

What To Do If The Laboring Person Panics



Many people ride every contraction of their labor with seeming ease and poise. However, many more feel that some contractions overwhelm them - that they "lose control" or "panic" and call for help. The support person can help prevent this panic in some instances or help them regain control by being familiar with the "Panic Routine"

PRE-PANIC SIGNALS

Restless or agitated body movements

ROLE OF PARTNER

Observe tension, and:

- Stroke it away with both touch and verbal signals ("Release where I touch you, release to my hands.")
- Apply back pressure if needed.
- Talk it away ("Uncurl your toes", "I'll hold your hand", "Take a cleansing breath")
- Use key phrases from your "special place" to encourage relaxation

Unrhythmical, loud, or irregular breathing

Breathe with them. Start with their pace and slow it if necessary.

Loss of focal point

Eyes darting about or head moving side to side

Keep your face close to theirs. "Look at me".

Verbally giving up

This is a request for support. Acknowledge their pain. Reassure and praise them, take charge. Try to get them to focus on the power of the contraction rather than the pain. See if you can get them to visualize the *cervix opening up and the baby moving down*. Use as much of the "Pain Routine" as needed.

PANIC ROUTINE FOR LABOR PARTNER

1. Establish eye-to-eye contact - Position yourself so that your face is directly in front of theirs. You may need to stand up.
2. Hold them firmly - Take either their hands, shoulders, or face in your hands to focus their attention on you. If they pull away from you, do not give up; re-establish physical contact.
3. Breathe with them - Tell them to breathe with you. Breathe loudly or use words or blows so that they can easily follow you. Begin at their pace and guide them to slower, quieter breaths as they follow you.
4. Reassure them - After the contraction is over, assure them that you will be there to help with each contraction. Remind them that each contraction brings them closer to the birth of the baby.
5. Words of encouragement and support from you, the nurse, and your caregiver can make all the difference in the world.
"You are doing it!"
"Baby is coming"
"You are strong!"
"I love you"