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Tools for conquering panic:

Remember this is an emotional feeling caused by a stress reaction. The symptoms you are experiencing stem from your thoughts, not your body. Your body is fine, yet feels bad because your brain (Amygdala- alarm system) sent the wrong signal and you are experiencing a boost in cortisol. This initial cortisol boost and the “fight or flight” response escalates into feelings of panic when we overestimate our danger and underestimate our ability to cope. You are not in danger and you CAN cope.

This was a simple mistake by your brain, so now we need to let our body know, “false alarm,” and “no need to worry.” We can let our body know this by calming it down. Some ways we can do this is by:

- Deep breathing: breathing square (inhale up, exhale across, inhale down, exhale across)
- Grounding body in senses (5 things you see, 4 feel, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste)
- Body scan (scan sensations throughout body moving from hair on scalp to tip of your toes)
- Remind self that soon this will pass and you will feel “normal” again. Imagine how it will feel in your body to feel “normal.”
- Helpful self-talk: something like, “Hmmm, I see my body got the wrong message from my brain that I am in danger. I know I am not, and I am going to sit here calmly while the symptoms go away. I will soon feel better and back to normal.”
- While riding out the uncomfortable feeling use calming music and helpful apps such as Insight Timer, Calm, Breathe, or Headspace to ground your mind and body.