



Coping with Job Separation

Managing Change and Transition



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EXAMINING COMMON REACTIONS TO JOB SEPARATION

Being separated from one's job can be extremely difficult. Job loss often feels personal. Why? Because much of our identity and sense of self-worth stems from the work we do. Losing a job means more than losing income, it includes loss of routine, loss of stability, loss of interpersonal relationships, and can make us feel as though we have lost our sense of purpose. We may blame ourselves or question what we did wrong.

At times, we may experience feelings of shame or guilt about not being able to provide financial stability, protection, and/or support for the people we care about. Reacting to change is normal. It's normal to feel overwhelmed, disoriented, or just plain scared. Failure to recognize, acknowledge, and deal with the emotions associated with change can initially cause normal reactions to be pushed to the extreme, and can cause sudden and unexpected changes in people's behavior.

Emotions	Reactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shock • Panic • Anger • Bargaining • Depression • Disappointment • Blame • Fear: The unknown • Fear: Losing something important • Anger • Irritation • Frustration • Confusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This CAN'T be right. • Will I lose everything I own? • I can't believe this... • Maybe it was all a mistake • This is the end of the road for me • I won't be able to do what I had planned. • Whose idea was THIS? • What does this REALLY mean? • I've worked here for 10 years... • I can't believe this... • What ELSE is in store? • Why won't THEY tell us what is going on? • Which way should I go?

STRESS ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGE

Examining the Fight, Flight, or Freeze Response

Fight - overworking to find a new job

Flight- seeking a distraction

Freeze- feeling hopeless and paralyzed

Focus on what you can control- remind yourself that you have control over your budget, finding a new job, getting short-term, immediate needs met (i.e. housing, food, bills), familiarize yourself with unemployment benefits

Mental Framing is within your control- What's worrying you? What are you grateful for? What problem can you actively work to solve? Think them through. Write down thoughts or talk about them, then begin the problem-solving process.

Focusing on what is in your control helps to lower anxiety.- Processing the immediate impact of job loss will help you to take a step back and determine what you want from the next phase of your career.



WATCH FOR THE WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS

<u>PHYSICAL</u>	<u>EMOTIONAL</u>	<u>COGNITIVE</u>	<u>RELATIONAL</u>
change in appetite	anxiety	poor concentration	isolation
weight change	bad temper/irritability	lower productivity	loneliness
pounding heart	frustration	lack of new ideas	nagging
frequent colds	negative outlook	agitation	lack of intimacy
headaches	mood swings	spacing out	sexual dysfunction
muscle tension	nightmares	forgetfulness	clamming up
fatigue	depression	dulled senses	social withdrawal
insomnia	nervous laughter	confusion	intolerance
back pain	crying spells	whirling mind	lashing out
high blood pressure	worrying	intrusive thoughts	resentment
rash/skin problems	easily discouraged	excessive worrying	distrust
digestive upsets	overwhelmed	inability to make decisions	relationship problems
clenching/grinding teeth restlessness	boredom inappropriate laughter	loss of sense of humor loss of direction/meaning	negative attitude overly critical/judgmental
increased use of alcohol/drugs/tobacco	feelings of emptiness, doubt, cynicism, apathy	Fixating on the stressor	poor communication

HELPFUL TIPS FOR MANAGING STRESS

- Allow yourself to grieve the loss – face the feelings and lean into the discomfort
- Reach out to stay strong – connect with family and friends for support
- Find other ways to define yourself and bring purpose and meaning to your life
- Get moving to relieve stress – aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day
- Eat well to keep your focus and maintain normal sleep schedule
- Stay positive to keep up your energy – try to maintain your sense of hope

Jobs provide us with social outlets. They give us structure, purpose, and meaning to our lives. Feelings of betrayal from your Employer, powerlessness over the direction of your life, or blaming yourself for some perceived shortcoming or mistake may come up for you as you navigate this period of change and transition. These are all normal reactions.

- Give yourself time to adjust – if you allow yourself to feel, the feelings will eventually pass. Write about your feelings and take advantage of creative outlets to express yourself.
- Work towards acceptance. Try not to beat yourself up – you need to have confidence while looking for a new job.
- View your job loss as temporary setback and try to learn from the experience and pick yourself back up. Adversity helps us to grow stronger and more resilient.
- Maintain balance in your life – do not allow your job loss or job search to consume you. Continue to find time for fun activities and relaxation. Pursue activities that bring joy and purpose to your life. Try a new hobby or get back to older hobbies you enjoyed. Spend time in nature.
- Maintain a regular daily routine. When conducting a job search or working on building your resume, establish a “start” and “end” time. This will help you to be more efficient and productive.
- Identify positive traits such as positive skill sets, accomplishments, successes, things you feel proud of. This will help to remind you of your strengths

Want to learn more? Take a look at the free “Emotional Intelligence Toolkit” published by HelpGuide to learn tools for managing stress and emotions.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/mental-health/emotional-intelligence-toolkit.htm>

FAMILY MATTERS: DEALING WITH JOB LOSS

- ✓ Tell your spouse/partner what is happening in your career regardless of how bad the situation looks. If you have children, be open and honest with them about what's happening. Make sure your children understand it is not anyone's fault. Children tend to internalize things and place blame on themselves or on you for the job loss. Keep an open dialogue about this.
- ✓ Recognize and accept atypical feelings of guilt, anger, and fear. Job loss has many effects, including guilt, anger, depression, even feelings of relief. However, for most people, it does represent somewhat of an emotional roller coaster; your heart is in your throat and the dips and turns are unpredictable.
- ✓ The spouse/partner out of work needs a safe place to experience these reactions. His/her partner needs to provide an interested and accepting forum for those feelings to have a voice. Never talk someone out of what they feel or act as if a feeling "doesn't make sense." Don't imply that the partner out of work should be "over this by now." The partner may need to be aware of his/her own feelings of fear or anger to be a receptive listener. Counseling with a professional can help with this process.
- ✓ Just as doctors shouldn't treat their own kids, partners shouldn't direct each other's job search. Support, encouragement, ideas, and discussion are all great but setting up the calendar and the "to do" list for your partner are not. First, it puts responsibility where it doesn't belong and can further undermine self-confidence. Second, the spousal role of providing emotional support does not fit well with acting as a supervisor. Even if a partner is having trouble getting started, or is stuck at some point in the job search, professional career counseling resources are available to provide the appropriate push.
- ✓ Make an effort to maintain the usual family routines and rituals.
- ✓ In times of trouble, a healthy reaction is to spend more time together. With job loss, however, the usual schedules and routines are often disrupted. This can interfere with opportunities for closeness and sharing. What used to be taken for granted is now up for grabs and may change.
- ✓ If the pattern before job loss was to have dinner together on Tuesdays and Fridays, try to maintain that pattern. If you both enjoy a bike ride on Saturday, keep it up. Sometimes, a conscious effort must be made to schedule shared activities that in the past did not require planning.

*Couples dealing with job loss are faced with difficult choices and challenges. Keeping the above points in mind will help reduce unnecessary tension and keep the couple engaged as a team in overcoming this problem. If you or your immediate family members need additional assistance, **contact National EAP at 800-624-2593.***

MOVING ON AFTER JOB LOSS - 4 CRITICAL STEPS

1. Financial Resources

A number of practical issues must be addressed. A first step is determining how long your financial resources will sustain you. Make a budget to help you plan. Often people take the time to consider whether a career change is in order. Creating a plan for your future is the next step.

2. Unemployment

Finding out if one qualifies for unemployment compensation should be one the first things that is taken care of. The next would be applying for this benefit. There are certain criteria that must be met; your local Employment Service Center or Human Resources will be able to help you. The Website (www.dol.gov) has information on unemployment compensation. This includes links to the individual sites of many states.

3. Health Insurance

If your employer provides you with health benefits, request information on continuance of health and life insurance benefits. COBRA law enables continuation of health insurance coverage through the group plan at a monthly fee.

4. Reference Letter

Be sure to ask for a reference letter so you have it for your files. New employers will ask for references, and it's much easier to have it in your files vs. having to call your previous employer to get it.



RESOURCES

Websites

- <https://www.careeronestop.org/>
Careers and career information
- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta>
United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration
- <https://dol.ny.gov/>
New York State Department of Labor

Resume Tips

- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/professional_technical_writing/workplace_writers.html
Resume design and presentation, samples, reviewing employment documents

Job Search

- <https://www.aarp.org/work/job-search/>
- <https://www.monster.com/>
- <https://www.indeed.com/>
- <https://www.careerbuilder.com/?cbRecursionCnt=1>
- <https://www.glassdoor.com/index.htm>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/>

Interviewing Skills

- <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/boost-your-interview-iq>
- <https://www.thebalance.com/job-interview-skills-to-get-hired-4138625>
- <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/5836-top-interviewing-skills.html>



NATIONAL EAP HAS GOT YOUR BACK!

Remember, National EAP is here to help. You have continued access to EAP Services for up to 90 days after termination. A full list of EAP Services can be found at [MY EAP](#). Contact us for free, confidential support. We are available 24/7 to assist you with your various needs.

Looking for additional resources?

- Login to the [Member Portal](#)
- Type into the search bar “job loss” to be redirected to various resources, articles, tips, and tools.
- Check out the “working” tab for additional supports.

[CLICK HERE](#) to login to your Member Portal. UN and PW is your company name

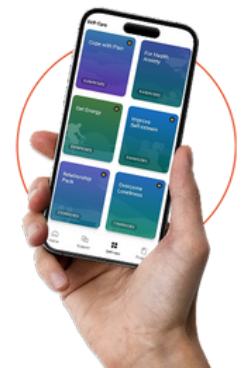


Anonymous | Private | 24/7 Access

Job separation can bring a mix of emotions, from uncertainty to opportunity. Mindfulness helps you acknowledge and process these feelings with clarity, allowing you to move forward with resilience and confidence.

To help navigate these challenges, **Wysa, National EAP's new wellness platform, blends cognitive behavioral techniques, mindfulness, and empathetic conversations to support your well-being.**

This private, non-judgmental app helps you manage stress and build resilience—free to you!



DOWNLOAD WYSA

[Scan the QR Code below or Click Here](#)



Free Financial Consultations

Your journey may be changing, but your support continues. For 90 days after your employment ends, you still have free access to Financial Assist services through your Employee Assistance Program.

Financial Assist

Speak with expert financial professionals — CFP® practitioners and licensed CPAs — for free 30-minute phone consultations on topics such as:

- Credit and Debt Management
- Budgeting and Saving
- Mortgage & Homeownership
- Retirement and Tax Planning
- Student Loans and College Funding

**Need Assistance?
Contact Us Today!**

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