



Insights

**Resources for a
Workforce in Transition**

EAP Toolkit: Resources for Managing a Changing Workforce

Changes in the workplace can happen quickly, leaving managers and employees feeling vulnerable, anxious and, often, angry. While it is important to be realistic about all aspects of life transitions and to acknowledge feelings of sadness, anger, frustration and fear, it also is important to control these feelings so you, your company and your colleagues can move forward. Your GuidanceResources Employee Assistance Program understands this and is available to help to you and your employees, at work and at home, during difficult transitions. This resource guide explains how the EAP can assist with understanding and supervising during transition periods and offers HelpSheetsSM, flyers and posters of varying length to help those affected by this transition understand and work through their challenges. The first section is directed at managers who must lead the transition. The second section can help employees, both those leaving and those remaining with the company.

How the GuidanceResources Program Can Help

Your GuidanceResources program has been designed to give you and your colleagues simple, fast, direct access to confidential services 24 hours a day, seven days a week by phone, online or via our mobile site. To help you better understand how your Employee Assistance Program works, here is an overview of typical services offered by an EAP:

Confidential Counseling

Life can be stressful. The EAP offers relief with short-term counseling services for you and your dependents to help handle concerns constructively, before they become issues. You can call anytime about marital, relationship and family problems; stress, anxiety and depression; grief and loss; job pressures or substance abuse. Your call will be answered by our highly trained GuidanceConsultantsSM, clinicians who will listen to your concerns and guide you to the resources you need.

Work-Life Solutions

Too much to do, and too little time to get it all done? Work-life specialists at ComPsych® do the research and provide qualified referrals and customized resources for child and elder care, moving, pet care, college planning, home repair, buying a car, planning an event, selling a house and more.

Legal Support

With GuidanceResources, you have an attorney on call. You can speak with an expert about divorce, custody, adoption, real estate, debt and bankruptcy, landlord/tenant issues, civil and criminal actions and other legal issues. If you require representation, you can be referred to a qualified attorney for a free 30-minute consultation and will be given a 25 percent reduction in customary legal fees thereafter.

Financial Information

Everyone has financial questions. With GuidanceResources, you can get answers about budgeting, debt management, tax issues and other money concerns from on-staff CPAs, Certified Financial Planners® and other financial experts, simply by calling the toll-free number.

GuidanceResources® Online

Guidanceresources.com and the mobile app, GuidanceNowSM, allow anytime, anywhere access to expert information on thousands of topics, including relationships, work, school, children, wellness, legal, financial and free time. You can search for qualified child and elder care, attorneys and financial planners, as well as ask questions, take self-assessments and more.

GuidanceResources benefits are strictly confidential. To view the ComPsych HIPAA privacy notice, please go to www.guidanceresources.com/privacy. If you have questions regarding your company's program, please contact your internal benefits manager or ComPsych account manager.

How the GuidanceResources Program Can Help

Counseling Assistance

- Grief, depression or anxiety
- Substance abuse/addictions
- Domestic violence
- Parenting or relationship issues
- Job search pressures

Work-Life Balance

- Finding Moving and relocation resources
- Support groups and community resources
- Child or elder care arrangements
- Job search assistance
- Education and professional training resources

Legal Concerns

- Landlord-tenant issues
- Divorce and separation
- Wills and estate planning
- Criminal and civil issues
- Bankruptcy filing

Financial Issues

- Credit card debt and liability
- Identity theft
- Retirement planning
- Income tax questions
- Budgeting help
- Insurance issues

Encouraging a Healthier, Happier, Better-educated Workforce

Your EAP is more than a response to crises or personal issues. It is a tool to promote a healthier, more productive and more cohesive workforce. As such, we regularly provide educational materials on thousands of health, well-being and life topics. These materials, along with the GuidanceResources Online website and GuidanceNow mobile site, are designed to encourage easy distribution.

The following materials are examples of what is provided and can be used to educate and inform your colleagues. New materials are produced regularly, so talk with your internal benefits manager about what else may be available to you.

Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.

Section 1

Resources for Managers

HelpSheets

- Navigating Organizational Change
- Workplace Downsizing
- Managing Through Change
- Resiliency During Tough Times

Posters and Flyers

- What is resilience?
- Resources for Employees Facing Job Loss
- Learning to Accept Change

Navigating Organizational Change

Changes in the workplace can happen quickly, leaving us to feel vulnerable and unaware of where to go for much-needed assistance. Whenever life throws us off course, it presents an opportunity to pause, reassess and reflect on what we truly want to create. Then we can move forward feeling more on course and avoiding that uneasy feeling that we are just going through the motions with no feelings of accomplishment or satisfaction.

One's perspective about what's happening is critical. With a job transition – or any type of change – including a troubled relationship or unplanned life adjustment, one voice within us states, “Why is this happening to me?” while another voice may ask, “What's the lesson in this for me?” or “How do I use this experience to help me grow, and how might I take advantage of this chance for fresh start?” While it is important to be realistic about all aspects of life transitions and to acknowledge feelings of sadness, anger, frustration and fear, your next move is a crucial choice. Do you want to remain stuck in pain and stress, or are you ready to focus your energy forward, looking at how best to learn from the experience?

Change can be scary and may leave you feeling overwhelmed. Follow the steps below to get started. It is dangerous to oversimplify the complex nature of any life transition, so tailor these suggestions to your own unique reality.

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** Let yourself feel what you feel, and find a way to release some of the emotion. Physical activity, writing down your thoughts or talking with others can help let this energy out and prevent the distraction of negative thoughts and self-defeating behaviors.
- **Reflect and refocus.** Take stock of what you still have, and express gratitude, such as “I still have my ability to think, my special talents and my aspirations. I'm grateful for relationships and for my family.” Take a walk, a bike ride or a longer hot shower than usual, and ask yourself some powerful questions, such as “How do I want to feel three months from now? What will it take to get there? What does my ideal week look like? What could I do to realize that? Who could help with that?”
- **Choose.** Entertain the notion that everything is a choice. Decide what you want to choose as the next chapter of your life. Simply choosing doesn't guarantee you'll get it, however. The power of your intentions makes a huge difference. Feeling like you have a choice is certainly better than feeling like you have no influence, so why not adopt this philosophy? Choosing what matters most and what you'll honor as authentic priorities is absolutely up to you. It is about being resilient and truly empowered to choose your life's course rather than being a victim of circumstance and replaying old thought patterns.
- **Get into action.** Start by visualizing how you want to feel or where you want to be, perhaps three months from now. Work backwards from this goal until you find something small enough that you can do the next day or the next week. Picking first steps and finding the right people for encouragement and support will help you realize your goal.
- **Utilize your GuidanceResources program.** Did you know that GuidanceResources is a free, confidential service for you and your household family members that can take on your To Do List and provide you with the amount of time necessary to manage the changes around you? Examples of services include:
 - Personalized concierge resources including child-, elder- and pet-care solutions, medical cost estimation and claims analysis, transportation and local errand resources, low-cost home repair and utility assistance, etc.
 - Unlimited telephonic appointments with GuidanceResources attorneys and financial planners to assist with personal legal matters and financial issues.
 - Confidential guidance from a local counselor to provide stress management assistance during the time of organizational transition.

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.

[Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.](#)

Workplace Downsizing

Laying off employees can be a stressful task for management, as managers may be equally vulnerable to the emotional toll that downsizing takes on a workplace. The following are some tips for managers on how to approach the situation:

During Downsizing

Communicate. Communicate early, communicate often and, especially, communicate openly and honestly. Plan ahead of time what you will say. The last thing you want is to misinform anyone about the facts of an already difficult situation. If you don't have an answer, find out. The main responsibility of being a manager is to manage expectations, dispel rumors and maintain a professional atmosphere at work.

Step up. The decision to cut jobs is a business decision. It's up to your employer who makes the lay-off announcement. Follow their direction.

Be prepared: If you are given an official announcement by your employer, memorize it so you do not have to read it to your employees. The purpose of a prewritten announcement is to ensure consistency in the message given to the employees. The announcement usually has all the pertinent information on health care coverage and any other support the company is offering.

Take it slowly. Be prepared to answer any questions in clear, calm language.

Expect emotions. Some employees may be upset over the job loss. Be prepared for the fact that the anger may be directed at you. If that is the case, don't take it personally. Avoid any statements such as "I know how you feel" or "This could be a blessing in disguise." In addition, humor is not likely to be well-received in such situations.

After Downsizing

Remaining staff. Those employees who avoided being laid off may be dealing with anger, shock, guilt, fear, frustration or resentment, especially if their friends have been let go. They may feel betrayed and less than optimistic about the company. Fear of future cuts could be weighing on their minds, as well. Do your best to be as open about communicating with them as you were with those losing their jobs. During this time:

- Acknowledge the layoffs
- Increase your availability for questions and concerns
- Clarify how expectations and roles have changed
- Highlight opportunities for new challenges and professional growth
- Set a positive example and show appreciation for the work they are doing
- Encourage them to contact their Employee Assistance Program for help

Take Care of Yourself

Like your staff, you may have a wide range of feelings. That makes it all the more important that you take care of yourself mentally and physically during this time. Here are some tips for keeping your stress in control during this transition period:

- By recognizing your feelings, you can learn to feel more in control and able to self-regulate.
- Set realistic expectations and take pride in small successes.
- Take good care of yourself. Eat healthier. Keep coffee and alcohol to a minimum or replace them with water. Exercise regularly.
- Make the most of your time away from work. Try not to think about work when you're not there. Spend a few minutes each day doing something just for you.
- Find ways to laugh, whether with your spouse, family or friends or through books and movies. Laughter is the best cure for stress.
- Consider counseling through your Employee Assistance Program. Talking with a professional can be an effective outlet to express your feelings.

[Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.](#)

Managing Through Change

The only thing permanent in life is change, and in today's world change is the rule rather than the exception.

It has been estimated that under good conditions, people spend at least 5 to 10 percent of their time and energy managing changes; they can easily spend half or all of their time and energy instead. When changes happen in the workplace, both staff and managers are impacted, however it often falls to managers to communicate and navigate their staff through the changes. Understanding the normal reactions and how to counter them is the first step to developing strategies for helping you and your staff members handle changes as positively and effectively as possible. Here's how:

Five Dimensions of Organizational Readiness for Change

If History of Change is a barrier to change:

- Explain change plans fully.
- Make information readily available.
- Ensure plans include benefits for end users and for the organization.
- Spend extra time talking.
- Ask for additional feedback from the workforce.
- Start small and simple.
- Arrange for a quick, positive, visible payoff.
- Publicize success.

If Clarity of Expectations is a barrier to change:

- Emphasize the common interests of all participants.
- Specify all assumptions about the impact of the change, including potential problems.
- Ask for feedback.
- Don't suppress negative opinions.
- Focus on clear outcomes.

If Origin of the Idea or Problem is a barrier to change:

- Specify and confront end user concerns first.
- Clarify who wants the change and why.
- Present a clear case for change.
- Bridge communication gaps among various groups in the organization.
- Spend more time communicating.
- Set goals that address end users concerns first.
- Arrange for a quick, visible payoff.

If Lack of Top Management Support is a barrier to change:

- Become knowledgeable about the change.
- Develop upper level allies.
- Develop informal coalitions for support.
- Build a case for change that appeals to top-level concerns.
- Start and sustain a formal management review process.
- Ask for help.
- Keep focused on practical outcomes.

If Compatibility of Change is a barrier to change:

- Specify how the change fits with overall organizational directions.
- Make plans, overt, concrete, and simple.
- Integrate the change into ongoing procedures whenever possible.
- Initially implement the change in the most acceptable surroundings.
- Don't oversell the change.

Change vs. Transition

Change

- Situational
- External

Transition

- Psychological
- Internal

Changes are...

- Essential differences that require adjustment to a new identity or situation.
- Never the same. They can be gradual or sudden, expected or unexpected, big or small.

Transition is...

- The psychological process people go through to come to terms with a new situation. It's letting go of the old reality and the old identity you had before the change took place.
- Made up of three phases: Ending, Neutral Zone, New Beginning.

The Ending

Any time there is a change, you and others are likely to lose something or to have to give up something. That something may be external (budget, personnel, space) or internal (hopes for a promotion, a sense of control, faith in the leadership).

The Neutral Zone

The Neutral Zone deals with understanding what comes after letting go. It is the very core of the transition process. It is the place and time when the old habits that are no longer adaptive to the situation are extinguished and new, better-adapted patterns of habit begin to take shape.

The New Beginning

A New Beginning is when you make a new commitment and actually become the new person that the new situation demands. This happens only when the timing of the transition process allows it to happen. People make the New Beginning only if they have first made an Ending and have spent some time in the Neutral Zone.

Source: *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change* by William Bridges

Staff Expectations

Old Deal vs. New Deal Employment

Under the old deal of employment, the company has power over employees: to make them, develop them and to keep them a passive position waiting to be molded and bent. People who successfully "move forward" to transition are not committed to company, but to a personal set of skills, goals, interests and affiliations. The company offers not permanent employment, but challenges that give the employees an opportunity to develop their interests and a promise of mutual dialogue and openness to manage the two sets of needs.

Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.

If you...

Old Deal

- Are loyal
- Work hard
- Do as you're told

New Deal

- Develop skills we need
- Apply them efficiently
- Accept accountability

The company will provide...

Old Deal

- A secure job
- Steady pay increases
- Financial security

New Deal

- A challenging workplace
- Support for development
- Rewards for your contribution

And you will be...

Old Deal

- Part of a safe, secure organization

New Deal

- A dynamic leader in a changing organization

Reasons People Resist Change

1. Preference for the familiar; fear of the unknown
2. Impatience for a quick fix and all-or-nothing thinking
3. Rigid models of what's right
4. Too much "work" to change

Bumps Along the Way

When facing change and ambiguity, people experience different emotions. Emotional reactions to change are often mistaken for poor morale. There are natural responses all people can go through when faced something different.

Inertia: Difficulty in deciding to get started (often seems easier to stay where you are)

Self-Doubt: Not believing you really can change or operate in a different way

Anger: Blaming others for having to go through the change

Chaos: Seeing so many ways to get there that you become lost

Common Work Problems During Times of Change and Stress

- Absenteeism
- Increase in accidents/mistakes
- Increased constructive discharge complaints
- Team rebellions
- Poison pen letters
- "Us" vs. "Them" rivalries
- Conflict between "traitors" and "loyalists"
- Paralysis in productivity
- Increased turnover
- Harassment complaints

Tips for Managing Staff Through Change...

- Increase communication to prevent rumors, anxiety and mistakes
- Use hotlines, open forums, newsletters, videos
- Encourage participation in training and coaching opportunities
- Make contingency plans
- Watch for situations that could bring potential harm to an individual, group or the organization
- Facilitate the grieving and transition process
- Maintain performance standards and adhere to constructive counseling policies and procedures
- Celebrate the wins

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Resiliency During Tough Times

For organizations, change never ends; that is the one constant we can all agree on. Still, that doesn't make it any less challenging. Regardless of how capable and in control we may feel, there will be times of unrest and anxiety at any workplace. As a leader, your role is to understand change as part of business and to convey that understanding to your employees so that they can understand and embrace it, too. Of the many factors that go into successful change, whether personal or business-related, the most important may be resiliency. Resilience is the measure of our ability to welcome challenges, overcome adversity and get back on track to achieving our goals. With that in mind, here is some information on resilience amid changing times.

What is resilience?

Resilience is more than coping; it's about confronting crises and difficult situations without getting overwhelmed by them. Resilient people are better able to handle life's stressors and to adapt to changing situations. Being resilient can help protect you from depression, stress and anxiety, too.

Some of the characteristics of resilient people include:

- Strong relationships
- Self-motivation
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities
- Skills in communication and problem solving
- Self-awareness
- Emotional control

Resiliency in the Workplace

All business involves some inherent risk. Anyone in management understands that—or if they don't, they soon will. That's why resilience is such a useful tool in today's business world. Resilience means controlling your ego, not panicking in the face of a setback, and having the patience and ability to stay focused on long-term goals. Resilience can help you weather storms, remain steady and make rational decisions instead of being driven by emotion.

How can you cope with the regular changes inherent in business today?

There will always be periods of large growth, times of relative stability and times where the economy slows or recedes. To thrive, businesses must respond to these waves appropriately. While workplace upheaval can be stressful, there are things you can do to cope with this challenging environment:

Find a healthy balance. Your work is important, but it's unhealthy for you mentally, physically and socially if you live, breathe and sleep your job. Get off the rollercoaster and away from the stress and uncertainty by surrounding yourself with friends and family and finding positive outlets to spend your free time.

Be positive. There is only so much you can control. How you feel about your situation is one of those things. Look for the silver lining and practice positive self-affirmations—it can change your mood and outlook on life.

Look for the gray. Even though it may seem so, not everything is black and white or gain and loss. Search for the middle ground. It can be a far less stressful place.

How to Manage Anger and Stress

A new boss. A drop in headcount. A change in procedure... When facing change, it's fairly common for those in the workplace today to feel anger and stress. It's important, however, to remember that allowing such emotions to run you leads to mental, physical and social consequences.

If anger is getting the best of you, there are a number of steps you can take to manage it in a healthier way:

- **Relax and calm down.** Take deep breaths. Count to 10 and let the tension escape from your body. Try relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga and progressive muscle relaxation.
- **Remove yourself from the environment.** If a person or situation is causing you to feel extremely angry, or if you feel that you cannot talk about your emotions or express your anger positively, excuse yourself and walk away.
- **Identify the source.** What exactly is making you angry? When you recognize the cause, approach it in a positive, productive way.
- **Think before taking action.** Carefully consider the consequences of your response. Will you regret saying what is on your mind? Is there a better way to express your anger than the first impulse that came to you? Do not overreact. Avoid making assumptions or guesses; know the facts before you speak out about someone or something.
- **Assert yourself appropriately.** If you feel strongly about something, do not hold back from saying what is on your mind. Let the other person know what you want. Be clear and direct in your message.
- **Divert your attention.** If there is nothing you can do to change the situation, (e.g., you are stuck in a terrible traffic jam that is making you increasingly irritated), think of something else. Focus on a pleasant thought, an upcoming vacation or a happy memory.
- **Find humor in the situation.** When appropriate, learn to laugh at life and conflicts with others. Break the tension and defuse the situation with a smile, a joke or a funny (but not sarcastic) comment.
- **Be patient.** Try to be tolerant and empathetic of others. Attempt to understand their situations and behaviors.
- **Find a substitute outlet for anger.** Instead of acting on an aggressive urge, find a creative outlet for your energy. Start an exercise program. Take up a physically challenging new sport like kickboxing. Try a new hobby or artistic endeavor such as painting.
- **Get advice from others.** If you simply do not know how to deal with an angry feeling or situation, ask friends or family for suggestions on how they got through similar situations.

There are also a number of ways you can alleviate stress in your day-to-day life. Here are 10:

- **Get enough sleep.** If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.
- **Schedule a realistic day.** If you can't avoid back-to-back appointments, try to at least give yourself a few moments for a breathing spell.
- **Do not rely on your memory.** Write down appointment times, assignment due dates, etc. As an old Chinese proverb states, "The palest ink is better than the most retentive memory."
- **Be prepared to wait.** A paperback, crossword puzzle or cell phone game can make a wait in a post-office line almost pleasant.
- **Procrastination is stressful.** Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.
- **Relax your standards.** The world will not end if the grass does not get mowed this weekend or if the sheets have to be changed on Sunday instead of Saturday.
- **Learn to say 'no.'** Saying no to extra projects, social events and activities you do not have the time or energy for takes practice.
- **Eliminate destructive self-talk.** "I can't ..." or "I'm too inexperienced to ..." are negative thoughts that can increase stress levels.
- **Take time for yourself.** Develop a belief that everyone needs quiet time every day to relax and be alone.
- **Turn off your phone.** Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep or read without interruption? Drum up the courage to temporarily disconnect.

Get Support

If you would like to learn more about resilience and how it can help you deal with anger or stress, contact your Employee Assistance Program for free and confidential support, resources and information. Help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

[Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.](#)



What is resilience?

Resilience is more than coping; it's about confronting crises and difficult situations without getting overwhelmed by them. Resilient people are better able to handle life's stressors and to adapt to changing situations. Being resilient can help protect you from depression, stress and anxiety, too. Some of the characteristics of resilient people include:

- Strong relationships
- Self-motivation
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities
- Skills in communication and problem solving
- Self-awareness
- Emotional control

Resiliency in the Workplace

All business involves some inherent risk. Anyone in management understands that—or if they don't, they soon will. That's why resilience is such a useful tool in today's business world. Resilience means controlling your ego, not panicking in the face of a setback, and having the patience and ability to stay focused on long-term goals. Resilience can help you weather storms, remain steady and make rational decisions instead of being driven by emotion.

Here when you need us.

Call:

TTY: 800.697.0353

Online: [guidanceresources.com](https://www.guidanceresources.com)

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID:

Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.



Resources for Employees Facing Job Loss

When employees are told they will be losing their jobs, you can expect a wide range of feelings and emotions to be expressed, from relief, to disbelief to anger. Your company's GuidanceResources program can help you help them as they deal with these emotions and start to look to the future. The following are confidential resources available to employees and their household family members through the GuidanceResources program to help them cope during the weeks ahead and remain focused on a new start instead of asking "Why me?" Keep in mind that these are stressful times for you as well, so you can also take advantage of the program.

Confidential Counseling

- Stress, anxiety and depression
- Relationship/marital conflicts
- Substance abuse

If employees are already in counseling, sessions will continue.

Financial Matters

- Budgeting while away from work/living on a reduced income
- Dealing with credit card or loan problems
- Finding mortgage assistance

GuidanceResources® Online

- The Job Loss Resource Guide: learn about navigating life's transitions, managing job loss stress, effective networking for business purposes and other related topics.
- Timely and topical articles written by local experts

Employees and their household family members are eligible for these resources for 90 days following the end of employment.

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Learning to Accept Change

Learning to roll with change will lead to a happier and more fulfilling life. That doesn't mean ignoring feelings of sadness, anger, frustration or stress. These are normal responses to major life changes. But once you have acknowledged those feelings, it is important to move forward and focus your energy on what's possible.

The following are some simple, solid steps you can take to turn unexpected transitions into positive outcomes:

- **Reflect and refocus.** Take stock of your personal assets and express gratitude, such as, "I can deal with this. I still have my ability to think, my special talents, my skills and my aspirations. I'm grateful for relationships and for my family."
- **Ask yourself some important questions.** "How do I want to feel three months from now? What will it take to get there? What does my ideal week look like? What can I do to realize that? Who can help with that?"
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Section 2

Resources for Employees

HelpSheets

- Resilience During Times of Change
- Navigating Organization Change
- Coping With Downsizing When You Still Have a Job
- Managing Job Loss
 - Practical Guide to Coping With Job Loss
 - Dealing With Loss
 - Job Loss Do's and Don'ts

Posters and Flyers

- Learning to Accept Change
- Managing Job Loss
- What is resilience?

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- **Be patient.** Try to be tolerant and empathetic of others. Attempt to understand their situations and behaviors.
- **Find a substitute outlet for anger.** Instead of acting on an aggressive urge, find a creative outlet for your energy. Start an exercise program. Take up a physically challenging new sport like kickboxing. Try a new hobby or artistic endeavor such as painting.
- **Get advice from others.** If you simply do not know how to deal with an angry feeling or situation, ask friends or family for suggestions on how they got through similar situations.

There are also a number of ways you can alleviate stress in your day-to-day life. Here are 10:

- **Get enough sleep.** If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.
- **Schedule a realistic day.** If you can't avoid back-to-back appointments, try to at least give yourself a few moments for a breathing spell.
- **Do not rely on your memory.** Write down appointment times, assignment due dates, etc. As an old Chinese proverb states, "The palest ink is better than the most retentive memory."
- **Be prepared to wait.** A paperback, crossword puzzle or cell phone game can make a wait in a post-office line almost pleasant.
- **Procrastination is stressful.** Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.
- **Relax your standards.** The world will not end if the grass does not get mowed this weekend or if the sheets have to be changed on Sunday instead of Saturday.
- **Learn to say 'no.'** Saying no to extra projects, social events and activities you do not have the time or energy for takes practice.
- **Eliminate destructive self-talk.** "I can't ..." or "I'm too inexperienced to ..." are negative thoughts that can increase stress levels.
- **Take time for yourself.** Develop a belief that everyone needs quiet time every day to relax and be alone.
- **Turn off your phone.** Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep or read without interruption? Drum up the courage to temporarily disconnect.

Get Support

If you would like to learn more about resilience and how it can help you deal with anger or stress, contact your Employee Assistance Program for free and confidential support, resources and information. Help is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

[Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.](#)

Navigating Organizational Change

Changes in the workplace can happen quickly, leaving us to feel vulnerable and unaware of where to go for much-needed assistance. Whenever life throws us off course, it presents an opportunity to pause, reassess and reflect on what we truly want to create. Then we can move forward feeling more on course and avoiding that uneasy feeling that we are just going through the motions with no feelings of accomplishment or satisfaction.

One's perspective about what's happening is critical. With a job transition – or any type of change – including a troubled relationship or unplanned life adjustment, one voice within us states, “Why is this happening to me?” while another voice may ask, “What’s the lesson in this for me?” or “How do I use this experience to help me grow, and how might I take advantage of this chance for fresh start?” While it is important to be realistic about all aspects of life transitions and to acknowledge feelings of sadness, anger, frustration and fear, your next move is a crucial choice. Do you want to remain stuck in pain and stress, or are you ready to focus your energy forward, looking at how best to learn from the experience? Change can be scary and may leave you feeling overwhelmed. Follow the steps below to get started. It is dangerous to oversimplify the complex nature of any life transition, so tailor these suggestions to your own unique reality.

- **Acknowledge your feelings.** Let yourself feel what you feel, and find a way to release some of the emotion. Physical activity, writing down your thoughts or talking with others can help let this energy out and prevent the distraction of negative thoughts and self-defeating behaviors.
- **Reflect and refocus.** Take stock of what you still have, and express gratitude, such as “I still have my ability to think, my special talents and my aspirations. I’m grateful for relationships and for my family.” Take a walk, a bike ride or a longer hot shower than usual, and ask yourself some powerful questions, such as “How do I want to feel three months from now? What will it take to get there? What does my ideal week look like? What could I do to realize that? Who could help with that?”
- **Choose.** Entertain the notion that everything is a choice. Decide what you want to choose as the next chapter of your life. Simply choosing doesn’t guarantee you’ll get it, however. The power of your intentions makes a huge difference. Feeling like you have a choice is certainly better than feeling like you have no influence, so why not adopt this philosophy? Choosing what matters most and what you’ll honor as authentic priorities is absolutely up to you. It is about being resilient and truly empowered to choose your life’s course rather than being a victim of circumstance and replaying old thought patterns.
- **Get into action.** Start by visualizing how you want to feel or where you want to be, perhaps three months from now. Work backwards from this goal until you find something small enough that you can do the next day or the next week. Picking first steps and finding the right people for encouragement and support will help you realize your goal.
- **Utilize your GuidanceResources program.** Did you know that GuidanceResources is a free, confidential service for you and your household family members that can take on your To Do List and provide you with the amount of time necessary to manage the changes around you? Examples of services include:
 - Personalized concierge resources including child-, elder- and pet-care solutions, medical cost estimation and claims analysis, transportation and local errand resources, low-cost home repair and utility assistance, etc.
 - Unlimited telephonic appointments with GuidanceResources attorneys and financial planners to assist with personal legal matters and financial issues.
 - Confidential guidance from a local counselor to provide stress management assistance during the time of organizational transition.

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.

[Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.](#)

Coping With Downsizing When You Still Have a Job

Nearly every business undergoes downsizing at some point. Knowing that, however, doesn't make it any easier, even for those who retain their jobs. If you or someone you know has survived a recent layoff or downsizing, the following information can help.

What You May Be Feeling

As with any trauma, reactions to making it through a downsizing may include anxiety, shock, guilt, fear and confusion. You may feel grateful to still have a job or you may feel betrayed and less than optimistic about the company. Some people exhibit emotional reactions, while others experience physical responses such as nausea, dizziness and lack of energy. These reactions are normal. Other typical responses include:

- **Shock.** Feelings of disbelief.
- **Fear.** The feeling that it may happen again.
- **Anger.** Many people feel rage at the circumstances that led up to the downsizing.
- **Alienation.** Feeling cut off from or mistrustful of others.
- **Helplessness.** Feelings of frustration for being powerless over the event.
- **Guilt or blame.** Feeling responsible for what happened or guilty for keeping your job when others did not.
- **Mistrust.** Feeling doubts or mistrust about the future.
- **Sorrow.** Feelings of great sadness about the event.

Stages of Coping

Most people respond to a downsizing as they would to any traumatic event: through a series of coping stages. These stages vary from person to person, but generally include:

1. **Shock.** This stage usually occurs shortly after the event. The survivor can feel confused, dazed, anxious and exhausted as he or she tries to process the event.
2. **Denial.** As a defense mechanism, the survivor may ignore his/her feelings, refuse to talk about what happened or shut down emotionally.
3. **Intrusion.** The survivor may experience mood changes, irritability, encounter difficulty concentrating, become sensitive to external stimuli and encounter sleep disturbances.
4. **Working through.** The survivor has learned to accept what has happened and adopt strategies to cope with the future.

Talking With Co-workers Who Have Been Downsized

It is natural to feel reluctant or even afraid of facing another person's painful feelings. But it is important not to let this fear prevent us from doing what we can to help someone who is suffering.

What to Do

Though each situation is unique depending on how close you are with your colleague, the most important thing is simply to be there and listen and show you care.

- Find a private setting where you will not be overheard or interrupted.
- Keep your comments brief and simple so you do not get the person off track.
- Ask questions that show your interest and encourage the person to keep talking. For example, "What was that like?"
- Give verbal and non-verbal messages of caring and support. Facial expressions and body posture go a long way toward showing your interest. Do not hesitate to interject your own feelings as appropriate.
- Let people know that it is OK to cry. Some people are embarrassed if they cry in front of others. Handing over a box of tissues in a matter-of-fact way can help show that tears are normal and appropriate. It is also OK if you get a bit teary yourself.

What Not to Do

Do not be distressed by differences in the way people respond. One person may react very calmly, while another expresses strong feelings. One person may have an immediate emotional response while another may be “numb” at first and respond emotionally later.

Emotions are rarely simple. People who are suffering loss often feel anger along with grief. Unless you see signs of actual danger, simply accept the feelings as that person’s natural response at the moment. If a person is usually rational and sensible, those qualities will return once their painful feelings are expressed.

It is natural to worry about saying the wrong thing. People will understand if you say something awkward in a difficult situation. Use this to guide you:

- Do not offer unsolicited advice. People usually will ask for advice later if they need it; initially it just gets in the way of talking things out.
- Do not turn the conversation into a forum for your own experiences. If you have had a similar experience, you may want to mention that briefly when the moment seems right. But do not say, “I know exactly how you feel,” because everybody is different.
- Do not say anything that tries to minimize the person’s pain such as, “You shouldn’t take it so hard” or “It could be a lot worse.”
- Do not say anything that asks the person to disguise or reject his or her feelings, such as, “You have to pull yourself together.”

Afterward

Once you have finished talking, it may be appropriate to offer simple forms of help such as:

- Checking about basic things like eating and sleeping
- Sharing a meal may help the person find an appetite
- Giving a ride to someone too upset to drive may mean a lot
- Asking what else you can do to be of assistance

After you have talked to someone who is hurting, you may feel as if you have absorbed some of that person’s pain. Take care of yourself by talking to a friend, taking a walk or doing whatever helps restore your own spirits.

How to Cope With Layoffs as a Survivor

Instead of dwelling on the recent losses, try to keep an open mind and a positive outlook, which can make it easier to cope with the situation.

- Be objective
- Find constructive ways to express your thoughts and feelings
- Balance your time carefully
- Don’t try to cope by using alcohol or drugs
- Focus on enhancing your work skills
- Rise to the challenge

Talking With Management

When downsizing becomes necessary, you are likely to have questions and comments, not to mention anxiety. Some topics you might want to discuss with your manager during this time might include:

- The need for increased guidance, leadership and open communication
- Honesty about future expectations
- Assessment of your job security, career path and how the downsizing will improve the company’s outlook
- Changes to expect in your duties and those of your colleagues
- Inside opportunities to create new challenges and professional growth

- Assistance with time management. (Remember, now, more than ever, balancing work and home is vital to your emotional health and productivity.)
- Support, in addition to your Employee Assistance Program, that will be made available to those remaining on the job. An example: skills training.
- Suggestions for taking an active, positive role in improving morale among your colleagues
- How you can support your boss, who likely saw friends and colleagues let go, too.

Accepting and Moving On

So you made it through the downsizing period. One way to deal with the situation is to accept what has happened and keep moving forward. Maybe this is an opportunity to advance within the company; a chance to learn additional industry-related skills and management tools; and a way to showcase your value.

Finally, don't forget your Employee Assistance Program. This company benefit is available to help you in stressful times.

[Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.](#)

Managing Job Loss

Guidelines for Coping in the Coming Weeks

Learning that you will be losing your job can be a traumatic experience. That's because, as with any significant loss, you are being forced to let go of something vital to you. Stress, sadness, anger and uncertainty are all natural reactions. The following are some suggestions to help you cope with your emotions and your situation during the weeks ahead.

Immediate

Don't panic. It is likely your initial reaction to the announcement was shock, even though you may have suspected it was coming. You may have trouble concentrating, and you may feel a little anxious. You may be angry or sad.

Give yourself time to think about your situation. Sometimes we react emotionally and wish we had not done what we did or said what we said. You may be hurt, but don't do something you'll regret. Instead, take a timeout. It works for the pros on the field and it can work for you. Give yourself time to plan your strategy—you'll come out ahead.

Don't lose control. Chances are you're experiencing everything from shock to anger to relief. Try to label your feelings, and remember that you've weathered major changes in the past. If you feel you might lose control and do something harmful to yourself or others, get help.

Prepare to talk to your spouse or partner. Be ready to answer these questions:

- Why will you lose your job?
- How will savings and pensions be distributed? In a lump sum? Over several weeks?
- How long will your medical coverage continue?
- What about life insurance?
- What kind of support will you get to help you find a new job?
- What other resources will be provided during the coming weeks and months?

Ongoing

Take care of yourself. Drive carefully; resist the temptation to take out your feelings in traffic. If you need to pull over and take a timeout, do it!

Talk to your family. As difficult as it might be, let your spouse or partner know what is going on. Recall your first reaction; remember how you felt. Your partner probably feels the same way. He or she may feel anger, shock or even betrayed. Be supportive. Also, give yourself permission to ask for their support.

Take a break, especially if you have a weekend. Get something accomplished around the house. Get a small project out of the way. Accomplish short-term goals. You'll feel better for it.

Be sensitive to your stress levels. If you feel particularly stressed, take a walk or do something to relieve your tension. Moderate exercise can help you manage stress. Try to cut down on caffeine and alcohol. They can add to your stress level.

Don't rush out and tell everyone you need a job. Wait until you are prepared and are clear about your objectives and how others can help. Otherwise, you may waste a very important contact.

Be cautious about thinking you can change the past. Prepare to move forward. The fact is, shortly, you will no longer work for this company. You will soon work for yourself. You need to prepare yourself to find a new job.

Stay involved. Continue to be involved with friends. Don't put everything off until life settles down. You are allowed to have fun while in transition. Go to the party. Plant that tree. Enjoy a good movie. Your children can play sports and continue piano lessons. Taking a job search seriously doesn't mean being serious all the time.

Realize there will be ups and downs. When your emotions are charged up, rainy days, flat tires and late mail deliveries may take on undue significance.

Don't overreact. While this may not be the time to buy a new boat, it's also not the time to ration toothpaste or pull your child out of day care.

Practice moving forward. While it may not be helpful news at this moment, employees do get new and often better positions, no matter what the industry, stock market or local news sources say about employment outlooks. Spending your energy moving ahead pays off.

Don't blame every problem on the job loss. Avoid blaming everything that goes wrong on the job loss. Blame does not fix the problem. Remember, kids whose parents haven't lost their jobs are also getting into trouble at school; faucets leak in working households; couples disagree in the best of times.

Share your thoughts with your spouse or partner and your family. Protecting your family members from what you consider bad news is not the answer. Inform them of your situation and help them know that you are moving forward and that you need their support. Include your children in this process. It will ease their fears and they can learn from your example.

Recharge yourself. Make the most of the time you have to recharge yourself before starting something new. Listen to music; visit friends; teach a church or community class, or even sign up for some classes yourself.

And Finally

Work diligently on your new job search. You will be able to reposition yourself in the workforce with the right approach.

Practical Guide to Coping With Job Loss

Give yourself permission to feel. Express your feelings as they arise. Take time to cry, if needed. Don't repress any recurring thoughts or emotions. Talk with others about how you feel. Write your thoughts down. These thoughts and emotions will diminish over time.

Find someone you trust. Talk with a family member or close friend about your experience. Have someone stay with you, if you live alone. Do not carry the burden of this experience alone; share it with those who care about you. Talking about the situation will help you clarify your plan to find new employment or opportunities.

Take care of yourself. Get enough rest and eat regular meals. If you are irritable from lack of sleep or if you are not eating regularly, you will have less energy to cope with the situation.

Make daily decisions. This will give you a feeling of control over your life. Know your limits. If the problem is beyond your control and cannot be changed, accept it.

Maintain your daily routine. This will also give you a feeling of control over your life.

Practice relaxation and meditation. Create a quiet scene. You can't always get away from a situation, but you can visualize a quiet scene or a walk along the beach. Such visualization will temporarily remove you from the turmoil of the present situation.

Take one thing at a time. At this time, any ordinary workload may seem overwhelming. Do not overwhelm yourself by over-tasking. Perform one task at a time.

Allow extra time. This will help reduce pressure. If you usually plan half an hour to complete a task, schedule forty-five minutes to complete it. Do the best you can. Don't be too critical of yourself.

Create a pleasant and comfortable environment. Surround yourself with things you like and enjoy. Listen to music.

Dealing With Loss

When dealing with a major loss, such as losing a job, there is a pattern to what everyone experiences. It is called the grief process, whether it involves one's income, stability, friends and social connections or work identity. The grief process has several stages, ending with acceptance of the loss and the search for new opportunities.

First Stage: 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 also is a tendency to withdraw from social and daily activities.

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

Third Stage: Bargaining. This is an attempt to postpone grieving by bargaining with oneself or God.

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

Fifth Stage: 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 in how people experience job loss, 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 face setbacks or experience breakthroughs. Some people may even be relieved and may not experience loss. Just remember, however you deal with job loss, you will be able to cope with your situation. You will develop strategies to find new employment and you will feel productive again. If, however, the signs of grief persist and prevent you from action, seek professional assistance to help you resolve the grief process and return to a state of productivity and well-being.

Job Loss Do's and Don'ts

People who have experienced job loss may experience changes in their behavior. These suggestions will help you reduce the probability of long-term reactions.

Do's

- Get enough rest.
- Maintain a good diet and exercise program.
- Follow a familiar routine.
- Talk to friends and family.
- Take one thing at a time.
- Attend meetings regarding this situation.
- Maintain your sense of humor.
- Expect the experience to bother you.
- Ask for help if your reactions persist.
- Do remind yourself that things will improve.

Don'ts

- Drink alcohol excessively.
- Use drugs or alcohol to numb feelings.
- Reduce leisure activities.
- Withdraw from others.
- Take on new major projects.
- Look for easy answers.
- Have unrealistic expectations.
- Pretend that everything is OK.
- Blame everything on the job loss.
- Dwell on the job loss.

Common Stress Themes Expressed

Fear

- Fear of being unemployed.
- Fear of not having money, benefits, etc.

Anger

- “Why me?” “I’ve been a good employee”; “It’s not fair!”

Vulnerability

- “I thought bad things only happened to other people.
- “I can’t believe I’m losing my job.”

Sadness

- Feelings of sadness regarding the loss of employment, work identity, loss of friends.

Rage at the source

- Anger at the employer or the individual making the announcement.

Fear of loss of control

- Fear of potentially hurting another person or oneself caused by feelings of hostility toward the employer or manager, or toward employees remaining in their jobs.

Survivor guilt

- “I’m glad I did not lose my job.” “It is selfish of me to be glad that I have my job while my friend lost hers.”

Fear of rejection

- “What if nobody wants to hire me?”

Common Reactions Following Job Loss

Physical Reactions

- Shock
- Fatigue
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Low energy
- Loss of appetite

Emotional Reactions

- Fear
- Grief
- Anger
- Denial
- Anxiety
- Sadness
- Irritability
- Depression
- Apprehension

Cognitive Reactions

- Confusion
- Forgetfulness
- Poor coping skills
- Lack of concentration
- Poor decision-making
- Poor problem solving

Behavioral Reactions

- Emotional outbursts
- Avoidance of others
- Increased need to keep busy
- Impaired level of functioning
- Increased or decreased appetite
- Increased alcohol consumption
- Increased interpersonal conflicts
- Decreased interests in usual activities
- Trouble sleeping or excessive sleeping

[Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.](#)



Learning to Accept Change

Learning to roll with change will lead to a happier and more fulfilling life. That doesn't mean ignoring feelings of sadness, anger, frustration or stress. These are normal responses to major life changes. But once you have acknowledged those feelings, it is important to move forward and focus your energy on what's possible.

The following are some simple, solid steps you can take to turn unexpected transitions into positive outcomes:

- **Reflect and refocus:** Take stock of your personal assets and express gratitude, such as, "I can deal with this. I still have my ability to think, my special talents, my skills and my aspirations. I'm grateful for relationships and for my family."
- **Ask yourself some important questions:** "How do I want to feel three months from now? What will it take to get there? What does my ideal week look like? What can I do to realize that? Who can help with that?"
- **Choose:** Decide what you want as the next chapter of your life. Simply choosing doesn't guarantee you'll get it, but the power of your intentions makes a huge difference.
- **Take action:** Start by visualizing how you want to feel or where you want to be three months from now. Work back from this goal until you find something small enough that you can do today, tomorrow or next week.

Here when you need us.

Call:

TTY: 800.697.0353

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID:

Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.



Managing Job Loss

When you hear you will be losing your job, it's natural to experience a wide range of feelings and emotions because, as with many of the losses you may experience, it means letting go of something important to you. The following are confidential resources available to you and your household family members through the GuidanceResources program to help you cope during the weeks ahead and remain focused on a new start instead of asking "Why me?"

Confidential Counseling

- Stress, anxiety and depression
- Relationship/marital conflicts
- Substance abuse

If employees are already in counseling, sessions will continue.

Financial Matters

- Budgeting while away from work/living on a reduced income
- Dealing with credit card or loan problems
- Finding mortgage assistance

GuidanceResources® Online

- The Job Loss Resource Guide: learn about navigating life's transitions, managing job loss stress, effective networking for business purposes and other related topics.
- Timely and topical articles written by local experts

Employees and their household family members are eligible for these resources for 90 days following the end of employment.

Here when you need us.

Call:

TTY: 800.697.0353

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID:

Contact us anytime for confidential assistance.



What is resilience?

Resilience is more than coping; it's about confronting crises and difficult situations without getting overwhelmed by them. Resilient people are better able to handle life's stressors and to adapt to changing situations. Being resilient can help protect you from depression, stress and anxiety, too. Some of the characteristics of resilient people include:

- Strong relationships
- Self-motivation
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities
- Skills in communication and problem solving
- Self-awareness
- Emotional control

Resiliency in the Workplace

All business involves some inherent risk. Anyone in management understands that—or if they don't, they soon will. That's why resilience is such a useful tool in today's business world. Resilience means controlling your ego, not panicking in the face of a setback, and having the patience and ability to stay focused on long-term goals. Resilience can help you weather storms, remain steady and make rational decisions instead of being driven by emotion.

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