

# PANIC

## What is a panic attack?

Panic attacks are very common – one in ten people will experience panic symptoms at

These thoughts and beliefs compound the fear that we experience leading to an escalation of the symptoms panic.

### **Ways in which people typically cope:**

It is entirely understandable that when we feel under threat, we take measures to protect ourselves with the aim of keeping safe. Ways that people typically cope include:

Leaving the situation which has triggered the alarming sensations as quickly as possible e.g. abandoning a queue in the supermarket.

Avoiding returning to that situation again.

Only doing things if accompanied by someone else like a friend or family member since this helps us to feel safe

Planning such events carefully – only going when it is likely to be quiet, taking a bottle of water with you, making sure someone is available at the end of the 'phone and having your mobile with you.

Walking slowly if you believe your heart is vulnerable, try to park close by.

Walk quickly to try to get the experience over with as quickly as possible which paradoxically can lead to greater breathlessness.

Although these coping strategies are all very understandable in the circumstance, there is a very real danger that they can compound the sense of anxiety and further fuel the fear. It becomes **imperative** to do things in a certain way and through this we never get a chance to see that anxious feelings subside, that nothing terrible can happen and that we can in fact cope.

### **More helpful coping!**

The key to overcoming panic is to re-set your alarm system so that it does not go off when there is no real danger.

Aim to reassure your thinking. Tell yourself calmly that nothing terrible can happen; remind yourself gently that the sensations will pass.