

# “New Normal”

April 2002

The shock of the September 11 attacks has affected all of us in different ways. Some people can easily describe how the terrorist act and other events following it have affected them. Others cannot. Still others feel it has had no effect on them. Over our lifetime, however, we are bound to see just how the day that changed America forever has affected us. Certainly, none of us will ever forget where we were on September 11, 2001.

The World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks and other disasters that are caused by people can lead to severe and complicated reactions, which are more difficult to overcome than are reactions to natural disasters, like hurricanes and floods. This is true for several reasons:

1. The attacks were completely unexpected—there was no warning or time to get ready,
2. The idea that someone would want to kill thousands of people is impossible for us to understand
3. Television, radio, and newspaper coverage made all of us feel as if we were part of the attack, as if we were all “victims.”

“September 10th was the last everyday morning of the rest of our lives.”

—Anna Quindlen, *Newsweek*, Nov. 19, 2001

Jenna had just graduated from college and moved to New York City for a job. She worked in one of the smaller World Trade Center buildings. Heading to work in her second week on the job, she witnessed the towers toppling and ran for her life.

Ashley was always a little anxious on planes. She worried about her flight for days beforehand and had great difficulty relaxing once she was on the plane. Every dip and odd sound made her fear there was a problem on the plane. She has not been able to get on a plane since September 11.



Up until recently, Jordan felt he had to watch the news at least twice a day since the attacks just to keep updated on what is going on in the United States and in the world. In the first weeks after the attack, he had great difficulty not watching the news for at least a couple hours a day.

Sam swears that all of this talk about September 11 is overrated and just wishes everyone would lighten up and chill out and go back to their normal, everyday lives.

Stacy was sexually abused as a child and had been in counseling to help her overcome this trauma. After the WTC incidents, she has had more frequent flashbacks and nightmares.

Though Andrew had always thought about joining the Army, he decided to join up right after September 11.

