

Understanding Panic Attacks and Anxiety



society of care



What is the difference between panic attacks and anxiety?

In many Native traditions, wellness often means balance, between mind, body, spirit, and our connection to others. When that balance is disrupted, anxiety can show up. **Anxiety is a feeling of fear or worry that can be strong, even when there's no immediate danger.** Sometimes, it builds up and causes a panic attack—a sudden wave of intense fear that comes on quickly.

Effects of Panic Attacks and Anxiety on Our Bodies

Panic attacks and anxiety can affect more than just the moment they happen, they can impact a person's overall wellness and way of life.

When left unaddressed, ongoing anxiety can lead to sleep problems, fatigue, muscle pain, or chronic health issues. It may also affect relationships, spiritual practices, or participation in community events. Some people may avoid certain places or situations out of fear of having another panic attack, which can lead to isolation. *Anxiety is not a weakness—it's a signal.* That's why it's important to recognize the signs early, respond with care, and seek support that honors mind and spirit. **If you are unsure about your symptoms talk to your doctor or go to the emergency room.**

SUPPORT

It's Okay to Ask For Help!

All Nations Crisis Textline

For Relatives living in Nebraska

Text "Support" to 33464 to chat with an All Nations team member.

We are here seven days a week from 8am-Midnight

What can Anxiety and Panic Attacks feel like?

Some symptoms of panic attacks and anxiety can be:

- Fast heartbeat or chest pain
- Trouble breathing or feeling like you're choking
- Dizziness or feeling lightheaded
- Sweating, shaking, or chills
- Feeling out of control, numb, or disconnected



What to do during a panic attack:



BREATHE DEEPLY:

Place your feet on the ground. Inhale slowly through your nose, exhale through your mouth. Repeat until you feel calm.



CONNECT TO THE PRESENT:

Use your senses—name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.



REMINDE YOURSELF:

"This feeling will pass. I am safe. My body is reacting, but I am in control."



REACH OUT:

Talk with a trusted elder, friend, or counselor. You are not alone.