



## Coping with Tragedy

### The Second Anniversary of 9/11: **STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH THE DAY**

Anniversaries of tragedies can be difficult times for many people. For some, especially those family members and friends who were directly touched, the anniversary of 9/11 is a powerful reminder of loss. For others, who thought they had put the tragedy behind them, the anniversary may produce unexpected anxiety or grief.

The anniversary, and the media replay of all the day's destruction and aftermath that may come with it, will stir strong emotions in many of us. But there are positive ways to cope:

- Observe the anniversary in a way that's comfortable for you. Being with other people, getting involved in positive activities and talking about the tragedy are all important coping strategies, but taking time to be by yourself – to think and reflect – can be helpful and healing, as well.
- Get plenty of rest and exercise. Remember to eat well. Avoid excessive drinking.
- Avoid television as much as possible. The visual images can prompt especially strong reactions. Instead, turn to a movie channel or read a book.
- If you start to feel overwhelmed, talk with a friend, family member, doctor, minister, or religious advisor. Often, talking about your fears and feelings is enough to relieve stress and realize that other people share your feelings. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness.
- Recall other times you've experienced strong emotions. Consider which coping strategies and worked for you in the past, and use them.
- Don't compare yourself to how others around you are dealing with the September 11 anniversary. Everyone experiences and copes with stress differently. Remember not to judge other people's emotions.
- If you have children, encourage them to discuss their concerns and feelings with you. Maybe plan an after-school outing with them that will give everyone something positive to look forward to.
- If you have strong feelings that won't go away, or are affecting your relationships or job, seek help from a mental health professional.

*For more information, contact your local Mental Health Association or the National Mental Health Association at (800) 969-NMHA or [www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org). © 2003 National Mental Health Association*