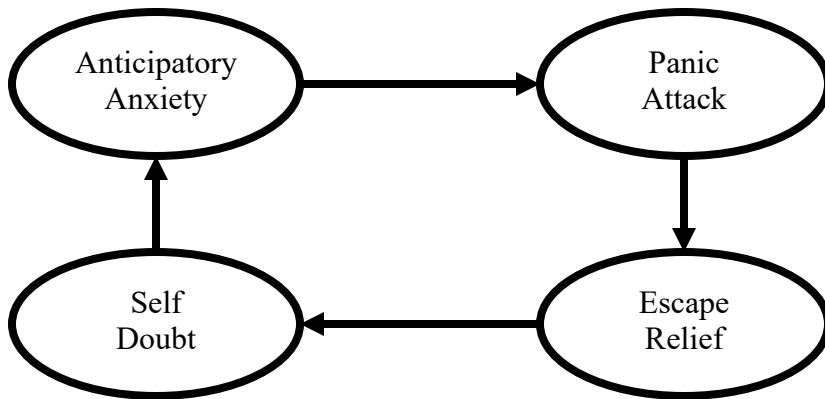
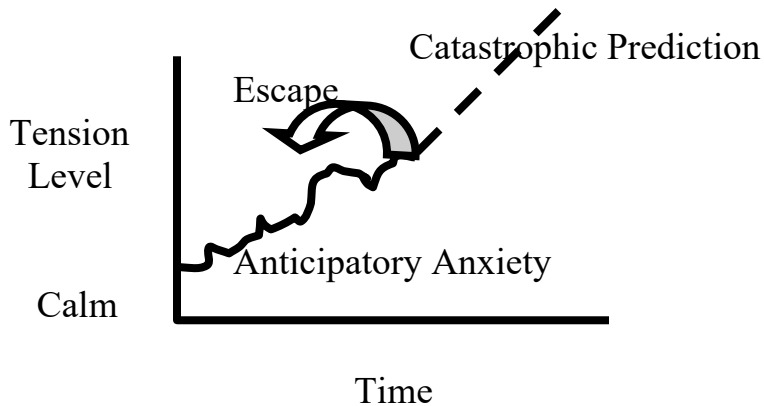


PANIC and ANXIETY

PANIC CYCLE

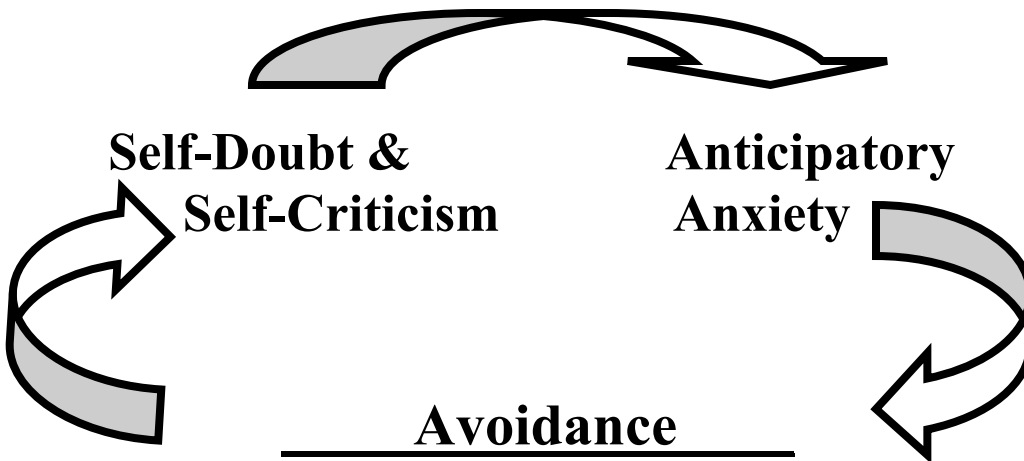


How Fearful Escape Reinforces Panic



Anticipatory anxiety represents the worrying we do before an event that we might consider a potential threat. When we leave or escape from that potential threat we experience relief. This relief is temporary. The escape process however, reinforces the cycle of panic, as we then doubt our ability to cope with this same threat in the future. A healthy response to our fears is to walk toward them and learn that in reality we have the resources within us to cope.

The Avoidance Cycle Agoraphobia Cycle



When we consistently avoid a real or imagined threat we are in reality creating self-doubt. Repeating this cycle serves to reinforce our self-doubt, which in turn provokes anxiety. We may avoid the real or imagined threat with the use of prescription medication, alcohol, distraction, addictive behaviors etc. The permanent solution involves facing our fears and “staring them down.” When we do so we learn we do have the internal resources to cope. This allows us to develop an internal sense of self-confidence. We can then rely upon our self-confidence to overcome self-doubt when we experience anxiety.

Adapted from: Facing Panic: Wilson, R. PhD. 2003. *“Self-Help for People with Panic Attacks”* Silver Spring, MD: Anxiety Disorders Association of America.