

Coping during the anniversary of the Forbury Gardens major incident

Anniversaries can be a difficult time, capable of stirring up all manner of thoughts, feelings and memories. The emotions that you feel may be strong during this time.

There are no right or wrong ways to think or feel. Everyone will experience this time in different ways and have different ways of coping.

As the anniversary draws closer, you might find yourself struggling a bit more. If you are struggling, we can support you during this time and after the anniversary.

Common changes you might notice in yourself or others around you

- Feeling irritable or on edge
- Struggling to sleep
- Feeling more anxious
- Loss of appetite
- Concentration getting worse
- Having more memories of what happened
- Feeling more sad and increased negative thinking
- Wanting to avoid thinking about the anniversary and trying to avoid reminders of it
- Upsetting thoughts about what happened and those affected
- Drinking or smoking more
- Feeling guilty about what happened that day
- You might also feel guilty for not thinking about those who died or for feeling positive emotions – it is okay to have positive feelings and memories

Forbury Gardens Services – Track, Screen and Treat Programme

This is a proactive approach to reach out to those who are affected by the incident. We can offer psychological support or make onward referrals where necessary.

If you're feeling affected by the events and would like to speak to someone about how you feel, visit the Victims First website for more information on how to access this free service.



www.victims-first.org.uk/forburygardens

You'll be asked some questions to help us assess your needs and level of support needed.

You can also discuss this with your GP.

The Forbury Gardens Service is **not an emergency service**.

If you need urgent or emergency mental health support please call either:

- NHS **111**
- Samaritans on **116 123**

What might help?

It can be helpful to plan ahead for the day and think about how you want to spend it. Think about what might be difficult for you and have some ideas about what might help you manage. If you can, it would be good to try to schedule these helpful activities in before you reach the day of the anniversary. Some possible suggestions below:



Marking the day – It may be that you want to spend some time on the day doing things that connect you to the person you lost or to mark the day. Some find it helpful to share the day with others that also want to spend time remembering. However, you may feel that it would be too painful to do this or that it would be unhelpful. Both options are completely fine and does not mean your grief or loss is any more or less important than anyone else's.



Quiet reflection – You might decide to spend time reflecting quietly on your own or in your own way.

Listen to music – Listen to their favourite music (or yours).



Spend time with friends and family – Take time to reconnect with others that bring you joy and support.

Look after yourself – Make sure you're taking care of the basics. Get some exercise and fresh air, eat well and try to get enough sleep.



Routine – Some people find it helpful to keep to their usual routine.

Be kind and good to yourself – Take the pressure off yourself and allow yourself to just be. Some people find it helpful to treat themselves to something special or to something that reminds them of the lost one so they feel connected and reminded of them.



Say 'no' – It is important for self-care and recovery to feel able to set your own boundaries and say no to things that will not be helpful for you.



Social media – Social media and being online can be a great way of keeping in touch with others and getting support. But sometimes people can find it unhelpful, especially if they feel they are being frequently reminded of upsetting memories. Unplug yourself from the internet if it is getting too much.

Limit alcohol – When we are struggling it can be tempting to lean on crutches like alcohol. Unfortunately, this can make things worse in the longer run and slow our recovery. Try to focus on healthier coping strategies instead and get support if needed.



Talk to someone you trust – It can be difficult to reach out to friends and family and it is a common misconception that we are being a burden or that it might affect the relationship. Do ask for help as often others are not aware that you might need it and can feel uncomfortable to ask you.

