

## Life... Anniversary of assault

### ***Situation:***

Yesterday afternoon I was watching TV and found myself feeling very uncomfortable, and almost going into having flashbacks. It's coming up on two years since I was assaulted, and that's where my thoughts were going.

### ***Symptoms:***

It was difficult to concentrate watching TV because my thoughts were wandering. The more they wandered, the more scared I got. It felt like I was being pulled back into the scene when the attack happened. The longer it went on, the more real it seemed.

### ***Solution:***

I had to work on this for a couple of hours. I started with my simple tool, "This is distressing, not dangerous." When I said it a few times in a row, I started feeling a bit better, then the scary thoughts and pictures would come back into my mind. Then I would get mad because they were so strong and persistent. But now I know I'm strong too. So I kept changing to secure thoughts: "I'm safe right now, in my house. I am not where I was when the assault happened." It's average to have thoughts and flashbacks near the anniversary of something that was traumatic in your life. I don't have to be afraid of my symptoms. That's all these feelings and sensations are, they're just symptoms. Symptoms can't hurt me. They are distressing, they are upsetting, and pretty terrifying, but I'm in no danger, no real danger."

### ***In the past:***

It's been really hard to stop the assault scenes and the feelings that come over my body. It's like a movie that replays in my mind. Yet the movie isn't on a screen. I'm right there in the middle of it. Before I had no idea that I had any control over my thoughts and the drama that was going on in my mind. Several times I would go to bed and curl up into a fetal position, trying to protect myself. A few times I ended up in the hospital because I thought I was going crazy.

This took a lot of practice and effort for me. I'm not completely 100% over what happened to me, but I'm doing so much better. Even my doctor is pleased with my progress.

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