

Anniversary Reactions to a Traumatic Event

The anniversary reaction is an individual's response to unresolved grief from significant losses that results on the anniversary of a disaster or traumatic event.

Common Anniversary Reactions can Include:

MEMORIES/DREAMS/ THOUGHTS/FEELINGS

- These might be repeated and reoccurring.
- May be as vivid as they were at the time of the incident.

GRIEF AND SADNESS

- Individuals may experience grief and/or sadness.
- This may include feeling sad for those who experienced a loss of a loved one.

FEAR AND ANXIETY

- May lead to jumpiness, startles responses, and vigilance about safety.
- May be stronger for individuals working through the grieving process.

FRUSTRATION, ANGER, AND GUILT

- The anniversary may reawaken frustration and anger connected to the response of the event.

AVOIDANCE

- Some survivors try to protect themselves by avoiding reminders of the event.
- May even treat the anniversary as just an ordinary day.

REMEMBRANCE AND REFLECTION

- Many survivors welcome the tears, commemoration, and fellowship of the anniversary.
- The reflection is often a turning point in recovery.