

Dealing With Loss

When dealing with a major loss, such as losing one's job, there are several similarities that everyone experiences. It is called a grief process—grieving over losing one's income, stability of a job, loss of friends, social connections or work identity. The grief process has several stages with an expected resolution of accepting the loss and finding new opportunities.

Denial and Isolation. The initial state of denial is common when confronted with a major loss. This inability to comprehend fully what happened is short lived. Disbelief and shock is a common reaction. There is also a tendency to withdraw from social and daily activities.

Anger. Once the shock of the loss has subsided, it is common to react with anger, rage or resentment. These feelings may be directed at the employer, the person making the announcement, family members, friends or co-workers. You may find yourself more irritable and impatient.

Bargaining. This is an attempt to postpone the grieving process by bargaining with the employer.

Depression. Anger may be replaced by a sense of loss or physical and emotional distress over the future. Physical expressions of grief may include decreased appetite, sleep disturbances, weight loss or difficulties concentrating. Emotional expressions of distress may include crying, panic and helplessness in relation to losing one's job and looking for new opportunities.

Acceptance. This is the final stage of grief when the loss of job is fully accepted. You are now ready to face new challenges and opportunities.

There can be great variations of how people will experience loss of employment and the above stages may not be followed in the specified order. In fact, people may go back and forth between the stages as they may experience a wide range of emotions at different times. Some people may be relieved and may not experience the loss. Regardless, you will be able to cope with your situation. You will be able to develop strategies on how to find new employment opportunities. You will find a new job or new opportunities to lead a productive life! However, if the signs of grief persist, it would be beneficial to seek professional assistance to help you resolve the grief process and return to a state of productivity and wellbeing.

Additional Information

This information is brought to you by ComPsych® GuidanceResources®. This company-sponsored benefit offers confidential help and support 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, at no cost to you or your immediate family. The Guidance Consultants can assist you with your concerns at: **844.UCI.EAP3 (824.3273)**

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