

Coping with Panic Attacks: Be **AWARE**

A

ACCEPT Accept the anxiety and feelings of fear

- ▶ Try not to fear them coming - accept it's there, it's not nice, but it's just a feeling, it doesn't mean anything except that you are feeling anxious, and it will pass
- ▶ If this is hard, try telling yourself 'Dave /your name, it's ok, you're having a panic attack'
- ▶ Picture your worrying thoughts as being like a leaf drifting past on a river - watch them, be aware of them, but know that they are just thoughts, and watch them float by, you will think other thoughts

W

WATCH Watch the anxiety, rate it from 1-10 and notice how it is affecting your body and your breathing

- ▶ What symptoms are you feeling? Remember these are caused by your anxiety, and nothing to worry about
- ▶ Observe your breathing and try to practice a breathing exercise

A

ACT Act normal - try and focus on doing something. Acting like everything's normal tells your brain that it is

- ▶ Although it's hard, start by just trying to do a small manageable task, such as put the kettle on, do some washing up, go for a walk or try something you enjoy
- ▶ Doing, rather than thinking, uses a different part of your brain to the worry part, and helps get the calm rational side of your brain working instead of 'fight or flight'

R

REPEAT Keep repeating the above steps

- ▶ Every time feelings of panic bubble up, remind yourself it's just a panic attack, rate the fear from 1-10, and keep acting normal

E

EXPECT Expect the best. Taking these steps means the panic will have a little less control over you each time, and that you are taking control

- ▶ Try and fight any negative thoughts of 'this will never work' or it's no good, these are just negative thoughts and can be a natural response to anxiety, you do not have to listen to them
- ▶ You are embracing your inner fear and putting the functioning side of your brain - rather than the fear / fight or flight, back in control
- ▶ It will feel hard to begin with, but each time you put the AWARE technique into practice it will be easier