

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Grief: Coping with Reminders After Loss

For some, the holidays and the New Year can be a difficult time. While we enjoy the time we have with family and friends, it is also a reminder of the loved ones who are no longer with us. Feelings of grief can return months and even years after a loved one passed away. These feelings, also referred to as anniversary reactions, are a normal and natural part of the grief process. In order to continue to cope with your loss it is important to know about these reactions and ways to cope.

The Process of Healing

The process of grief is different for everyone. Also it's a cycle, so there are times where you might feel like you have regressed or taken a step back in your progress. It is normal for important dates like holidays and birthdays to trigger reactions such as:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Lack of energy and motivation
- Feeling numb
- Anger
- Anxiety or fear
- Guilt and remorse
- Trouble eating and/or sleeping

Dates, events and memorials are common triggers, but movies, sights, music, and even smells can trigger an emotional reaction or pain associated with the loss you experienced.

Coping with Reoccurring Grief

Each of us has different styles to cope with grief. Below are ideas that may help you manage your feelings of grief and continue to heal:

- Be Patient with Yourself and Your Feelings. With time and support the intensity of your grief will lessen.
- Allow Yourself to Feel your Emotions. It OK to feel sad with these memories. Allow yourself to grieve but also allow yourself to experience the joy and happiness associated with your loved one as well.
- Connect to Others. These are times when support systems are important. Surround yourself with family and friends, social systems, or support groups. Talk to others who were also close to your loved one about your memory of them.
- Stay Busy. Schedule activities or visits with loved ones during times when you might be reminded of the loss of your loved one.
- Seek Help. If your grief appears to be getting worse over time or is interfering with your ability to function, seek the help of a counselor. A counselor can help you with the process of healing.

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