

**Anniversaries and reminders**

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**Cruse**  
Bereavement  
Support

## **Coping with anniversaries and reminders**

Anniversaries and reminders can be very difficult. They may bring back grief even years after someone dies.

There are many events that will remind you of the person who died. Some are more obvious, such as the day they died or their birthday, and others are more unpredictable, like a piece of music, a smell or a particular TV programme.

Anniversaries and reminders can evoke powerful memories and feelings which are really personal. Days or events which mean so much to one person, may be ordinary to others who may not understand what is happening. This can make it difficult to explain how you're feeling to your friends and family.

Just as every experience of grief is unique, so are the things that remind you of the person who died. For some people, anniversaries will remind them of fond or happy memories, while for others they can create feelings of sadness, grief, fear, regret and guilt.

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## How to cope with anniversaries and reminders

### ***Plan ahead***

If there's a date you're dreading, spend some time trying to work out in advance how you'd like to spend it. Maybe you'd like to stay home and watch your favourite films or perhaps you'd like to organise an event in their honour. Maybe you'd like to ignore the event all together.

It doesn't matter how you spend the day but it's important to do what's right for you at the time.

### ***Be flexible with others***

The uncertainty and anxiety surrounding death may lead to fixed ideas and thinking. So it's important to remember that people remember and forget those who have died in their own ways. It's OK if people want to spend the day in different ways.

### ***Find ways to remember them***

As time passes, anniversaries and reminders can help us to begin to focus on happy memories of good times shared in the past. You could find something to do each year that helps

you to remember and celebrate your relationship with the person who has died.

***Put your feelings into words***

Journal and letter writing can help you organise your thoughts and memories. If you find yourself overwhelmed with grief after a reminder, writing down why can be really helpful.

**For more support call our helpline**

**0808 808 1677**