

Coping with Job Loss

Losing a job is a significantly stressful life event. The emotional consequences affect not only you, but can also impact your partner and/or children. Individuals who have lost their jobs will likely experience symptoms similar to depression, anxiety, and stress.

The recovery from this loss may take time, and people should allow for a transition period. During that time, people coping with the job loss should openly communicate with their partners and families about their feelings. They should also allow for family members to express their feelings related to the job loss and the impact on the household.

Coping with job loss independently may be difficult; people may want to consider seeking outside help. Also, talking with other people who have experienced job loss may help to lessen the feelings of isolation and hopelessness.

Tips for Handling the Emotional Impact of Job Loss

Things to remember during this time include:

- Allow for time for the job loss to sink in, and attend to the emotions that arise due to the job loss.
- Maintain a sense of purpose for yourself. Set goals related to job hunting, re-prioritize goals, apply organizational skills to regain control over your life.
- Work to maintain your self-esteem. Participate in meaningful activities. Exercise. Nurture yourself.
- Take care of your physical health. Attending to one's emotional health will improve one's self-esteem, which will go far in the pursuit of new employment.
- If you are still working in a company that has had layoffs, you may be experiencing additional stress worrying about your job security. Do not neglect your real feelings about this. Communicate to your supervisors, friends, or family members. Use this time to concentrate on your work, evaluate your performance, and prepare for the possibility of additional layoffs by updating your resume or networking with other professionals you know.
- Be honest with your partner about your reaction to the job loss. You also might practice how you will both tell children, or you might simply ask him or her to be present.
- Tell children the news honestly and at an appropriate way for their age. Assure them that most routine things will stay the same. If this is not the case, then ease any necessary transitions by fully explaining the changes that will be happening.
- Do not create a false sense of security for your children. This could end up making things more difficult in the long run.
- Be realistic with your family about finances. This may mean that you all work together to identify what can be cut back and what things may be delayed.
- Acknowledge your own feelings in an appropriate way. Tell your children that you may be reacting to events differently for a while, and assure them that it is not because of them.
- Let children help out around the house in age-appropriate ways to provide additional time for you to concentrate on job-hunting.
- Remember not to overburden your children with your stress or emotions. Let them know how you are doing, but seek adult relatives or friends in which to confide.

- Ask your family to discuss the job loss regularly in a family meeting where everyone has an opportunity to speak about their feelings associated with the job loss.
- Maintain positive interactions with children, and attempt to stick to the family routine. If possible, add time with children to provide additional assurance that you are there for them and will care for them always.
- Seek outside help if you are a single parent and/or feel that you cannot open up and discuss the impact of the job loss to friends and loved ones.

For More Information:

For a free and confidential mental health screening, go on-line to www.mhacolorado.org.