



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Panic Disorder Groups

Panic disorder means recurrent, unexpected panic attacks, sudden surges of intense fear with racing heart, shortness of breath, and a sense of impending doom, followed by ongoing worry about the next one and avoidance of where it might happen. Group CBT helps you understand what panic actually is, challenge the catastrophic interpretations that fuel it, and face avoided situations and sensations instead of escaping them. For most who finish, attacks become less frequent, less frightening, and no longer in charge.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A strong fit if you'll engage with exposure, including deliberately inducing uncomfortable sensations.
- If avoidance is too severe to reach a group, or a medical condition makes the exercises unsafe, get clearance or individual support first.
- Trauma-driven distress or active suicidal thoughts may need stabilizing first. In crisis? Call or text 988.

What it's for

Panic disorder, with or without agoraphobia.

Agoraphobia is avoiding places where escape or help feels hard: crowds, bridges, transit, being alone outside.

Most programs follow David Barlow's Panic Control Treatment over 10 to 12 sessions.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- 1 Sessions run about 90 minutes on a structured weekly curriculum.
- 2 Early on: how panic and the fight-or-flight response work, and how avoidance keeps the cycle going.
- 3 Then interoceptive exposure done together (spinning, straw breathing, running in place), and real-world exposure with homework.

CBT for panic has among the strongest evidence of any psychological treatment.

- A 2016 Cochrane network meta-analysis (60 trials) found CBT well ahead of waitlist and pill placebo, with **group CBT comparable to individual**.¹
- A 2022 review of delivery formats (50 trials) confirmed group CBT beats waitlist and **doesn't differ from individual CBT**.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

- **Do the practice.** Facing the sensations is the cure.
- **Don't skip homework.** Real-world exposure between sessions matters.
- **Give it a few sessions.** Early discomfort is the point.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1 Is the leader trained in CBT for panic, including interoceptive exposure?
- 2 How many sessions, and is it a closed cohort?
- 3 What does it cost? Is there a sliding scale or no-cost option?

Ready to find a group?

Browse 2,000+ therapy and support groups in all 50 states.

Free to browse · No account needed · thegroupguide.com



If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Panic Disorder Groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Pompoli, A., Furukawa, T. A., Imai, H., et al. Psychological therapies for panic disorder with or without agoraphobia in adults: a network meta-analysis. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (2016), 2016(4), Article CD011004.
- 2 Papola, D., Ostuzzi, G., Tedeschi, F., et al. CBT treatment delivery formats for panic disorder: a systematic review and network meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *Psychological Medicine* (2022), 53(3), 614–624.

If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact.