

SELF HELP

Coping with job loss

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Losing a job releases a torrent of losses: financial, social, psychological and biological.



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The stability and security of your lifestyle are jeopardized, as well as your health, happiness, productivity and relationships.

People who lose their jobs risk losing their self-respect, the respect of others, friends, self-confidence, social support, the structure and routine of their lives, and their sense of dignity and place of belonging in the world.

Many who lose their jobs feel it as a loss of identity and wonder, "Who am I?" As losses escalate, dreams for the

future, meaning and purpose in life, and hope may fall away only to be replaced by negative emotions such as anger, guilt, shame, anxiety, depression, and stress.

Stress contributes to physical problems such as backaches, headaches, stomachaches and high blood pressure. High levels of stress also reduce productivity, concentration and coordination, and contribute to irritability, social withdrawal and relationship conflict.

When people feel bad, they often reach for a quick fix, something to make them feel good – alcohol, food, cigarettes, drugs.

But these bad habits and addictions are likely to further increase long-term stress even while affording short-term relief.

Here are some suggestions to help you be resilient while searching for a new job:

- Count your blessings, however short in supply they may seem to be. Looking at what is good in your life is the perfect antidote for self-pity and negative thinking.
- Look at your life through a window rather than a mirror. See the larger world beyond yourself and involve yourself in concerns and interests larger than yourself.
- People who see and have empathy for the suffering of others are unlikely to get stuck in self pity.
- Know that you are more than your job title. You are a human being with interests, relationships, personal qualities, skills, and talents.
- You might even want to compile a list of your attributes to remind yourself who you are.
- Inform everyone you know that you are seeking employment and ask

- you of any leads they obtain.
- Recognize you are not alone – many others are in your position. Reach out to others who are unemployed and seeking work, form support networks, and assist each other with leads and contacts.
- Seek employment in an alternative line of work in which you have relevant talent and skills.
- Volunteer. Not only does volunteering keep your work skills fresh, it also contributes to self-esteem and can improve your marketability with prospective employers.
- Take care of yourself with regular exercise, healthy meals, and sleep patterns.
- Maintain relationships with people who matter to you.
- Know that you will eventually recover from this setback.

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