

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PANIC ATTACKS**

1. Panic attacks are fairly common and are not dangerous.
2. Panic is your body's natural reaction to extreme stress.
3. Panic attacks tend to last a short period of time and will never last forever.
4. You are not going to die, faint, "go crazy", or lose control of your body when you have a panic attack.
5. Panic attacks continue to cause problems if you are afraid of having more panic attacks and change your behavior to try to avoid having additional panic attacks. Examples of behavior change include stopping going out in public because you are afraid you will have a panic attack and not exercising because it makes our heart race and causes fear of having an additional attack.
6. When people have panic attacks they tend to pay more attention to physiological symptoms (such as heart rate) and this tends to increase the likelihood of having additional panic attacks.

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU DON'T WANT TO KEEP HAVING PANIC ATTACKS**

1. Challenge fearful thoughts about panic attacks. If you are not afraid of panic attacks, they are much less likely to continue or cause problems in your life.
2. Avoid avoidance. In other words, don't do anything different because you have had panic attacks. Don't avoid activities, places, or people because you have had a panic attack. Do the things that scare you as long as they aren't harmful or dangerous.
3. Get out of the habit of monitoring physiological symptoms such as heart rate. If you notice yourself doing this, direct your attention externally by silently describing the world around you.