

Coping with Anniversary Dates
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Anniversary dates are very hard to face because these days are changed forever when a significant person in your life has died. These special dates highlight your feelings of emptiness and loss. The following suggestions are offered to give you ideas for coping with these difficult days.

Perhaps the most important thing to do is to plan the upcoming anniversary date. Talk about what family members want to do and how they may want to honour the memory of the person who has died. Talk about the person who is no longer there. Sharing tears and memories is healing. Allow each family member the freedom to choose what is best for him/herself. Everyone grieves in his/her own unique way

Rituals help us to find meaning in the memory of our loved one who has died. You can create any type of ritual that is meaningful to you. Celebrate the life of the person who has died. Honour his/her memory

- * Light a candle at a certain time each day.
- * Donate your time to a needy cause in your loved one's memory.
- * Plant a tree, bush or shrub to honour the memory of a loved one.

Create a ritual to celebrate the activity eg., if planting a tree or shrub, write a special note to the person who has died and then plant it along with the tree.

Mother's Day

- * Buy a present in memory of your mother and give it to yourself.
- * Take some flowers to the gravesite. Keep one flower to take home.
- * Have a picnic at the grave site.

Father's Day

- * Make a contribution to his favorite charity.
- * Buy a book and donate it to your local library.

Birthdays

- * Light a candle to honor the memory of your loved one.
- * Bake a cake in memory of the person who has died.
- * Make a birthday card, take it to the cemetery and bury it at the gravesite.

The anniversary of the death may need special care and planning because it is so significant.

- *Buy a single flower in memory of your loved one. Dry it or press it afterwards.
- * Share a special meal with family or friends. Talk about the person who died. Share memories.

Include children in rituals and in the plans for anniversary days. Ask them what they would like to do. You may be amazed at their wonderful ideas!

- * Make a collage as a family project.
- * Make a memory book of the person who has died.
- * Choose a special book in memory of someone who has died.
- *Involve children in making the favorite meal of your loved one who has died.

It may be easier for children to draw how they feel than to express themselves verbally.

It is not uncommon to have fresh surges of grief on these anniversary days. Sometimes you will experience a flood of physical and emotional feelings days before the actual date occurs. This is normal and is part of the grieving process. These intense feelings will subside once the special day has occurred.