

Coping with Anniversaries

Anniversaries of traumatic or upsetting events can trigger thoughts and feelings that are similar to those experienced during the actual event. This is a natural part of the healing process, and it is okay to feel emotional.

Common Reactions

- Memories, thoughts and feelings about the event that won't go away
- Dreams or nightmares about the event
- Grief and sadness about loss. This loss can include income, employment, a home, loved one, or changed life circumstances
- Fear and anxiety can occur again. These can be seen in signs such as jumpiness, startled responses and even an extra vigilance about personal and family safety
- Frustration, anger and guilt may creep in. Survivors may be angry about everything they lost during the event, the time they didn't get to spend with family and friends, and the bureaucratic process of recovery. Some people might even feel guilty about surviving the event
- Avoiding things that remind them of the event. Some survivors will protect themselves by avoiding anything that reminds them of the event around the time of the anniversary.

Coping Strategies

- Be aware that anniversary days can be difficult. This is normal, and everyone's reaction will be different.
- Recognise your feelings, be gentle on yourself, and don't compare your reactions with others.
- Do something you love. You could do something with friends and family, or spend some time alone.
- It is okay to talk about your losses if you need to. It is also okay to talk about the future if you want to. Share your thoughts with someone you trust, or a health care professional.
- Accept help and support from others. Support from family and friends is an essential part of healing.
- Where possible, help others. Volunteering provides us with a great sense of satisfaction.
- Reflect on how far you have come and give yourself a pat on the back.

For more information contact your local RAMHP Coordinator

Aimee Makeham
aimee.makeham@health.nsw.gov.au
0428 249 719

Faith Rogers
faith.rogers@health.nsw.gov.au
0427 273 895



Health
Murrumbidgee
Local Health District

The information for this flyer was derived from
<https://disaster.unl.edu/disaster-anniversaries>