

Mental Health & Wellbeing at the Bar

Panicked in court



Wellbeing
at the Bar

Panicked in court

"I'm petrified about my next hearing and I have no idea how I am going to get through it."

If you feel panicked about court – a court hearing in particular, or court in general, gently ask yourself why?

- Is it because you feel out of your depth? If so, confide in a trusted colleague and ascertain if that is in fact the case – if so, take early steps to return the case to someone with more relevant expertise.
- If it is because you are unsure of what is expected of you and you need some advice or guidance – then again speak with a trusted colleague (whether within your Chambers or in your wider network) and obtain the necessary support.
- If you feel that the time frame for preparing the case is too short – then either return the case as soon as possible or seek an adjournment of the hearing at court with reasons in support.
- Ask for a short break and find a colleague to talk it over with. Or ask to deal with a specific issue after the lunch adjournment.

Remember:

- A lack of rest can cause panic – rest/sleep on it if you can
- A lack of preparation can cause panic – prepare in as tranquil setting as you can
- A conflict of schedules can cause panic – simplify your tasks if you can
- Consider always what is the “irreducible minimum” and act accordingly

Where can I find out more?

- <http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/anxiety-and-panic-attacks/panic-attacks/>
- <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-relief-in-the-moment.htm>
- <https://hbr.org/2014/11/how-to-handle-stress-in-the-moment>