



HOW TO COPE WHEN COWORKERS LOSE THEIR JOBS:

Managing Change and Transition



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You've just learned of your company's Reduction in Force (RIF). Despite being a downsizing survivor, you feel a bit like a victim too. You are grieving the loss of your coworkers and must quickly adjust to new organizational change. RIF survivors may experience jumbled emotions and it takes time to work through them.

COMMON REACTIONS TO A REDUCTION IN FORCE:

- Feeling a loss of control
- Feeling relieved, thankful
- Sadness and grief for your coworkers who lost their jobs
- Guilt that you survived the Reduction in Force
- Anxiety (waiting for the next bad news)
- Mistrust, anger, and insecurity
- Lack of motivation

The strength of the emotional reactions and the speed with which a person moves from a non-constructive reaction to a constructive reaction varies with each individual. 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? • What should I do now?

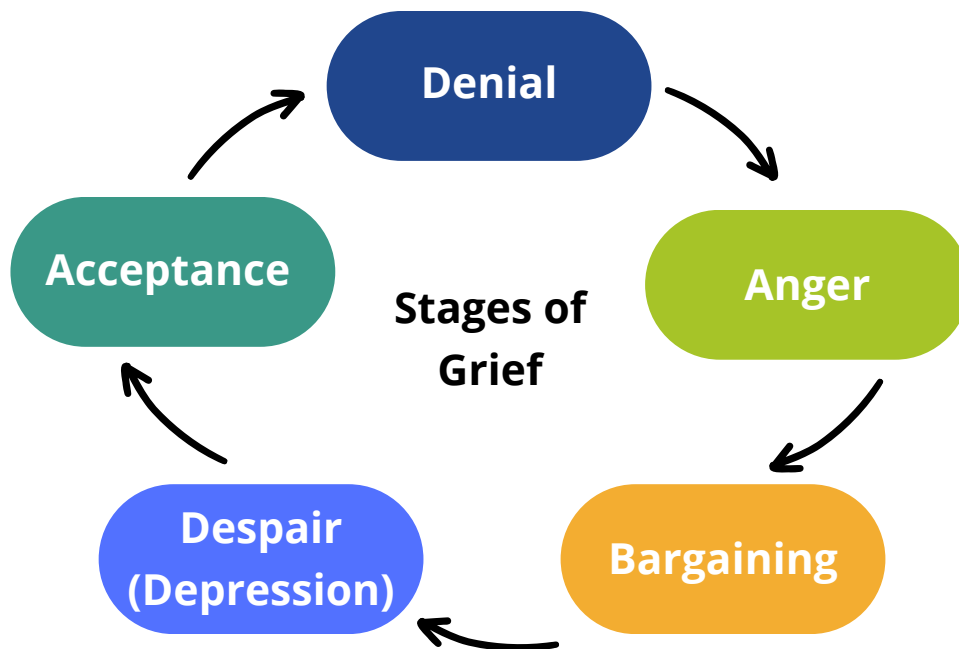
PHASES OF TRANSITION

Stage 1 ENDING	How will I manage? What will I do? What will happen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning of transition Ending to an existing pattern of behavior – old responsibilities change or end Emotions experienced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shock and disbelief -Denial -Anxiety -Sense of anger
Stage 2 NEUTRAL ZONE (Exploration)	What do I do now? Who am I?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary state between old and new beginning A time when information is gathered about current situation and the future New plans are made Emotions experienced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Confusion/chaos/uncertainty -Lagging productivity -Fear
Stage 3 BEGINNING	Is that light at the end of the tunnel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewal and realignment Personal resilience is seen New goals result from planning process and new relationships are formed Emotions experienced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Acceptance -Hope -Action and creativity -New opportunities



5 STAGES OF GRIEF

Grief is not only felt after the loss of a loved one. Grief is an emotional reaction to change. The 5 Stages of Grief can be applied after surviving a Reduction in Force. The 5 Stages of Grief are not linear, you can go back and forth between the stages and everyone responds to grief and loss differently. It is best not to think of grief as a series of stages. Rather, we may think of the grieving process as a roller coaster, full of ups and downs, highs and lows. The ride tends to be rougher in the beginning but the difficult periods tend to become less intense and shorter as time passes. However, it takes time to work through these stages. Be patient with yourself.



Denial: unable to accept the loss, avoidance, shock, fear, confusion

Anger: blaming others, frustration, irritability

Bargaining: struggling to find meaning; questioning things

Despair: overwhelmed, sad, down, feeling helpless

Acceptance: coming to terms with the loss, moving forward with life

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF AND LOSS

Physical

- Difficulty sleeping
- Loss of appetite
- Headaches
- Physical aches and pains
- Exhaustion
- Restlessness
- Rapid heartbeat

Emotional

- Sadness
- Yearning
- Worry/anxiety
- Anger
- Numbness
- Guilt
- Depression
- Feeling hypervigilant
- Powerlessness

Social/Behavioral

- Feeling withdrawn or isolated
- Feeling detached from others
- Questioning the reason for your loss or questioning your purpose in life
- Forgetfulness
- Lack of interest in things
- Crying or sobbing
- Avoidance of places where memories are strong
- Decrease in productivity

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. **How am I being affected by feelings of grief and loss?** Consider your physical, emotional, and behavioral reactions to grief.
2. **What am I currently doing to cope with grief/loss?** If you are struggling to cope, think of things you can do to improve your mood (i.e. self-care).
3. **Who can I turn to for support?** Think of your social supports and who can offer you a compassionate ear when you are feeling down.



Mental health For All

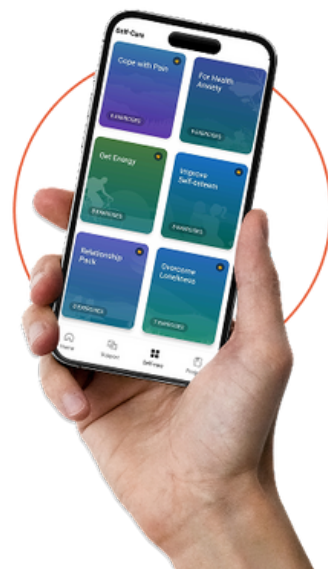
wysa

Organizational changes big and small, can bring a range of emotions. Mindfulness helps us recognize and embrace those feelings with a clear mind and move forward with a greater sense of calm.

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!

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TIPS FOR COPING WHEN COWORKERS LOSE THEIR JOBS

- ✓ **Recognize that your emotions are legitimate:** It is normal to feel various emotions after a RIF. It takes time for the intensity of your current emotions to dissipate.
- ✓ **Seek access to your supervisor:** Assuming your supervisor is readily available and perceived by you as concerned about employees, your time with him or her should help you feel reassured.
- ✓ **Maintain daily routine:** Attempt to recreate the daily patterns you experienced prior to the layoffs.
- ✓ **Be kind to yourself; practice self-care:** Care for yourself by eating well, exercising, and resting when needed. Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, chocolate and nicotine and depressants such as alcohol.
- ✓ **Express your feelings:** Share your thoughts and feelings with those who are supportive and helpful. Reach out to family and friends.
- ✓ **Seek professional assistance:** If you are taking these steps but you are feeling increasingly worried or depressed, seek help from a professional counselor. Call us at National EAP for support.
- ✓ **Connect your former coworkers to your network:** Adding your former coworkers to your connections on Facebook, LinkedIn, and other online social networks is a great way to stay in touch and help expand their network for potential job opportunities.

NATIONAL EAP HAS GOT YOUR BACK!

Remember, National EAP is here to help. Contact us for free, confidential support. We are available 24/7 to assist you with your various needs.

Looking for additional resources?



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

