

# Survivors: Triggers & Anniversaries Guide

For suicide survivors, certain dates, places, or sensory cues can feel overwhelming. This guide offers practical ways to anticipate, prepare, and ride out these moments.

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## Understanding Triggers:

- Anniversaries (date of death, birthdays, holidays) may bring fresh waves of grief.
- Sights, sounds, or smells linked with the person or event can spark flashbacks.
- Media reports, TV shows, or online content about suicide can intensify pain.

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## Practical Coping Tools:

1. Name the day in advance: mark anniversaries on your calendar and plan gentle routines.
2. Create an "anchor kit": soothing items like music, photos, or grounding scents.
3. Share your plan with a trusted person: let them know the day may be difficult.
4. Allow mixed feelings: it's normal to feel sadness, anger, guilt, or even relief.
5. Choose rituals that feel right: light a candle, walk their favourite place, write a note.

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## Anniversaries in the First Years:

- The first anniversary often re-opens acute grief. Plan ahead for support.
- In later years, feelings may soften but sudden "grief spikes" are still common.

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## Supporting Children & Neurodiverse Survivors:

- Young people may re-grieve at new stages of understanding (adolescence, adulthood).
- Neurodiverse survivors may process anniversaries through routines or sensory anchors; visual planners and scripts can help.
- Use simple, consistent language and offer safe space for questions.

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## Emergency Steps:

- If overwhelmed, pause and breathe slowly (in for 4, out for 6).
- Ground yourself using the 5-4-3-2-1 senses exercise.
- Call a trusted friend, helpline, or text SHOUT to 85258 (UK).

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## Support Resources (UK & Scotland):

- Samaritans – 116 123 (24/7 free helpline)
- Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) – groups & forums
- Cruse Bereavement Support – counselling & advice
- NHS Inform Scotland – local support & urgent care

*Patch & Pot – This guide is not a substitute for professional advice.*