



## *LANDMINES IN GRIEF*

Special days—anniversaries, holidays, birthdays—can act as emotional landmines. The emotions you feel on those days can be as intense or even more intense than the emotions you felt at first.

"Too many people are unaware or under aware of the normal grieving process. For example . . . anniversary dates, birthdays, holidays and things like that can evoke a lot of anger. When this happens, people feel like there's something wrong with them or they're not very strong."

These feelings are normal. Knowing this, prepare yourself ahead of time for those special days. Plan a quiet day with close friends or family members who will surround you with love. Remember, when you are discouraged and at a low point relating to your loss, your best remedy is to be gentle and forgiving with yourself.

Here is a list of possible landmines:

- Anniversary of a critical incident
- Occurrence of a similar incident
- Survivor or Patient same age, similar appearance or reminds you of loved one
- Certain songs or music
- Certain foods or types of food
- Seeing a stranger who looks like loved one
- Routine procedures at work that trigger memory
- Children walking to school
- Holidays - especially family holidays
- Birthdays
- Wedding anniversaries
- Movies, television shows
- Places/locations where incident happened or places that look similar

- Car, truck or other rig that was used
- Grocery stores
- Outdoor places; favorite camping spot or hiking trail
- Activities shared with loved one
- Daily routines
- Meals-preparing and eating
- Young lovers
- Elderly people
- Clothing
- Finding memories in an unexpected place
- Sights, scents, sounds, feelings that trigger a memory of loss or trauma
- Other landmines, your list

Adapted from the GriefShare Helpcenter