MENTAL HEALTH GUIDES UNDERSTANDING PANIC ATTACKS by Alexis Burling

BrightPoint Press

Bright Press

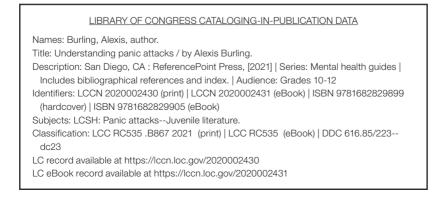
© 2021 BrightPoint Press an imprint of ReferencePoint Press, Inc. Printed in the United States

For more information, contact: BrightPoint Press PO Box 27779 San Diego, CA 92198 www.BrightPointPress.com

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, web distribution, or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

Content Consultant: Michael J. Zvolensky, PhD; Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished University Professor; Director, Anxiety and Health Research Laboratory/Substance Use Treatment Clinic, University of Houston



CONTENTS

AT A GLANCE	4
INTRODUCTION EMMA'S STORY	6
CHAPTER ONE WHAT ARE PANIC ATTACKS?	14
CHAPTER TWO HOW DO PANIC ATTACKS AFFECT PEOPLE?	30
CHAPTER THREE HOW DO PANIC ATTACKS AFFECT SOCIETY?	40
CHAPTER FOUR HOW ARE PANIC ATTACKS TREATED?	56
Glossary	74
Source Notes	75
For Further Research	76
Index	78
Image Credits	79
About the Author	80

AT A GLANCE

- Panic attacks are uncontrollable feelings of intense fear and anxiety.
- There are two types of panic attacks. Uncued panic attacks are unexpected. Cued panic attacks are expected.
- Cued panic attacks are triggered by a frightening situation. They may also be triggered by stress.
- Most panic attacks peak after about ten minutes.
 They generally last less than thirty minutes.
- Panic attack symptoms may include fast breathing and sweating. A person's heart rate increases.
- Some people suffer from frequent panic attacks.
 They live in fear of these attacks. This fear affects their daily lives. They have panic disorder (PD).



Panic attacks are scary and can be painful. But most last only twenty to thirty minutes.

WHAT ARE PANIC ATTACKS?

ertain life events can cause anxiety.
These events are called stressors.
They make people feel worried and tense.
For example, an exam can be a stressor.
People might worry they will do poorly on the test. This feeling is normal.

But some people react more strongly to stressful situations. Barbara O. Rothbaum



Stressors such as tests make most people anxious. However, stressors can cause some people to have panic attacks.

is a professor of psychiatry. Psychiatrists

treat people who have mental health issues.

Rothbaum explains, "We all physically

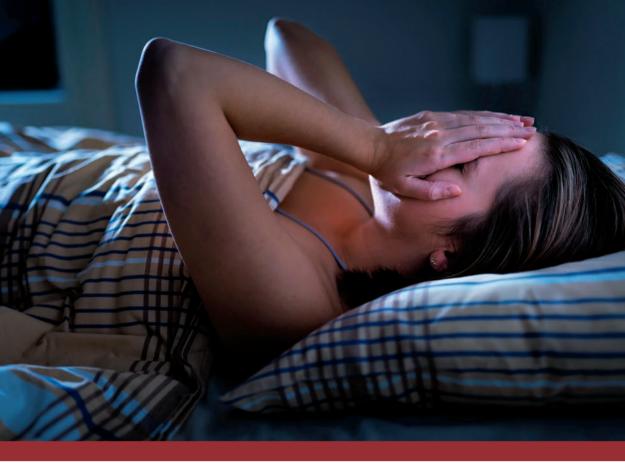
respond to stress. . . . But someone who

suffers from panic disorder may react

to those same . . . pressures with an exaggerated physical reaction."² People who have PD have a strong emotional reaction to stress. They feel intense fear. Their senses are heightened. Rothbaum compares it to the fear someone might experience if he were to come face-to-face with a tiger.

TYPES OF PANIC ATTACKS

Not all people suffer from the same types of panic attacks. Some panic attacks are expected. They are called cued panic attacks. A cue is a sign that something will happen. People may know a certain situation will **trigger** a panic attack.



Panic attacks can be cued or uncued. Prediciting when an uncued panic attack will strike is harder than predicting a cued one.

For example, people who have phobias

may have panic attacks. A phobia is a

strong fear of something. Some people

fear enclosed spaces. They might have a

panic attack in an elevator. Aerophobia is

also common. It is a fear of flying. People who have aerophobia might have a panic attack on an airplane. Just thinking about a phobia could cause a panic attack.

Some people have uncued panic attacks. These attacks are unexpected. For example, someone might be asleep. Or she might be reading a book. A minor change takes place in her body. Her heart rate may increase. She does not notice this change. But it triggers a panic attack. The attack seems to happen without warning. However, there were signs that an attack might happen. The person just did not detect them.

Other people experience situationally predisposed panic attacks. This means they are more likely to have a panic attack in a frightening situation. But it does not always happen. For example, many people have a

NIGHTTIME PANIC ATTACKS

Some people experience panic attacks at night. These panic attacks wake them up from sleep. The attacks have no obvious trigger or cause. The symptoms are the same as panic attacks that happen during the day. People may sweat and shake. They may be short of breath. Nighttime panic attacks usually last only a few minutes. But it can be hard to go back to sleep afterward.

GLOSSARY

diagnose

to identify an illness or condition based on its symptoms

disorder

a physical or mental condition that affects a person's ability to function and causes distress

prescribe

to write a prescription, or an official recommendation that tells someone which medicine to take

stress

a feeling of pressure or tension

survey

a questionnaire that helps researchers understand people's ideas and beliefs

symptoms

the signs of an illness or disorder

trigger

to cause or set in motion

SOURCE NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Quoted in Leigh Weingus, "7 Celebrities Describe What It's Like to Suffer a Panic Attack," *HuffPost*, June 24, 2015. www.huffpost.com.

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT ARE PANIC ATTACKS?

2. Quoted in "Under Pressure," *MedicineNet*, January 31, 2006. www.medicinenet.com.

3. Quoted in Erica Gonzales, "Gisele Bündchen Reveals She Had Severe Panic Attacks During Her Modeling Career," *Harper's Bazaar*, September 27, 2018. www.harpersbazaar.com.

CHAPTER TWO: HOW DO PANIC ATTACKS AFFECT PEOPLE?

4. Paul Li, "What Happens in the Brain When We Experience a Panic Attack?" *Scientific American*, July 1, 2011. www.scientificamerican.com.

5. Kendra Cherry, "How the Fight or Flight Response Works," *Verywell Mind*, August 18, 2019. www.verywellmind.com.

CHAPTER THREE: HOW DO PANIC ATTACKS AFFECT SOCIETY?

6. Luna Greenstein, "9 Ways to Fight Mental Health Stigma," *NAMI*, October 11, 2017. www.nami.org.

7. Katharina Star, "Managing Your Panic Disorder at Work," *Verywell Mind*, April 10, 2020. www.verywellmind.com.

8. Quoted in Lindsay Holmes, "What You Should Know if You Love Someone Who Has Panic Attacks," *HuffPost*, March 16, 2018. www.huffpost.com.

9. Dina Cagliostro, "Panic Attacks & Panic Disorder: Symptoms, Causes, and Treatment," *Psycom*, February 24, 2020. www.psycom.net.

CHAPTER FOUR: HOW ARE PANIC ATTACKS TREATED?

10. Quoted in Caroline Miller, "Panic Attacks and How to Treat Them," *Child Mind Institute*, n.d. www.childmind.org.

11. Mark Markham, "Breaking the Silence and Stigma of Mental Illness," *Mayo Clinic*, October 18, 2019. www.sharing.mayoclinic.org.

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

BOOKS

Holly Duhig, A Book About Anxiety. New York: PowerKids Press, 2020.

- Jennifer Lombardo, *Anxiety and Panic Disorders*. New York: Lucent Press, 2018.
- Celina McManus, *Understanding Anxiety*. San Diego, CA: ReferencePoint Press, 2021.

Hilary W. Poole, Anxiety Disorders. New York: AV2 by Weigl, 2019.

INTERNET SOURCES

- "Panic Attacks and Panic Disorder," *Mayo Clinic*, May 4, 2018. www.mayoclinic.org.
- "Panic Disorder: When Fear Overwhelms," *National Institute of Mental Health*, 2016. www.nimh.nih.gov.
- Katharina Star, "An Overview of Panic Attack Types and Symptoms," *Verywell Mind*, October 20, 2019. www.verywellmind.com.

INDEX

anxiety, 4, 6, 11, 14, 23–24, 49–50, 63, 66, 69–71 asthma, 24, 58

Bündchen, Gisele, 27, 28–29 Bubrick, Jerry, 63

Cagliostro, Dina, 55 Cherry, Kendra, 35 cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), 61–63, 65 coping skills, 39, 62, 64 costs, 63 counselors, 50, 60 cued panic attacks, 4, 16–18

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), 26

eating disorders (EDs), 22–23 employee assistance programs, 50 ethnicity, 41–43

fight-flight-freeze response, 30-32

gender, 43–44 Greenstein, Luna, 47 group therapy, 71, 73

heart attacks, 12, 34, 35

Li, Paul, 33-34

Markham, Mark, 73 medication, 5, 39, 65–69

Petersen, Andrea, 67–68 phobias, 17–18, 24, 64 post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), 22 psychiatrists, 15, 66 psychologists, 55, 61, 63 psychotherapy, 5, 59, 60–65

Reid, Meghan, 52–53 Rothbaum, Barbara O., 14–16

Star, Katharina, 50–51 stigma, 44–47 Stone, Emma, 4–11 stress, 4, 14–16, 22–23, 24, 37–39, 50–51, 61, 70–71 substance use disorders (SUDs), 25, 67, 69 symptoms, 4–5, 12, 18, 19, 21, 25–26, 34–37, 40–43, 49, 52, 54, 56, 58, 59, 61, 66, 73

therapists, 52, 60–62, 63 triggers, 4, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 28, 38, 50–51, 62,

uncued panic attacks, 4, 18