

COPING WITH ANNIVERSARY REACTIONS

ANNIVERSARY REACTIONS ARE DIFFICULT OR UPSETTING THOUGHTS OR FEELINGS EXPERIENCED ON OR ABOUT THE TIME OF AN ANNIVERSARY THAT REMINDS US OF A LOSS OR SOME UNPLEASANT (OR TRAUMATIC) SITUATION OR CIRCUMSTANCE EXPERIENCED IN OUR LIVES.

IDENTIFY & UNDERSTAND

Anniversary reactions may be easier to handle if you can name them and understand why you are experiencing them. Remember, anniversary reactions are normal and temporary.

PLAN & PREPARE

If you experience anniversary reactions regularly, it may be helpful to put a plan into place, to prepare in anticipation of possible reactions. Look for ways to commemorate the anniversary, practice self-care, and seek support if needed.

COMMEMORATE

If appropriate, find ways to remember and honor the anniversary.

- Gather together
- Start a new tradition
- Light a candle
- Contribute to a charity
- Plant a tree or a memory garden
- Sing songs

Take time to remember and reflect

SELF-CARE

Self-care is important when experiencing anniversary reactions. Remember to rest, eat well and stay hydrated. Take time for yourself to process your feelings; journaling may be helpful. Create positive distractions if the anniversary is too traumatic.

SUPPORT SYSTEM

If you experience anniversary reactions related to personal traumatic events, you may find it helpful to talk to someone who is wise and supportive. For anyone who may be having a particularly difficult time dealing with the thoughts and feelings precipitated by, or related to, an anniversary reaction, it is important to seek professional guidance and support.

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

The Heart's Way, Imagery and Insights
&
The Heart's Way for Creative Clinicians