7 steps to help a child who is having a panic attack



1 Remain in control. Remember, a child in the midst of a panic attack has lost their sense of control, which in itself is frightening and overwhelming.

2 Stay calm and mindful while using a firm but gentle tone of voice to communicate that you are present and there for them, and that you understand how anxious they feel.

3 Use age-appropriate words to describe anxiousness, such as "wobbly" or "scared". By doing this you will communicate a sense of safety, confidence and containment for the child who is in the middle of an emotional storm.



4 Ensure the child feels increasingly safe. Use soothing words. Use their name. Say things like, “I know you don’t feel okay but you will be okay,” “I will help you get through this and it will end soon,” and “Take some deep breaths.”

5 Remind them that panic attacks always end and that they will get through them. This can offer hope. However, try not to give excessive reassurance. You want your child to find their own coping strategies.

6 Pay attention to the physical symptoms of panic attacks. Convey to the child that the fast heartbeat, dizziness or shaking will pass in a few minutes. Tell them these are signs of their fear, not of illness.

7 Give them time to calm down. Don't rush the child. They will need time to help them regain their sense of self and composure.





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