THE STUDENT WHO FEELS ANXIOUS or HAS PANIC ATTACKS

Anxiety is a normal response to a perceived danger or threat to one’s well-being. For some students, the cause of their anxiety will be clear; but for others, it is difficult to pinpoint the source. Regardless of the cause, the resulting symptoms may include rapid heart palpitations; chest pain or discomfort; dizziness; sweating; trembling or shaking; and cold, clammy hands. The student may also complain of difficulty concentrating, obsessive thinking, feeling continually “on the edge,” having difficulty making decisions, or being too fearful/unable to take action. In rare cases, a student may experience a panic attack in which the physical symptoms occur so spontaneously and intensely that the student may fear s/he is dying. The following guidelines are appropriate in most situations.

**WHAT TO DO:**

* Talk to the student in private.
* Remain calm and reassure student in a soothing manner.
* Focus on relevant information, speaking concretely and concisely.
* Help them center or ground themselves
* Help the student develop an action plan that addresses the main concern.
* Refer the student to an Advocacy or DSS Counselor.

**WHAT NOT TO DO:**

* Taking responsibility for the student’s emotional state.
* Making things more complicated.
* Overwhelming him or her with information or ideas.
* Arguing with irrational thoughts.
* Devaluing the information presented.
* Assuming the student will get over the anxiety without treatment.

\*\**When in doubt, if any personal information the student tells you raises red flags, consult with* the Student Advocacy and Accountability team. <https://webapps.mccneb.edu/bcat/>