

# From the Chair of the Hypnotherapist – Panic Attacks

*The Edinburgh Reporter's Mike Smith is a qualified hypnotherapist. In the latest of his series of articles on how hypnotherapy can help address unwanted habits or disorders, Mike looks at how this can help panic attacks.*

Have you ever felt frightened? So frightened that you feared for your life? Have you had an overwhelming sense of dread? Your heart pumping seemingly uncontrollably and you struggle to breathe? You feel sick and sweat profusely? Do you feel detached from reality? These are some of the symptoms of a panic attack – particularly when these symptoms occur for seemingly no reason. It can be a very frightening experience – but for those who have a panic disorder this can be a frequent occurrence.

These feelings can be overwhelming – sometimes those who experience panic attacks can lose control of their breathing, thus making the situation worse. The length of a panic attack depends on the person experiencing one – after all, we are all different. An attack can be between five and ten minutes or the more prolonged ones can last up to two hours. Quite often, though, panic attacks can end as quickly as they begin.

## **What causes a panic attack?**

There is no definitive answer to this. In some cases there may be something which triggers one off, for example a period of stress, a close family bereavement or a situation where one is in an anxious situation such as a job interview or making a trip to the hospital either for themselves or a loved one.

However, it is quite often the case that the reason for the

panic attack is unknown – an attack comes from nowhere. In scenarios such as these, hypnotherapy can help. With the help of a fully trained and qualified hypnotherapist, hypnotherapy can help bring to the surface any deep-rooted concerns and worries that may be subconsciously causing the panic attacks.

## **Panic disorder**

If you have experienced frequent panic attacks, for example at least once a month, it is likely you are experiencing panic disorder. It is estimated that one in ten people experience panic attacks while one in fifty experience panic disorder. Quite often with panic disorder there has been an initial sensitising event which triggered the first attack but subsequent attacks may be random. The Catch-22 element here is that anxiety about having a panic attack may contribute to this situation.

Panic attacks can be triggered by feelings of anxiety. Hypnotherapy can teach you to manage this anxiety through relaxation techniques. By relieving anxiety, this can help reduce the number of attacks. So what is anxiety? Well, this can be feeling uncomfortable or uneasy and continually worried about something. We all feel anxious now and again but when anxiety becomes a regular feature of your life and begins to dominate then it becomes a problem. There is a danger of generalising anxiety; however, there are different types such as:

**Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)** – this is where someone feels anxious not just about one thing but a wide range of issues.

**Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** – this is usually triggered by a traumatic event and can result in physical and psychological symptoms.

**Phobias** – this is where someone is irrationally afraid of an object, animal, place or a situation. Fear of spiders and other ‘creepy-crawlies’ is quite common but there are other

fears such as a fear of needles, flying and confined spaces.

If you are an anxious person in general, this can increase your chances of developing panic attacks. Hypnotherapy can help as it can be used to help both panic attacks and anxiety.

So, what to do?

### **Hypnotherapy for panic attacks**

Hypnotherapy has proven to be effective for people who experience anxiety, fear and stress, and lends itself well to the treatment of panic attacks. This kind of therapy can help you cope with specific symptoms using the power of suggestion while helping you overcome limiting beliefs.

As a fully qualified hypnotherapist, I would begin the process by meeting you for an initial consultation. This is FREE and is where I can explain to you in more detail about what hypnotherapy can do for you. I also ask details about you – what helps you relax, your favourite place to go on holiday, favourite song, hobbies, colour etc – this gives me a chance to ‘paint a picture’ of your personality and what is important to you. The meeting also gives you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. This meeting usually lasts about an hour but I adopt a ‘how long is a piece of string’ approach – the meeting can take as long as you want it to. I certainly wouldn’t show you the door as soon as the clock hits 60 minutes! After this meeting it will be down to you whether you wish to proceed – there is no charge for this meeting.

When the hypnotherapy sessions begin, I will use the information provided at the consultation meeting to help to get you in a wholly relaxed state. This will mean you will be receptive to the power of suggestion. I begin with breathing exercises to enhance the feeling of relaxation.

You will not be ‘put to sleep’; you will be fully conscious and in control at all times. You will be in a trance but this is similar to when you daydream – how many times has someone

said to you 'hey, you're away in a dream!'

I will then offer powerful and long-lasting suggestions to your subconscious mind with a view to re-training how your subconscious mind acts during times of anxiety. These suggestions may include you picturing yourself somewhere calm and safe and free from the everyday stresses of life.

How many sessions it will take to help you address the panic attacks depends on you. I should make it clear that I am not a 'fixer' but by working together we can perhaps address the reasons behind the panic attacks and help tackle the unwanted disorder that affects your life. Depending on the information you give at the initial consultation meeting, there may also be some lifestyle changes to be considered.

If you have experienced panic attacks and would like a holistic approach to help you address this issue, please contact me today to arrange a FREE consultation. You can phone or text me on 0752 1353 787 or email me at [mike.smith@mgs-hypnotherapy-services.co.uk](mailto:mike.smith@mgs-hypnotherapy-services.co.uk)

**Readers of The Edinburgh Reporter can get 20% off their first session by quoting ER01.**

[Mind Generating Success](#) is a hypnotherapy practice based in Edinburgh city centre at 14-18 Hill Street (just off North Castle Street and a two-minute walk from Princes Street)

Take that important step towards improving your life!

**Mike Smith**

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