

Trauma Anniversary: Reactions, Resources, + Tips

UVA Department of Student Health and Wellness (SHW)

The anniversary of a traumatic event can trigger a range of feelings. Distressing memories may cause people to feel as if they are reliving the event. Some people also become alert to the possibility that the event might occur again. Regardless of whether an individual witnessed violence personally or heard about it through media or other sources, it is possible to feel triggered during an anniversary.

Common responses to trauma, including anniversary reactions include:

- **Reactivation of feelings**, physiological responses and thoughts related to the event.
- **Re-experiencing the trauma** (e.g. intrusive memories and flashbacks).
- **Avoidance of trauma-related stimuli** (e.g., avoiding people or places that remind you of the trauma).
- **Negative alterations in thoughts and mood** (e.g., sadness, hopelessness). Cognitive alterations include feeling that the world is unsafe and that you cannot trust other people, as well as having issues with self-esteem or intimacy with others.
- **Arousal and reactivity** (e.g., difficulty sleeping, heightened startle response, anxiety, irritability and anger).
- **Interpersonal problems** (e.g. not trusting others, feeling disconnected, feeling isolated and alone or different from others or having feelings of shame).

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms or feel like you would like a safe space to receive support, Student Health and Wellness welcomes you to access any of the number of services we provide throughout the year:

Urgent Support

- **TimelyCare's TalkNow** allows students to connect with a mental health professional any time of day, either by phone or video. Students can use TalkNow to discuss any concern, from conflicts with roommates to mental health crises. Staff are happy to assist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Download the TimelyCare app to get started.
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) On-Call:** During business hours (M-F, 8am-5pm) students in crisis can walk-in to CAPS at 550 Brandon Avenue or call 434-243-5150 to speak with an on-call counselor.
- **Concerns Regarding a Student:** If you are concerned about a student, you can call 434-243-5150 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and ask to speak with the on-call counselor. Consultation regarding concerns about students is available to UVA students, faculty, administrators, staff, parents, and other concerned community members.

One on One Support

- **Counseling & Psychological Services** offers individual, couples, + group therapy, embedded care services in UVA Schools, psychiatric care, and "Let's Talk" drop-in consults.
- **Medical Services** providers offer primary care appointments for management of mild to moderate anxiety or depression, including medication management.
- **TimelyCare's TalkNow** allows students to connect with a mental health professional any time of day, either by phone or video. Students can use TalkNow to discuss any concern, from conflicts with roommates to mental health crises. Staff are happy to assist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Download the TimelyCare app to get started.
- Whether you've been sober for 30 minutes or 30 years, the **Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP)** can provide support to those in recovery with regular meetings and events.
- **WahooWell** consists of a confidential well-being survey and two or more confidential, one-on-one meetings with a well-being facilitator.

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Afterhours Support

- Students have access 24/7 to “TalkNow” on-demand service for mental health concerns, 12 free telehealth sessions/year, and psychiatric care through [TimelyCare](#). Students can use and schedule these services at any time.

Follow-up Support

Trauma reactions may not surface until days, weeks, months, or sometimes years following a traumatic event. Sometimes, current stressful situations can activate memories about prior losses and traumas that occurred earlier.

- [CAPS](#) can be accessed throughout the academic year and summer. CAPS provides individual, group and crisis services, as well as case management and psychiatric services to all eligible UVA students.
- [TimelyCare’s](#) TalkNow allows students to connect with a mental health professional any time of day, either by phone or video. Students can use TalkNow to discuss any concern, from conflicts with roommates to mental health crises. Staff are happy to assist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Download the TimelyCare app to get started.
- TimelyCare’s [Self-Care Journeys](#) nurture students health and well-being. From yoga sessions to audio meditations, these assets help manage everyday struggles.
- [Well-being Guides](#) are a joint UVA students and staff effort, this digital hub includes different well-being guides with helpful info and tips, on- and off-Grounds resources, and searchable terms.

Looking for other types of support?

Sometimes students have needs outside of mental and emotional health, and can benefit from speaking with [Care and Support Services](#) (CASS). CASS provides non-clinical inclusive support for students with unmet needs to increase students’ ability to identify, reduce, and navigate barriers to their growth and well-being, CASS can help connect students to appropriate resources.

Contact CASS at 434-924-7133, cass@virginia.edu, or by walking in to their office on the second floor of Peabody Hall.

Suggestions for Coping with Trauma

- Avoid making big decisions
- Practice meditation and relaxation techniques multiple times per day, not just when you are feeling anxious
- If relaxation exercises increase your anxiety, consider using grounding techniques (e.g., describing the environment around you, say a safety statement to yourself to remind yourself that you are safe, say the alphabet very slowly or backwards as a distraction, run water over your hands, stretch, walk slowly, picture people you care about, say a coping statement like, “I can get through this.”)
- Educate yourself about common reactions to trauma so that you know that you are not alone
- Seek out support and talk openly with people you feel safe with
- Avoid using food, alcohol, drugs or excessive exercise to numb yourself; instead reach out to safe and trusted people
- Get moderate amounts of exercise daily
- Seek out spiritual or religious resources
- Distract yourself with positive activities
- When you have intrusive memories, remind yourself that they are memories and that the trauma is not happening right now
- Remind yourself that reactions are normal and usually lessen with time
- Connect with people that have had similar experiences