Douglas is a 50-year-old man who is being evaluated in the emergency department by a nurse from the mental health crisis team. Doug was brought into the emergency department by his wife after experiencing chest pain early in the evening. He arrived in a state of severe level of anxiety and believed that he was having a heart attack. An ECG and laboratory values were normal.

**Nursing Care Plan 16.1**

**The Person with Panic Disorder**

**Setting: Day Treatment Program, Adult Psychiatric Services**

**Baseline Assessment:** Doug arrived at the ED trembling, dizzy, pale, experiencing tachycardia, nausea, and feelings of dread. He could not follow directions and responded poorly to redirection. His attention and thoughts are scattered.

**Associated Psychiatric Diagnosis**

- Panic disorder
- History of hypertension

**Medications**

- Paroxetine CR (Paxil) 12.5 mg every day
- Lisinopril (Zestril) 20 mg daily
- Lorazepam (Ativan) 1 mg every 6 hours PRN for extreme anxiety

**Nursing Diagnosis 1: Anxiety**

**Defining Characteristics**

- Trembling, increased pulse
- Fearful, irritable, scared, worried
- Apprehensive

**Related Factors**

- Impending panic attacks
- Panic attacks

**Outcomes**

**Initial**

- Develop skills to decrease impact of panic attack

**Long-Term**

- Carry out normal daily living and social activities outside of the house

**Interventions**

**Meet daily with Doug to assess whether he has had a panic attack within the last 24 hours.**

**Using a calm reassuring approach, encourage verbalization of feelings, perceptions, and fears. Identify periods of time when anxiety level is at its highest.**

**Teach Doug how to perform relaxation techniques.**

**Teach Doug about the actions and side effects of paroxetine. Explain the purposes of the medication. Track the number of PRN medications that are used for anxiety. Also, monitor for use of alcohol and herbal supplements.**

**Rationale**

- Asking Doug to monitor panic attacks will provide data regarding potential antecedents to attacks.
- Discussing the experience of anxiety will help the patient notice when his anxiety increases.
- Having strategies to deal with impending panic attack will decrease the intensity of the experience.
- Panic attacks are neurobiologic occurrences that respond to medications.

**Ongoing Assessment**

- Determine whether Doug has had a panic attack.
- Explore the antecedents and determine whether he was able to practice techniques from education programs.
- Observe effectiveness of his technique and changes in anxiety/panic episodes.
- Determine whether panic attacks decrease over time and whether there are side effects.
- Determine his commitment to living a more normal life.

**Evaluation**

**Outcomes**

- Doug’s panic attacks decreased to once a week.
- Attended day treatment program every day.
- Able to go to grocery store.

**Revised Outcomes**

- Increase social activity outside of house.

**Interventions**

- Meet with Doug twice a week to monitor progress.
- Continue to reinforce the use of strategies in managing anticipatory anxiety.