

Exercise

Professional Version | US English

Am I Experiencing Panic Attacks?



Description

Panic attacks are discrete episodes of intense fear or apprehension. They are accompanied by the rapid and concurrent onset of characteristic symptoms such as sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, fear of losing control or going mad, and fear of imminent death.

Panic attacks are experienced by nearly 1 out of every 4 people at some point in their life (Kessler, Chiu, Jin, et al, 2006) but like many anxiety disorders, they are under-diagnosed and often go unrecognized (Kasper, 2006).

The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for a panic attack include:

- An abrupt surge of intense fear or intense discomfort that reaches a peak within minutes, and during which time 4 (or more) of the following symptoms occur:
 - Palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate
 - Sweating
 - Trembling or shaking
 - Sensations of shortness of breath or smothering
 - Feelings of choking
 - Chest pain or discomfort
 - Nausea or abdominal distress
 - Feeling dizzy, unsteady, light-headed, or faint
 - Chills or heat sensations
 - Paresthesias (numbness or tingling sensations)
 - Derealization (feelings of unreality) or depersonalization (being detached from one-self)
 - Fear of losing control or “going crazy”
 - Fear of dying

The ICD-11 diagnostic criteria for panic attacks include:

- A discrete episode of intense fear or apprehension characterized by the rapid and concurrent onset of several characteristic symptoms:
 - Palpitations, pounding heart, or an accelerated heart rate
 - Sweating
 - Trembling
 - Sensations of shortness of breath
 - Feelings of choking
 - Chest pain
 - Nausea or abdominal distress (e.g., churning in stomach)
 - Feelings of dizziness or light-headedness
 - Chills or hot flushes
 - Tingling or lack of sensation in extremities
 - Depersonalization or derealization
 - Fear of losing control or going mad
 - Fear of imminent death

Am I Experiencing Panic Attacks? is an indicative screening tool, designed to help clients self-assess whether their experiences might warrant further investigation. It is not intended to give a formal diagnosis or provide a measure of severity.

Instructions

Suggested Question



Some people who describe symptoms like yours suffer from panic attacks. Would you like to try a short quiz that could give us an idea whether this is a problem that troubles you?

References

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.).

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World Health Organization. (2019). *ICD-11: International classification of diseases (11th revision)*. Retrieved from <https://icd.who.int/>

Am I Experiencing Panic Attacks?

Have you ever been in a situation where you were very afraid, and where you felt:

Palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Sweating	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Trembling or shaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Sensations of shortness of breath or smothering	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Feeling of choking	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Chest pain or discomfort	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Nausea or abdominal distress	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Feeling dizzy, unsteady, lightheaded, or faint	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Chills or heat sensations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Paresthesias (numbness or tingling sensations)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Derealization (feelings of unreality) or depersonalization (being detached from oneself)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Fear of losing control or going crazy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Fear of dying	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

If you ticked 'Yes' to at least four of the symptoms, it is likely that you have had a panic attack. Remember that panic attacks are very common, and are not dangerous. Having a panic attack does not mean that there is anything wrong with you, and you do not necessarily need to seek treatment, unless you find yourself worrying about having more panic attacks to such a degree that it is interfering with your life.

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