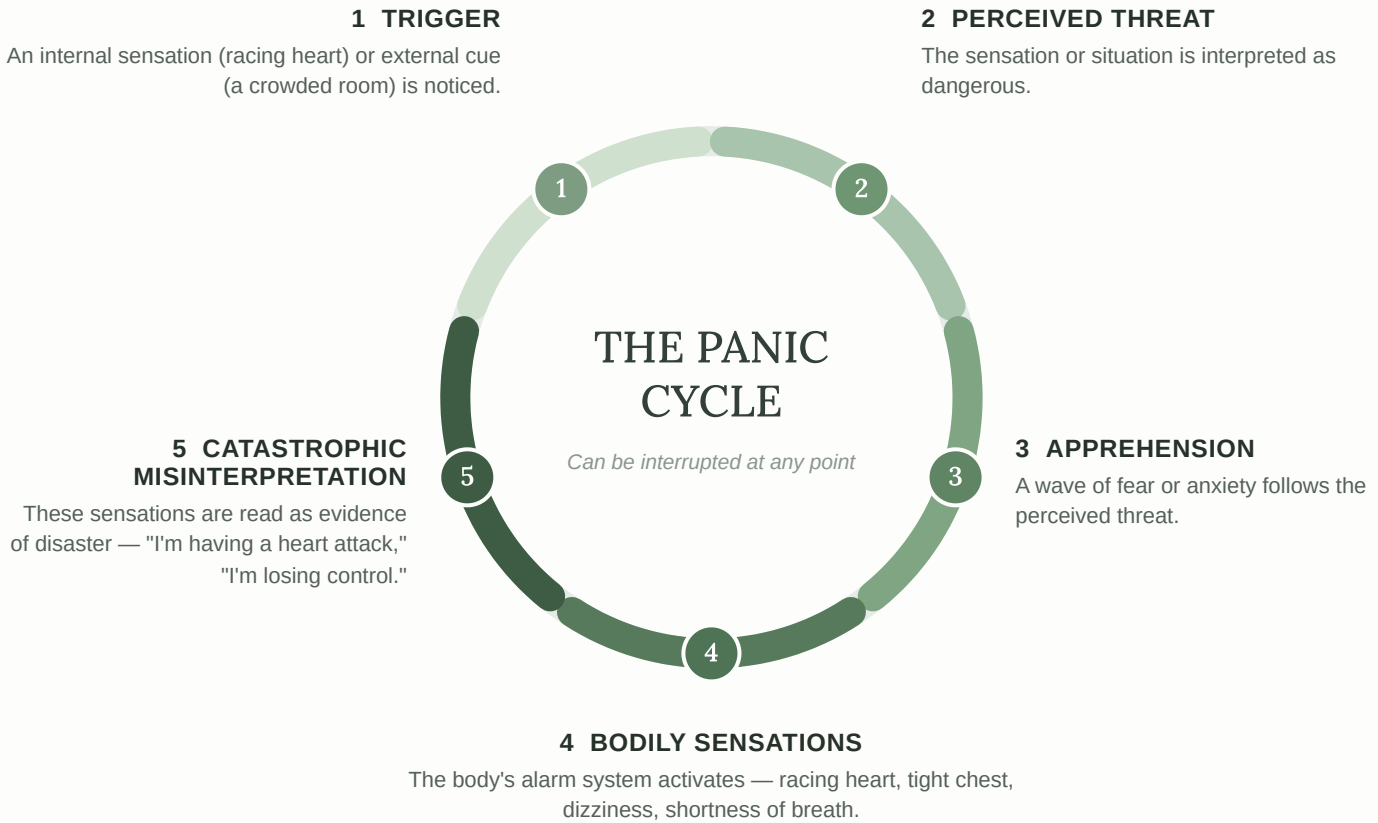


The Panic Cycle

Panic attacks are often maintained by a misunderstanding of the body's own alarm signals. This cycle describes how a frightening but harmless bodily sensation can spiral into a full panic response.



i Each stage feeds the next: catastrophic misinterpretation increases apprehension, which increases bodily sensations, which strengthens the misinterpretation — forming a rapid, self-reinforcing loop. Panic attacks are frightening but not dangerous; they typically peak within minutes and pass on their own, even without any action taken.

Interrupting the Cycle

- 1 Name It**
Silently note: "This is panic. It is frightening, but not dangerous, and it will pass."
- 2 Slow the Breath**
Slow, steady breathing can help calm the body's alarm response and reduce sensations.
- 3 Stay, Rather Than Flee**
Where possible, staying with the sensations helps the body learn they are not dangerous.

Common Bodily Sensations in Panic

Physical

Racing heart

Chest tightness

Shortness of breath

Dizziness

Trembling

Nausea

Cognitive & Perceptual

Fear of losing control

Fear of dying

Feeling detached or unreal

Racing thoughts

Tunnel vision

Urgent need to escape