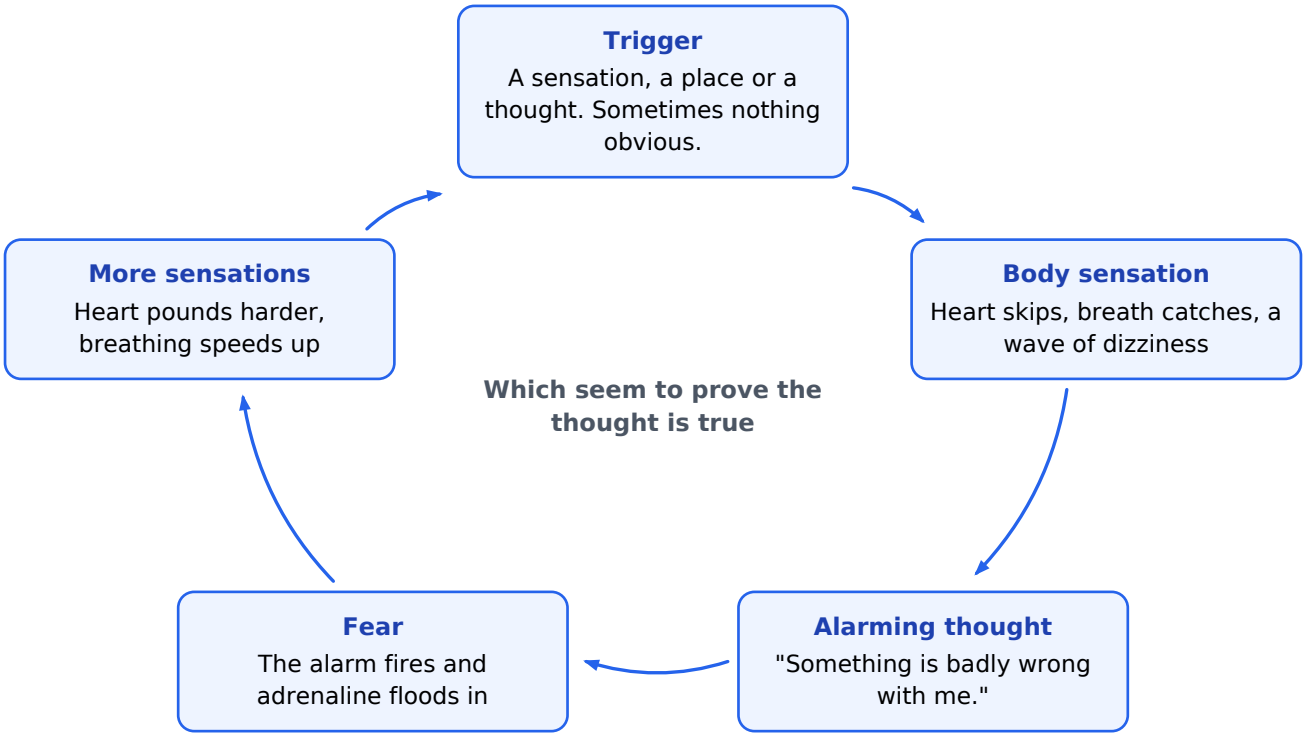
The panic cycle

How a harmless body sensation turns into a full panic attack.

Panic attacks are driven by a loop between body and mind. It can build in seconds.



The step that matters most

The loop depends on how the sensation is read. If a racing heart means "I ran up the stairs", nothing happens. If it means "heart attack", the alarm fires. The sensation is the same in both cases. Only the meaning is different.

What keeps it going between attacks

- **Body watching.** Scanning for sensations means you find more of them.
- **Avoidance.** Staying away from places or activities linked to panic.
- **Safety behaviours.** Sitting down, holding on, sipping water, escaping. Each one seems to have saved you, so the belief in danger survives.

What breaks it

1. Learning what the sensations really are.
2. Testing the alarming thought. Did the feared disaster ever happen?
3. Bringing the sensations on deliberately and discovering they are safe.
4. Going back, step by step, to the places and activities you have been avoiding.

Based on the cognitive model of panic developed by David M. Clark.

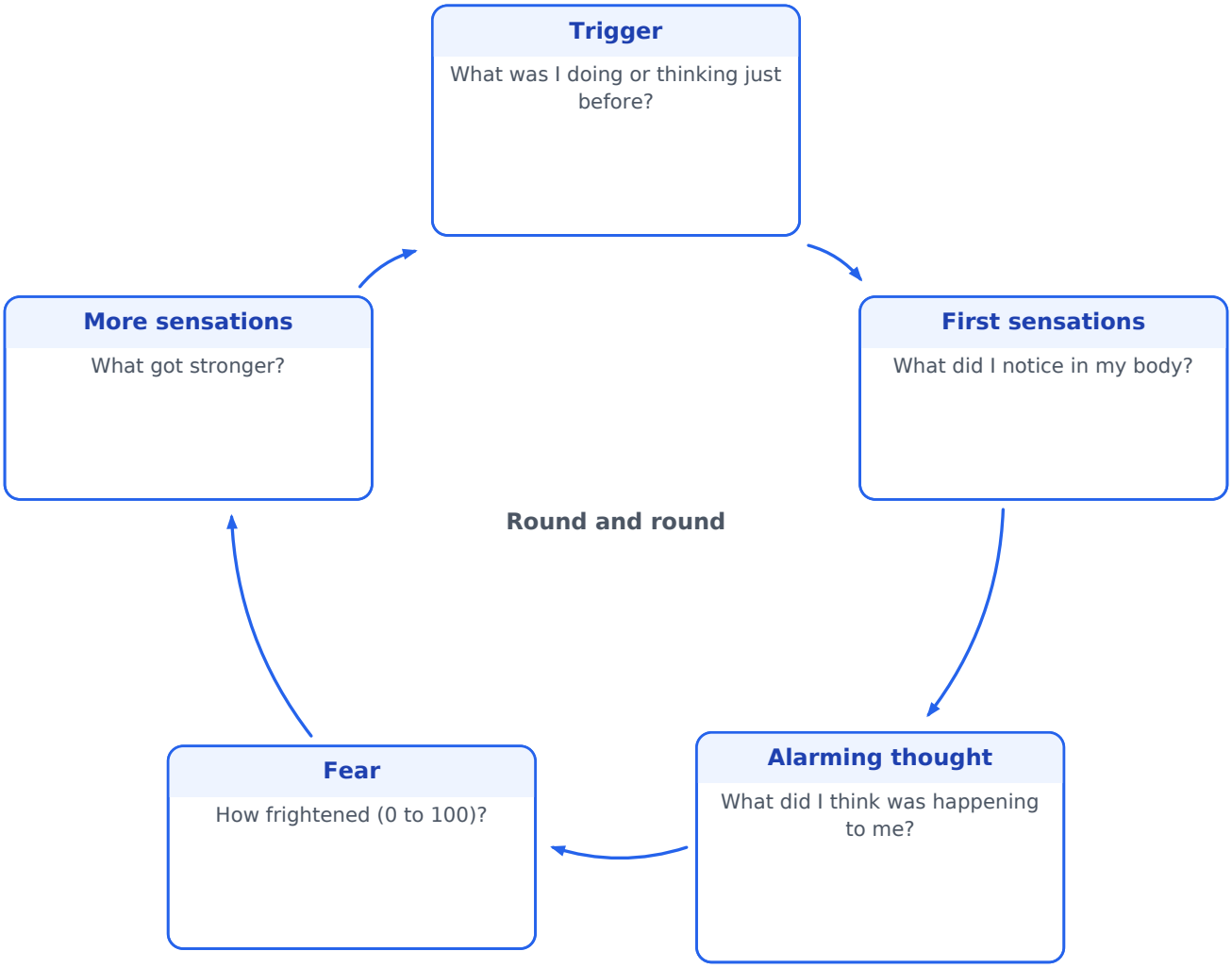
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My panic cycle

Map your most recent or most typical panic attack.

Name _____ Date _____

When and where did it happen?



What did I do to try to stop it or keep safe?

What actually happened in the end? Did the thing I feared happen?

What does that tell me?

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