

Important messages from your Safeguarding team

Anxiety and Panic Attacks

Everyone experiences feelings of anxiety and panic at times. It is a natural response to stressful or dangerous situations.

Anxiety is a feeling of unease. It can range from mild to severe, and can include feelings of worry and fear. The most severe form of anxiety is panic.

You may start to avoid certain situations because you fear they'll trigger another attack. This can create a cycle of living "in fear of fear". It can add to your sense of panic and may cause you to have more attacks.

A **panic attack** is when your body experiences a rush of intense mental and physical symptoms, such as, but not exhaustive of, shaking, struggling to breathe, feeling dizzy, experiencing pain in their chest or abdomen, and feeling sick. It can come on very quickly and for no apparent reason which can be frightening and distressing.

If someone you know or care about experiences a panic attack it can be a frightening experience, especially if it seems to happen without warning. It can help if you:

- try to stay calm
- gently let them know that you think they might be having a panic attack and that you are there for them
- encourage them to breathe slowly and deeply – it can help to count out loud, or ask them to watch while you gently raise your arm up and down
- encourage them to stamp their feet on the spot
- encourage them to sit somewhere quietly until they feel better

You should never encourage someone to breathe into a paper bag during a panic attack. This isn't recommended and it might not be safe.

Useful info: Talk to your GP or refer yourself to Let's Talk by calling 0800 073 2200. You may prefer to download an app such as 'Calm' or 'Headspace' or access advice from websites such as www.ghc.nhs.uk or www.mind.org.uk

Email us at safeguarding@gloscol.ac.uk (Monday to Friday, 08:30-17:00)