



# Older Adults and Their Recollections of September 11th, 2001: Survival and the Aftermath

*Janet Baumann*

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## **Older Adults and Their Recollections of September 11th, 2001: Survival and the Aftermath** Janet Baumann

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were the first attacks on the United States since World War II and were seen live on television throughout the world. Approximately 3000 people died in the attacks on the World Trade Center. While the psychological reactions of children and adults have been studied, there has been little attention to the effects of September 11, 2001 on older adults. The author provides an in-depth look at the perceptions and recollections of September 11, 2001 of 24 seniors attending senior centers in Lower Manhattan and of how they coped in the aftermath. Ninety-two percent of those interviewed witnessed directly the attacks on the World Trade Center. Their reactions include horror, disbelief, denial, numbness, grief, sadness, depression and anxiety. Their primary ways of coping included helping others and keeping busy. The majority of the seniors expressed no longer feeling safe and having a more permanent sense of vulnerability since September 11, 2001. The findings offer a direction for reaching out to seniors, identifying needs, strengthening existing social support networks and providing effective treatment when necessary.

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