

Panic and Anxiety Attacks

Though your response to someone experiencing a panic or

Slowing breathing to 4\$second inhale / 4\$second exhale can be beneficial. However, do not pressure the person. He/She may say, "I CAN'T," and that is okay.

4. Provide assurance that there is nothing to be afraid of and the experience will pass. During intense episodes, people experience a fear of impending doom. Inform that you will be there him/her through this.

5. Monitor your own anxiety. Breathe. Remind yourself this is just someone having a panic attack. Intense anxiety can unknowingly be contagious in the moment for you as the responder. If you escalate, so will the other person.

A Conversation After the Attack

After the individual has calmed, if possible, take a few minutes to check in. The person may feel quite embarrassed for the seemingly uncontrollable display of emotion. Acknowledge that elevated anxiety and panic is increasingly common these days, and normalize the intense pressure facing college students. Below are questions to consider:

- Do you typically feel high levels of stress or anxiety? What are some of the main things in your life that cause you stress?
- How often do you experience moments like this?
- How do you tend to cope with stress? What helps you manage? What in your life helps you relax?
- Do you have anyone you meet with to support you? Are you familiar with the resources that the Counseling Center offers for stress and anxiety?

Following up

If possible, reach out to the individual at a later time about how he/she is doing. Inquire about whether he/she has had additional intense episodes of anxiety. Not everyone who experiences a moment of high anxiety needs a referral to the Counseling Center; however, these symptoms tend to recur. The following questions can help frame this conversation if further support is needed: "Have you thought about seeking support at the Counseling Center for stress?" and "Would you like help connecting with the Counseling Center?"