and uncomfortable situations can help people manage anxiety.
- Learning to be comfortable with some distress is very important for our mental health.
- Knowing a crisis will come to an end even if the time line is undefined helps, too.
- It may take quite a while but it's not forever.
- Tolerating change and kind of looking at life with more cognitive flexibility helps us all.



- Focus on what you can control. There is a lot out of our control, but what is in our control? We can control our daily lives as much as possible, that includes routines, going outside and sleep schedules.
- Create a plan of attack to take positive steps toward controlling the factors you can.
- Focus on the positives, but recognize and accept negative emotions such as panic, fear and anxiety to help build resilience.
- Notice when you sink into catastrophic thinking patterns. Say, Oh, is there a different perspective I can take? Is there another way I can think about the situation so that I'm not automatically assuming the worst?
- Use breathing exercises and movement to calm yourself. Taking a deep breath and holding it for 10 seconds, and then slowly releasing it.



- Maintain relationships, and stay social.
- Social distancing shouldn't equal social isolation.
- Follow guidance from reliable sources.
- Limit media exposure and social media consumption. Set aside time to check headlines, resist tuning into the news all day.
- Care for your body by prioritizing nourishing food, exercising and getting adequate sleep. Be kind to yourself, be kind to others and recognise that some anxiety is normal.
- Continue with therapies already in place.
- Keep taking previously prescribed medications, and continue meeting with therapists and counsellors if possible.

Ref: Weill Institute for Neurosciences - Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences

Ref: Public Health