



## COPING WITH ANXIETY AND PANIC

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Anxiety and panic can be very frightening emotions, especially if you have not felt them intensely before. It is common for bereaved people to experience new emotions and to feel unsettled. If you feel anxious or panicky, these tips may help you feel better:

- Remember that feelings of panic are just exaggerations of normal bodily stress reactions.
- Sensations are neither harmful nor dangerous—just unpleasant. Nothing worse will happen.
- Anxiety is temporary. Instead of fighting the feelings, relax into them. Just let it be and they will lose their strength.
- Focus on facing the fear rather than trying to avoid or escape from it.
- Stay in the present. Be aware of what is happening to you rather than concerning yourself with how much worse it might get.
- It may take time for the fear to pass. Try your best to be patient with yourself.
- Notice that when you stop adding to panic with frightening thoughts, the fear begins to fade.
- Look around you. Plan what you will do next as the panic subsides.
- When you are ready to go on, do so in an easy, relaxed manner. There is no hurry.
- Think about the progress you've made so far, despite all the obstacles.

*Used with permission from Dr. Richard Moser, Psychologist, MeritCare Neuroscience Clinic, Fargo, ND.*