Anxiety is a natural and normal reaction to threatening physical or emotional situations.

A moderate amount of anxiety is essential for survival and success. However, when the anxiety becomes increasingly intense, it may affect our daily coping and functioning. Some may even experience panic attacks, which further limits their ability to think coherently or to even breathe normally.

**What is a panic attack?**

A panic attack is a sudden episode of extreme anxiety without any real cause or danger. It is often accompanied by intense physical symptoms such as pounding or racing heart rate, shortness of breath, trembling, sweating and feeling of choking.

Recurrent and long-drawn panic attacks may hinder a person from their daily routing. The experience is frightening as the person may feel that he or she is having a heart attack or is dying.

If the panic attack continues, even after the stressful situation or danger goes away, you may wish to consult a mental health professional.

**Common Signs and symptoms of anxiety**

- Racing heart rate & chest tightness
- Nausea & chronic headaches
- Chronic sleeplessness & fatigue
- Muscular aches and body stiffness
- A sense of impending doom
- Dramatic mood swings
- Inability to concentrate or focus
- Sweating Trembling Numbness
- Stomach upset or bloating
- Waking up in a panic attack
- Chronic worrying
- Feeling of tightness or a lump in throat
What should I do if I feel anxious or have a panic attack?
Take time to assess why you are feeling the way you are feeling. Often, the anxiety is a normal or appropriate reaction to a situation. You may wish to share your feelings or experience with a friend or family.
However, when these feelings last for a period of time, or significantly interfere with your ability to function, it might be wise to make efforts to change your situation.

You might consider the following:

**Talk to family members or friends about your anxiety**

At times, sharing your experience or anxiety with family members or friends may be helpful. They may be able to offer feedback or suggestions on how you can cope with your situation or problem.

**Learn and practice relaxation techniques**

Stressful or threatening situations may generate feelings of anxiety and tension. Practising a relaxation technique regularly or daily can help a great deal to reduce anxiety. The Student Counsellors at the NTU Student Wellbeing Centre can help you to choose and learn a relaxation technique that is suitable and convenient for you to practice regularly.

**Maintain a healthy and active lifestyle**

Exercise or take walks with a friend or family member.
Have regular, nutritious meals and cut down on junk foods.
Try to maintain a regular sleeping pattern and ensure that you put aside some time to rest or have fun.

**Keep a schedule or journal of your activities and deadlines**

Set small daily tasks and stick to them.
The next step after this would be to slowly make a weekly schedule of your daily activities and try to stick to them.
Avoid procrastination or setting unrealistic goals for yourself.

**Have a positive social support network**

Develop a support network comprising of people who are supportive, encouraging, and uplifting for you. Have at least one person that you can confide in rather than keeping your worries or concerns to yourself. Spend time with other people rather than being alone most of the time; it may be difficult to do so but it usually makes you feel better.

**Seek professional help**

If the symptoms continue to exist or increase in intensity, you may consider seeking help and professional counselling from the NTU Student Wellbeing Centre.