

Tips on Dealing with the Anniversary of a Traumatic Event

1. As the day comes near, expect reminders related to the anniversary. Don't be surprised if thoughts and feelings that had lessened, come up for you again. Anniversaries can often bring up the original feelings of loss, sorrow, anger, grief, and confusion.
2. There is no "right" way to feel. Be accepting of your own thoughts and feelings, as well as those of people around you.
3. At times anticipating a particular upcoming day causes more anxiety than the day itself. You might find that the days and weeks leading up to the anniversary are more difficult than the actual anniversary day.
4. If you feel you might have difficulty with the day, plan out how you would like to spend that day; think of the people who you would like to spend it with.
5. There is no "right" way to commemorate the day. Do as much or as little as feels right to you. You can choose to participate in public memorials, do something in private or with a small group of loved ones, or nothing at all.
6. If the traumatic event was in the media, pay attention to your media viewing on the days leading up to the anniversary. Images and news stories can be triggering, and it might be more helpful for you to limit your viewing.
7. Engage in activities that bring you comfort and joy. Take time to take care of yourself. Simple things like spending time with loved ones, taking a walk, eating a healthy meal, or taking a nap might help you feel better.
8. Remember, there is no timeline for "getting better." Everyone heals at their own pace.

For further counseling resources or support:

- Call the Disaster Distress Helpline toll free at 1-800-985-5990 or text TALKWITHUS to 66746. This free service offers multilingual, confidential crisis support, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. (www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov)
- Dial 2-1-1 in Massachusetts for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to find critical health and human services available in your community (www.mass211.org)