Panic: My Maintaining Pattern

Who this is for: Adults exploring an assessed panic pattern with a CBT therapist.

What this helps with: Notice links between sensations and meanings; identify one pattern to explore.

Why this works: When a sensation means immediate danger to us, fear and close body-monitoring can intensify it. Responses meant to protect us may also limit what we learn. Check whether this account fits you.

How to use: 1. Choose one recent episode together. 2. Add brief notes to the four boxes. 3. Agree one question to explore; review the map when new information emerges.

Guided example (fictional)

1. Bus journey; noticed a familiar fast heartbeat.

2. 'I will faint.' Felt afraid; legs felt unsteady.

3. Watched my pulse and moved close to the exit.

4. Felt more ready to escape; still feared buses. Explore what affected the sensations.

Your turn - one example, brief notes

1. Situation and first cue

Where were you? What did you first notice?

2. Meaning, feelings and sensations

What did you fear would happen? What changed in your body?

3. Attention and responses

What did you monitor, do or avoid? Include mental responses.

4. Effects and next question

What changed immediately and later? Which link needs exploring?

Reflection: Which link fits your experience? What needs correcting or adding? What would help you understand the pattern?

Optional next step: Bring one different episode next time and compare the patterns.

Support note: New, severe or unexplained physical symptoms need appropriate medical assessment. This map cannot determine their cause. Use with your therapist.

Model: Clark's cognitive model of panic. Original wording and layout; not a validated treatment programme.

Clark (1986), A cognitive approach to panic. Behaviour Research and Therapy, 24, 461-470. DOI: 10.1016/0005-7967(86)90011-2

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