

Health

School_Nurse Daily Newsletter

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Devotional Highlight

“A Labour of Love” –
Colossians 3:23

Extract
from
Our Daily
Bread

Many times when we offer our services, to either work, church, or others, we don't get the appreciation or recognition that we deserve, and this may lead us to feel like they don't deserve us. In situations like these, we are reminded by the word to 'work at it with all our heart, as working for the Lord' (Colossians 3:23). When we focus on serving God, we are able to accomplish even the most difficult task with gladness in His power.

We can then become less concerned with receiving earthly recognition and more keen on receiving the reward only God can provide.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for calling me to your work, and thank you for giving me a sense of fulfilment even on my bad days.

Diagnosis of the Week

“Panic Attacks”



Hey there everyone! I hope your December has started off superb! We are kicking off the month of December with the diagnosis of 'Panic Attacks'. I'm sure that many of us have either seen or experienced this, and trust me, it is not a beautiful experience. They are similar to anxiety attacks, however, the severity and cause of the attack is what differentiates them. A panic attack is more intense and is provoked by an external trigger, while an anxiety attack happens in response to a perceived threat.

Have you ever heard of the human body's 'fight-or-flight' response? Well, this is a mechanism built in us to respond to perceived danger, and it can also feel like 'panic'. Some may experience this even when there is no threat - experiencing panic attacks in the absence of any valid danger or risk. When this happens too often, it may cause significant distress. Unfortunately, the distress doesn't end when the attack is over but it persists while anticipating the next episode of the panic. This overall increase in anxiety can take a toll on our mental health, daily functioning, and overall well being.

Persons may experience two types of panic attacks:

1. Unexpected (or cued) - occur without cause, normally 'out of the blue'
2. Expected (or cued) - situationally caused, usually triggered when we anticipate the exposure to the panic trigger



There are quite a few things in our life that may cause panic attacks, especially in adolescents:

1. Brain Chemistry - chemical imbalance in the brain that deals with our mood and emotional regulation, may be the cause. This may also be due to an overactive fight-or-flight response in the brain (amygdala)
2. High stress levels
3. Major losses
4. Life transitions
5. Traumatic events
6. Health problems - such as respiratory issues

What does a [panic attack look like?](#)

This ranges anywhere from mild to severe, tends to arise quickly, and can worsen overtime. It may only last for a brief period of time or longer.

Physical Symptoms

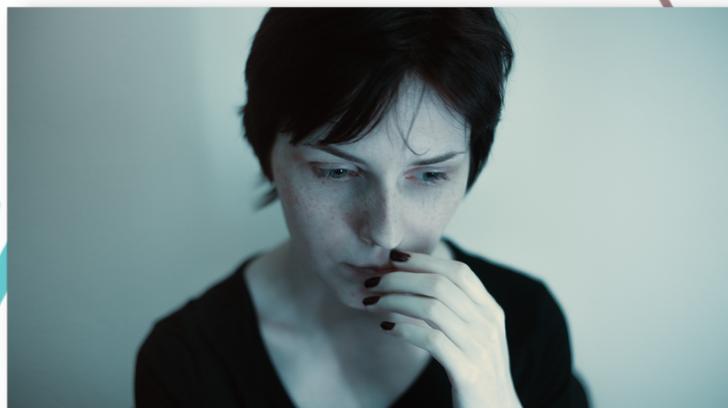
- Increased heart rate
- Feeling lightheaded or dizzy
- Sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Choking sensation
- Headaches
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Muscle tension and tightness
- Chills and/or hot flashes
- Trembling/shaking
- Numbness or tingling sensations
- Fatigue

Behavioral Symptoms

- Changes in diet or sleep pattern
- Isolation from friends and/or family'
- Refusal to leave the home
- Lack of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Inability to relax

Mental Symptoms

- Excessive worry
- Feelings of hopeless and/or depression
- Fear of losing control
- Fear of dying
- Suicidal thoughts



So, how can we help someone who is experiencing a panic attack?

Remind them they are not in any danger - it is easy for us to misperceive the severity of our panic attacks. In doing so, we worsen the symptoms because of imagining the worst case scenarios (I'm going to die, I'm having a heart attack, I'm going crazy). Let them know they are experiencing a false alarm and that they should just breathe.

Model being calm - demonstrate with both your words and your behaviour that there is no emergency. Those experiencing the distress usually look to those around them for help and how urgent their condition is. So, compose yourself, swallow the alarm, and assist with enough confidence to get you both through the next possible 20-30 minutes.

Deep breaths - this works wonders for those I've helped through their panic attacks. When experiencing a panic attack, we may have trouble breathing, our chest tightening and the whole works. So, encourage the individual experiencing the episode to do the deep breathing exercise WITH YOU. Take several deep breaths, focusing on the abdomen, and count to 3 seconds for every breath in and every breath out. You doing the exercise with them helps them to focus on something other than the actual attack.

Reduce avoidance - persons usually avoid returning to places where a panic attack has occurred, fearing symptoms they experienced. For example, they might resist returning to school if they were dizzy in class. Though understandable, it is important that we establish gradual exposure to the area to help decrease the likelihood of it happening again.



Also, a tip:

Panic attacks worsens when you fear the incoming episode, so don't. Allow the episode to come, but don't allow it to overtake you. Take multiple deep breaths and focus on your breathing and not the panic attack. Also take your mind off the trigger - the trigger is all it is, a trigger, not actual danger, remind yourself of that.

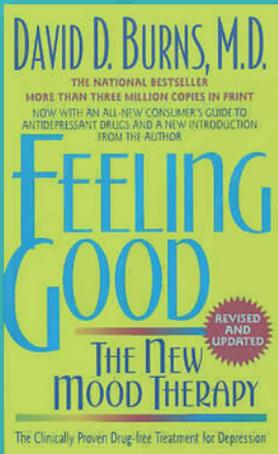
With that, let's do some deep breathing exercises this week, shall we?!
Chaoi!





No herbs, just a quick tip! For every panic or anxiety attack (or oncoming panic attack), have some mint on standby to inhale. It helps to ease stress and refresh the body and mind. It also helps to increase blood flow in our body and provides a cooling sensation in the body that helps to calm us down and decrease pain sensation.

Also, the sedative action of the root bark on the Jamaican Dogwood Timber tree is used to quell fear and anxiety; thus we can say it helps to alleviate panic among other things (Riley et al, 2016).



Read a book with me!

'feeling good - the new mood therapy'

The clinically proven drug-free treatment for depression by David D. Burns, M.D

Chapter 5

"Do-Nothingism: How to Beat It" - Part C

For the past two weeks we have been on this chapter, and as you can see, it is pretty lengthy. So, let's review what we have gone through - we learned that our emotions and actions are the results of our thoughts and attitudes. We also learned of how that cycle happens in your brain, and it was explained to be the 'lethargy cycle', we also covered how to convert the 'lethargy cycle' into the 'productivity cycle'. We then went on to describe the different types of 'do- nothingism' and how to overcome them. Of the ways to overcome do-nothingism, we covered the method of 'The Daily Activity Schedule', we will continue with other methods of combating do-nothingism.

1. The Anti-Procrastination Sheet

Using the anti-procrastination sheet, you can train yourself to test negative predictions (like it will be too difficult or unrewarding). Everyday write down the corresponding column tasks that you have been putting off. If the task takes a lot of time, break it down into smaller parts so you can complete it in 15 minutes or less.

In the next column, write down how difficult you think each task will be, using a 0-100% scale. If it's easy, estimate about 10-20%, if it is harder, estimate around 80-90%. In the next column, write your predictions for how satisfying and rewarding it will be to complete the task, in percentage. After completing the tasks, write how difficult it was to complete the tasks, and how much pleasure you gained from it in the next two columns.

The Antiprocrastination Sheet					
(Write down the predicted difficulty and satisfaction <i>before</i> you attempt the task. Write down the actual difficulty and satisfaction <i>after</i> you have completed each step.)					
Date	Activity (Break each task down into small steps)	Predicted Difficulty (0-100%)	Predicted Satisfaction (0-100%)	Actual Difficulty (0-100%)	Actual Satisfaction (0-100%)
6/10/99	1. Outline letter.	90	10	10	60
	2. Write rough draft.	90	10	10	75
	3. Type up final draft.	75	10	5	80
	4. Address the envelope and mail the letter.	50	5	0	95

Daily Record of Dysfunctional Thoughts

This was introduced in Chapter 4. So, write down the thoughts that run through your mind when you think about a task. Writing shows you the problem; after which you will write down appropriate rational responses that show these thoughts are unrealistic. This helps you to mobilise enough energy to take that first difficult step. Once completed, you will build a momentum that will help you on your way.

Be sure to actually write down the upsetting thoughts, do not try to figure it out in your head. You will probably get nowhere because the thoughts that plague you are slippery and complex. When you talk back to them, they'll come at you even harder from all angles with such speed that you won't even know what hit you. Writing helps you to expose them to the light of reason.

Date	Situation	Emotions	Automatic Thoughts	Rational Responses	Outcome
7/15/99	I stayed in bed all day Sunday—slept off and on—no desire or energy to get up or do anything productive.	Depressed Exhausted Guilty Self-hatred Lonely	I have no desire to do anything. I don't have the energy to get out of bed. I'm a failure as a person.	That's because I'm doing nothing. Remember motivation follows action! I can get out of bed; I'm not crippled. I do succeed at things when I want to. Doing nothing makes me depressed and bored, but it doesn't mean I'm "a failure as a person" because there is no such thing!	Felt some relief and decided to get up and take a shower at least.

The Pleasure-Predicting Sheet

Use this to test your belief that 'there is no point in doing anything productive'. Schedule activities that contain a potential for personal growth or satisfaction, over a few weeks. Complete some by yourself and some with others. Record who you want to do each activity with and how satisfying it may be, with percentage. Then go and do them, record the actual satisfaction percentage, and how enjoyable each activity really was. You may be surprised that activities by yourself are more satisfying than you thought.

This sheet tests a number of assumptions that may lead to procrastination, including:

1. I can't enjoy anything when i'm alone
2. There's no point in doing anything because i failed at something important to me
3. Since i'm not rich, successful, or famous, i can't really enjoy things to the hilt
4. I can't enjoy things unless i'm the centre of attention
5. Things won't be particularly satisfying unless I can do them perfectly and successfully.

These will all be self-fulfilling prophecies IF you don't put them to the test. So, check them out using the Pleasure-fulfilling sheet, you may be amazed to learn that life can offer you enormous fulfilment.

Some may ask, 'what if my predictions turn out true?'. This may happen, if so, note the negative thoughts that follow and write them down, answering them with the Daily Record of Dysfunctional Thoughts.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity for Satisfaction. (Sense of Achievement or Pleasure)</i>	<i>Who Did You Do This With? (If Alone, Specify Self)</i>	<i>Predicted Satisfaction (0-100%). (Write This Before the Activity)</i>	<i>Actual Satisfaction (0-100%). (Record This After the Activity)</i>
8/2/99	Reading (1 hour)	self	50%	60%
8/3/99	Dinner + bar w/Ben	Ben	80%	90%
8/4/99	Susan's party	self	80%	85%
8/5/99	N.Y.C. and Aunt Helen	parents and grandma	40%	30%
8/5/99	Nancy's house	Nancy and Joelle	75%	65%
8/6/99	Dinner at Nancy's	12 people	60%	80%
8/6/99	Luci's party	Luci + 5 people	70%	70%
8/7/99	Jogging	self	60%	90%
8/8/99	Theater	Luci	80%	70%
8/9/99	Harry's	Harry, Jack, Ben and Jim	60%	85%
8/10/99	Jogging	self	70%	80%
8/10/99	Phillies game	Dad	50%	70%
8/11/99	Dinner	Susan and Ben	70%	70%
8/12/99	Art museum	self	60%	70%
8/12/99	Peabody's	Fred	80%	85%
8/13/99	Jogging	self	70%	80%

How to Get off Your "But" - the But Rebuttal

This may represent your greatest obstacle to completing tasks. For example, 'I could go out and jog today, BUT..'

1. I'm already too tired to;
2. I'm just too lazy;
3. I'm not particularly in the mood

You'll have to learn how to get off your but if you want to motivate yourself. One way is using the 'But-Rebuttal Method'. Record every 'But' in the But column, and every contradiction in the 'But Rebuttal' column.

<i>But Column</i>	<i>But Rebuttal</i>
I really <i>should</i> mow the lawn, but I'm just not in the mood.	I'll feel more like it once I get started. When I'm done I'll feel terrific.
But now it's so long it would take forever.	It won't take that much extra time with the power mower. I can always do a part of it now.
But I'm too tired.	So just do some of it and rest.
I'd rather rest now or watch TV.	I can, but I won't feel very good about it knowing this chore is hanging over my head.
But I'm just too lazy to do it today.	That can't be true—I've done it on numerous occasions in the past.

Learn to Endorse Yourself

If you frequently tell yourself that what you do doesn't count, then you'll naturally feel that you never do anything worthwhile. To reverse this destructive tendency, a good first step is to pinpoint the self-downing thoughts that cause this in the first place. Talk back to the thoughts, and replace them with more objectively self-endorsing ones. It may not feel pleasant and emotionally lifting at first in the beginning, but after a few days you will begin to experience some mood lift, and more pride in what you do.

May also help if you make a written or mental list of the things you do each day, and give yourself a mental credit for each item, no matter how small. It helps you focus on what you have done, rather than what you haven't done.

<i>Self-Downing Statement</i>	<i>Self-Endorsing Statement</i>
Anybody could wash these dishes.	If it's a routine, boring job, I deserve extra credit for doing it.
There was no point in washing these dishes. They'll just get dirty again.	That's just the point. They'll be clean when we need them.
I could have done a better job straightening up.	Nothing in the universe is perfect, but I did make the room look a hell of a lot better.
It was just luck the way my speech turned out.	It wasn't a matter of luck. I prepared well and delivered my talk effectively. I did a darn good job.
I waxed the car, but it still doesn't look as good as my neighbor's new car.	The car looks a heck of a lot better than it did. I'll enjoy driving it around.

TIC-TOC Technique

Take note of tasks that you are procrastinating about. These TICs, or Task-Interfering Cognitions, will lose much power over you if you simply write them down and substitute more adaptive TOCs, or Task-Oriented Cognitions, using the double-column technique. When you record your TIC-TOCs, be sure to pinpoint the distortion in the TIC that defeats you. It may be all-or-nothing thinking or disqualifying the positive, whichever it is, you'll be able to correct it.

<i>TICs</i> (Task-interfering Cognitions)	<i>TOCs</i> (Task-oriented Cognitions)
<p><i>Housewife:</i> I'll never be able to get the garage cleaned out. The junk's been piling up for years.</p>	<p>Overgeneralization; all-or-nothing thinking. Just do a little bit and get started. There's no reason I have to do it all today.</p>
<p><i>Bank Clerk:</i> My work isn't very important or exciting.</p>	<p>Disqualifying the positive. It may seem routine to me, but it's quite important to the people who use the bank. When I'm not depressed, it can be very enjoyable. Many people do routine work but this doesn't make them unimportant human beings. Maybe I could do something more exciting in my free time.</p>
<p><i>Student:</i> Writing this term paper is pointless. The subject is boring.</p>	<p>All-or-nothing thinking. Just do a routine job. It doesn't have to be a masterpiece. I might learn something, and it will make me feel better to get it done.</p>

Little Steps for Little Feet

A simple and obvious self-activation method involves learning to break any proposed task down into its tiny component parts. This will combat your tendency to overwhelm yourself by dwelling on all the things you have to do.

An extremely useful way to divide a task into manageable units is through time limitation. Decide how much time you will devote to a particular task, and then stop at the end of the allotted time and go on to something more enjoyable, whether or not you're finished. As simple as it sounds, it can work wonders.

Motivation Without Coercion

Inappropriate systems for self-motivation may also cause procrastination. Undermining yourself with 'oughts', 'shoulds', and 'musts' will drain any desire to get moving. You are defeating yourself by the way you 'kill' yourself to get moving - a mental trap Dr. Albert Ellis describes as 'musterbation'. Translate your shoulds into wants, you will be treating yourself with a sense of respect, producing a feeling of freedom of choice and personal dignity.

<i>Advantages of Lying in Bed</i>	<i>Disadvantages of Lying in Bed</i>
1. It's easy.	1. While it seems easy, it gets awfully boring and painful after a while. It's actually not so easy to do nothing and to lie here moping and criticizing myself hour after hour.
2. I won't have to do anything or face my problems.	2. I won't be obliged to do anything if I get out of bed either, but it might feel better. If I avoid my problems they won't go away, they'll just get worse, and I won't have the satisfaction of trying to solve them. The short-term discomfort of facing up to things is probably less depressing than the endless anguish of staying in bed.
3. I can sleep and escape.	3. I can't sleep forever, and I really don't need any more sleep since I have been sleeping nearly sixteen hours a day. I will probably feel less fatigued if I get up and get my arms and legs moving rather than lie around in bed like a cripple waiting for my arms and legs to rot!

Ask the Nurse

Question: I think my friend has trouble with her anxieties, how can I help her?

Answer: First thing, take that person to a quiet and secluded area, then you use deep breathing to help calm her down. Following her calm composure, find out what caused it, then you can move from there.



Dear Parents:

"Hey there superheroes! This week we are reviewing panic attacks. Many times our children experience these at home and we do not know how to approach the situation. In this case, the most important thing we can do for them is to be there for them in the most composed way possible. Do all you can to help calm them down, and remind them they are safe.

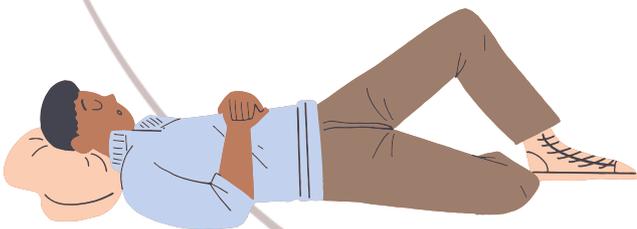
After the initial episode, it is always best for us to find out what caused the issue. At times they may be hesitant to tell us why, in this case, we will need to respect their boundaries and remind them we are there for them when they are ready to talk.

Following that, let's do some research on how to appropriately help them. This can be done through going on the internet, calling their teacher, school guidance counsellor or the school nurse.

Let's use compassion and initiative to show our children how much we love and appreciate them."

Den Cu Yah!

With panic attacks, there is not always a trigger - sometimes they just happen out of the blue. Panic attacks can also happen while you're sleeping, they are called 'nocturnal panic attacks'.



Disclaimer: The content on this newsletter should not be used in place of medical/professional consultation or advice, but to be used for educational purposes only.

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