

WHAT ARE TRAUMA & LOSS REMINDERS?



During the course of a traumatic event, anything associated with the experience may become linked in our brains to the trauma. This is not a conscious process but a response, as the brain learns to be on alert for danger in the future. Because of this, reminders can show up in unexpected ways, and a person may be unaware of the connections between a current experience and the original event.

TRAUMA REMINDERS

Things our brains connect to a traumatic event that brings up memories or feelings linked to a traumatic event. They can include sounds, smells, situations, feelings or even people.

- *Smell of smoke* from a fireplace reminds a child of the house they lost in a wildfire.
- *Rapid heartbeat* during exercise reminds a child of how they felt whilst hiding during a drive-by shooting.
- *Bedroom* at a family member's house where a child was molested by a family member.



LOSS REMINDERS

Things that bring up memories or feelings regarding someone they have lost. These include things like people, but also activities once shared, special occasions, or physical remembrances of the event.

- *Empty desk* in a classroom where a classmate who was shot during a school shooting sat.
- *Parent's absence* at graduation reminding them of the parent's overdose.
- *A scar* on their body reminding them of a car accident they survived in, but lost a loved one.



It's important to recognize that each child will have their own unique reaction(s) when experiencing a reminder. Refer to our products regarding *Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event* to learn more about what to look out for, and how to help them get through these emotions.