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Dear Members,

This week we recognized the 10-year anniversary of the tragic deaths of two well-love paramedics, Jo-Ann Fuller and Ivan Polivka. An unveiling of a new monument in their memory took place in Tofino on Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> to recognize the anniversary, remember these two-special people, their sacrifice and to honour their families.

Grief is unpredictable and anniversary reactions can last for days and in some cases much longer. During an anniversary you may experience the intense emotions and reactions that you first experienced when you lost your loved one, including:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Crying spells
- Depression
- Fatigue, or lack of energy
- Guilt
- Loneliness
- Pain
- Sadness
- Trouble sleeping

Anniversary reactions can also evoke powerful memories of the feelings and events surrounding your loved one's death. For example, you might remember in detail where you were and what you were doing when your loved one died.

### **Tips to cope with reawakened grief**

Even years after a loss, you might continue to feel sadness when you're confronted with reminders of your loved one's death. As you continue healing, take steps to cope with reminders of your loss.

For example:

- Be prepared. Anniversary reactions are normal. Knowing that you're likely to experience anniversary reactions can help you understand them and even turn them into opportunities for healing.
- Plan a distraction. Schedule a gathering or a visit with friends or loved ones during times when you're likely to feel alone or be reminded of your loved one's death.
- Reminisce about your relationship. Focus on the good things about your relationship with your loved one and the time you had together, rather than the loss. Write a letter to your loved one or a note about some of your good memories. You can add to this note anytime.
- Start a new tradition. Donate to a charitable organization in your loved one's name on birthdays or holidays or plant a tree in honor of your loved one.
- Connect with others. Draw friends, colleagues and loved ones close to you, including people who were special to your loved one. Find someone who'll encourage you to talk about your loss. Stay connected to your usual support systems, such as spiritual leaders and social groups. Consider joining a bereavement support group.
- Allow yourself to feel a range of emotions. It's OK to be sad and feel a sense of loss, but also allow yourself to experience joy and happiness. As you celebrate special times, you might find yourself both laughing and crying.

### **When grief becomes overly intense**

There's no time limit for grief, and anniversary reactions can leave you reeling. Still, the intensity of grief tends to lessen with time.

If your grief gets worse over time instead of better or interferes with your ability to function in daily life, consult a grief counselor or other mental health provider. Unresolved or complicated grief can lead to depression, other mental health problems and other medical conditions. With professional help, however, you can re-establish a sense of control and direction in your life — and return to the path toward healing.

### **Resources:**

**Peer Critical Incident Stress Management Program**

**1-855-969-4321**

- Talk to a peer about what you're experiencing or to obtain a referral a counselor or psychologist in your area



## Homewood 1-800-663-1142

- Access counselling or other employee family assistance supports for you and your immediate family

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/two-takes-depression/201105/the-anniversary-effect>

<https://cmha.ca/documents/grieving>

<https://www.bcbh.ca/>

Whether it's processing a critical incident, managing reactions to grief, dealing with cumulative stress or wanting to be proactive with your wellbeing, please consider taking advantage of the Psychology Network through the Peer CISM Team. It's as easy as calling 1-855-969-4321 and asking to be connected to a counsellor or psychologist near you.

“What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation.” – Glenn Close

In Solidarity,



Lindsay Kellosalmi  
Mental Health and Wellness Coordinator  
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LK/km/MoveUp

