**Help for Students who Panic**

* **Don’t believe everything you think**. That’s because when you’re having a panic attack, it’s common to experience racing thoughts that feel intense and catastrophic. Remembering that these thoughts are simply a symptom of the panic attack — like a cough to a cold — can help to de-escalate it. Just because you fear it doesn't make it dangerous.
* **Ground yourself**. Another common symptom of a panic attack is derealization, an unnerving feeling of being disoriented. People feel like they’re floating, and things just don’t seem real. Pay attention to where you are. What is under your feet. Touch a table and notice how it feels.
* **Be an observer:** Learn to observe your symptoms and your responses. Don't become the panic attack. You have more power if you watch and notice.
* **Breathe**: Belly breathe to the count of 3 and picture a square as you are inhaling to to 3, pause, exhale to 5, pause, inhale to 3, pause, exhale to 5. This helps your brain realize you are not in danger and helps normalize oxygen and carbon dioxide levels.
* **Practice healthy self-talk**. People can feel ashamed about their panic attacks and become very self-critical. Instead of pointing fingers, talk to yourself in positive ways. Remember that there’s no shame in experiencing panic attacks. You can say a statement such as, "Although this is really uncomfortable, it is not dangerous. I can tolerate this."
* **Use ice cubes**. This technique can help you divert your attention away from a panic attack, especially if you’re in the throes of a particularly intense attack. Take out an ice cube and hold it to your hand for as long as you can (you can put the cube in a paper towel). Then, place the ice cube on your other hand. This focuses your mind on the discomfort, de-escalating your symptoms. You can also put the ice cube above your eyebrows which derails intense emotions.
* **Know the “anatomy of a panic attack**.” Remember that the sensations you experience are simply symptoms of a panic attack, which occurs when your body’s fight or flight system is triggered, although there’s no real danger. For instance, even though you feel like you’re about to faint, chances are that you won’t.
* **Stimulate your mind**. Anxiety wants you to pay attention to it. Do the opposite by engaging in activities that stimulate your brain and keep you busy, such as getting outside, exercising, talking to someone or taking a shower.
* **A.W.A.R.E.** steps by David Carbonell. www.anxietycoach.com

Accept, Wait and watch, Actions (to help tolerate the chemicals), Repeat, End