

Don't panic when dealing with panic disorder

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go to an emergency room when an attack occurs. Because panic attacks can be so frightening, people suffering from panic disorder often live in fear of having another one. Sometimes, people avoid certain objects or even social situations for fear that they may trigger a panic attack. Panic disorder can thereby lead to other disorders, such as depression, phobias, and even substance abuse as people attempt to "self-medicate" their pain with alcohol or

drugs. What causes panic disorder? There are many theories regarding the underlying cause of panic disorder. On one hand, it may have a genetic component; many sufferers indicate that members of their family have also suffered from panic disorder or another emotional disorder. Behavioral and environmental factors undoubtedly play a role in disease etiology as well. For example, the APA reports that "stressful life

events" can trigger panic attacks, and, ironically, fearing that you are going to have a panic attack may also elicit one. As is the case with many conditions, the true cause of panic disorder probably lies in a combination of biological, psychological and environmental factors. Treatment of panic disorder With proper treatment, people with panic disorder can lead normal, healthy lives! Treatment usually involves a two-pronged combination of pharmacological (i.e. medication) and behavioral

approaches. In cognitive-behavioral therapy, patients are taught to restructure the way they think about panic attacks to reduce the likelihood that an attack will occur or to reduce the intensity of any attack that does occur. Behavioral techniques like deep breathing and relaxation can also be used to counter the effects of a panic attack. Other therapeutic techniques, such as exposure therapy and group/family counseling, may also be used to help treat the disease. Medications most often used

to treat panic attacks include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, such as Paxil, Zoloft, and Prozac; and/or benzodiazepines, such as Xanax, Valium, or Klonopin. Other antidepressants, such as Effexor, are sometimes used specifically to treat panic disorder. Most importantly, panic disorder does not have to control your life. If you recognize these symptoms in yourself or someone you know, seeking help from a qualified profes-

sional is crucial to correctly diagnosing the disorder. Treatment is effective; though it does take time and perseverance you can live and function normally with this condition. Contribution by Jaimie Hunter, MPH For more information about the Maya Angelou Research Center on Minority Health, visit www.wfubmc.edu/minorityhealth or call (336) 713.7578.

Cafe concept: A place for connection

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Across the country, blacks have struggled with their stance on homosexuality. In 2002 at Atlanta's Morehouse College, the nation's only all-male historically black college, a student suffered a fractured skull after being beaten by baseball bat by a student

who thought he was gay. "Café Evolution) is about breaking down barriers," she said. Simpson, who identifies as a lesbian, said this is not just a place for lesbians and gays. She wants heterosexuals to feel comfortable coming there as well. "Some of my best friends

are straight people and either we go to the straight place or the gay place. Why not be a place that is intentional about having a safe space for all people?" Simpson held a launch party on Friday, though the café isn't set to open until August. She said she did this

because she wanted input from the community so that people can feel a sense of ownership. "I haven't seen anything like this in Charlotte and this was a good place to start," Simpson said.

In death, window joins civil rights icon in M.L. King holiday tributes

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her husband's teachings, but she extrapolated the principles that he lived for into a contemporary context, speaking out on issues from the war in Iraq to gay marriage. After presiding over her husband's birthday celebration for nearly four decades, her seat in the pulpit of King's Ebenezer Baptist Church was empty last year for the first time. "She was able to inspire people and bring them together under the memory of Martin Luther King and what he stood for," said Steve Klein, spokesman for The King Center. "She became

sort of a living symbol. She was more than just a widow, but somebody who was involved." For 15 years, Coretta Scott King worked alongside her husband, and after his assassination in 1968, she kept fighting injustice. Within months of his death, the grieving widow established what would become The King Center—the first institution built in memory of a black leader—in the basement of the couple's northwest Atlanta home. On Jan. 15, 1969, she celebrated what would have been Martin Luther King Jr.'s 40th birthday. Each Jan. 15, for 35

more times, she publicly remembered him at events at his tomb and his church, and helped the rest of the country remember him. "He was much more of a marquis figure, but without her, there's no telling what his legacy would've been," Cobb said. "She essentially molded and shaped the way that his legacy was molded and interpreted." The service at Ebenezer Baptist Church—where King preached from 1960 to 1968 and where his widow remained a member until her death—and the wreath laying at his nearby tomb became iconic symbols of the

day long before it gained federal recognition. "She was there every year," Coretta Scott King's friend and civil rights comrade, Evelyn Lowery, recalled. "She was determined to carry out whatever she could that he stood for, to make sure that his philosophies and his presence were still felt." Over the years, The King Center grew. And King's widow pushed for the national holiday, finally getting it in January 1986, on King's 57th birthday. Today, King's birthday is celebrated in some form in more than 100 countries, according to The King Center.

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