

Coping With Anniversaries & Triggers

Anniversaries, birthdays, and unexpected reminders can stir grief and bring back intense feelings after a suicide loss. These moments are normal, but they can feel overwhelming. Preparing gently for them can make them more manageable.

Strategies to Support Yourself:

- **Plan Ahead:** Note significant dates in advance. Decide whether to spend them quietly, with others, or in a meaningful ritual.
- **Gentle Rituals:** Light a candle, visit a place of meaning, or write a message to the person you lost.
- **Grounding Tools:** Use 5-4-3-2-1 senses, breathing exercises, or a calming object to steady yourself when emotions rise suddenly.
- **Share the Load:** Let a trusted friend or family member know the day may be heavy for you, so you don't carry it alone.
- **Give Permission:** It's okay to step back from social events or traditions that feel too hard this year.
- **Mark Progress:** Notice how your response to anniversaries may change over time. Healing is not forgetting; it is adapting.

Grief waves can return at any time, even years later. Having a gentle plan and knowing you're not alone can help you face these moments with more steadiness.