

Coping with reminders after a loss

One thing grief doesn't magically end at a certain point after a loved one's death. Reminders often bring back the pain of loss.

When a loved one dies, you might be faced with grief over your loss again and again sometimes even years later. Feelings of grief might return on the anniversary of your loved one's death, birthday or other special days throughout the year.

These feelings, sometimes called an anniversary reaction, aren't necessarily a setback in the grieving process. They're a reflection that your loved one's life was important to you.

These Reminders can be anywhere.

Certain reminders of your loved one might be inevitable, especially on holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, and other special days that follow your loved one's death.

Reminders aren't just tied to the calendar. They can be tied to sights, sounds and smells and they can ambush you. You might suddenly be flooded with emotions when you drive by the restaurant your partner loved or when you hear your child's favorite song.

Even memorial celebrations for others can trigger the pain of your own loss.

What can we expect when grief returns.

Anniversary reactions can last for days at a time or in more extreme cases much longer.

During an anniversary reaction you might experience:

Sadness, Loneliness, Anger, Anxiety, Trouble sleeping, Fatigue, and Pain.

Anniversary reactions can also bring to mind powerful memories of the feelings and events surrounding our loved one's death. For example, you might remember in great detail where you were and what you are doing when your loved one died.

Suggestions on how to cope with reawakened grief.

Even years after a loss, you might continue to feel sadness when you're confronted with reminders of your loved one's death.

As you continue healing, take steps to cope with reminders of your loss. Suggestions are:

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Be prepared. Anniversary reactions are normal. Knowing that you're likely to experience anniversary reactions can help you understand them and even turn them into opportunities for healing.

Plan a distraction.

Schedule a gathering or a visit with friends or loved ones during times when you're likely to feel alone or be reminded of your loved one's death.

Reminisce about your relationship. Focus on the good things about your relationship with your loved one

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