

Some Expected Reactions ... as the anniversary nears

The approach of the one year anniversary of any loss can be a dreaded and emotional time. Everyone has a difficult and unique reaction all their own to trauma and to the recall of traumatic events.

There are as many different ways to handle the anniversary as there are people in the world. Some people may want to be alone, some may want to be with others. Some may want to go to the mountains, attend community activities or complete private rituals such as planting a flower, tree or lighting a candle.

As April 20th approaches and the community prepares for the anniversary, questions arise about the expected emotional responses we may see among our friends and family. Some people may experience a re-emergence of early trauma symptoms. This is quite common and not necessarily something to be alarmed about. Although the same feelings may surface now that people felt then, chances are the symptoms won't be as strong or last as long.

Common anniversary reactions:

- Feeling overwhelmed
- Inability to feel safe and secure
- Denial of the upcoming anniversary
- Extreme sense of loss
- Heightened grief reaction
- Anger
- Loss of energy
- Agitation
- Re-occurrence of nightmares
- Self doubt and blame
- Trouble concentrating
- Flashbacks
- Denial of feelings

Traumatic triggers are also a significant problem around the anniversary time. Traumatic triggers are things such as sights, sounds or smells that remind you, - whether consciously or sub-consciously -, about the tragedy of last spring. They bring about echoes of the same feelings you may have had in the past

Traumatic triggers likely to occur around the time of the anniversary include:

- Helicopters
- Fire drill bells
- Return of spring like weather
- Loud noises
- Similar clothing
- Similar location or setting
- Presence of the media
- Large gatherings of people
- Presence of law enforcement and emergency personnel