

# *Far West Family Services, LLC*

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Your Employee Assistance Program

## **Ten Cognitive Reminders for Coping with Panic Attacks**

1. Remember that although your feelings and symptoms can be very frightening, they are not dangerous or harmful. The key to calming is controlled breathing.
2. Understand that what you are experiencing is an exaggeration of your normal bodily reactions to stress. Slow your breathing. 4 in .... 6 out.
3. Do not fight your feelings or try to wish them away. The more you are willing to face them, the less intense they will become.
4. Do not add to your panic by thinking about what "might" happen. If you find yourself saying "what if," tell yourself "so what!"
5. STAY IN THE PRESENT. Notice what is really happening to you as opposed to what you think might happen. Practice long exhalation.
6. Label your fear level from 0 to 10, and watch it go up or down. Notice that it does not stay at a very high level for very long.
7. When you find yourself thinking about fear, CHANGE YOUR PRIMARY THOUGHT. Focus on and carry out a simple and manageable task. Drink a glass of water.
8. Notice that when you stop adding frightening thoughts to your fear, it begins to fade.
9. When the fear comes, expect it, and accept it. Wait and give it time to pass without running away from it.
10. If there is residual energy, shake it off. Take a walk, exercise, dance, punch a pillow. Do something physical to release it from your body.

Adapted from the work of J. Wayne Eastlack, PhD.  
by Julia Ingram, M.A.