

Panic Disorder with or without Agoraphobia

Besides seeking professional help, other helpful strategies to consider:

- Read stories or internet articles on how children/teenagers with panic disorder overcome the condition.
- Assure your child that the physiological signs accompanying a panic attack (tightness in chest, faster and harder breathing etc.) does not mean that they are going to die. After a while, the body recovers and these symptoms go away. Panicking during a panic attack prolongs the symptoms.
- Teach your child specific relaxation or cognitive strategies that can help him/her manage his/her anxiety better during panic attacks. (For specific relaxation and cognitive strategies to manage anxiety, please refer to 'F' and 'U' in the section on 'Tips to help your child cope with his/her anxiety')
- Remind your child to use relaxation techniques learnt to manage physical symptoms during a panic attack.
- If your child has panic disorder with accompanying agoraphobia, have your child make a list of situations he/she avoids. Rank these places in terms of how fearful your child is of the situation. Starting from the least fearful situation, accompany your child to the situation and have your child practice relaxation strategies so that he/she learns that he/she can cope with any panic attacks (should they occur) in that situation without having to physically escape from the situation. When your child is confident in that situation, move on to another more fearful situation until he overcomes his agoraphobia.