

Restoring Well-Being After a Job Loss

In today's world an organization's need to reposition itself to meet the demands of the market it serves can create stress among all employees. Change – such as role changes, restructured divisions, new initiatives, new locations – creates uncertainty. Of all these changes though, job loss is one of the most stressful.

Initial Reactions to Job Loss

When a job elimination occurs, the initial reaction can range from shock to disbelief to denial. You may struggle to accept what has happened, refusing to believe it, and perhaps even denying the level of impact it will have on your life. This is normal, and it is the mind's way of trying to protect us from something it interprets as threatening. After the initial shock, the emotional impact will begin to surface.

Once you begin to recover from the initial shock of your job loss, expect some healthy emotional reactions. As the reality of your job loss settles in, feelings of sadness, anger, confusion, worry, injustice and others, may emerge unexpectedly. These emotions can be strong and sudden. Be aware that they may impact your decision making and interpersonal relationships if you don't take steps to manage them.

Whatever the adversity and however you and those you care about are impacted, know that while the event may have some permanence, our reactions are temporary. What may feel like an emotional rollercoaster will diminish as well. Restoration to emotional wellbeing is the most common outcome and how you respond presents an opportunity for new growth. Talk to someone you trust, but also stay engaged with all your roles and responsibilities. You are more than just an employee to others who are in your life.

One of the most important things you can do is to connect to sources of support and compassion. This helps to calm you down and foster a sense of safety in the face of adversity. Ask yourself this:

- WHO DO I KNOW AND TRUST THAT I CAN SHARE THE NEWS ABOUT MY JOB LOSS?
 - WHOSE RESPONSE WOULD BE ONE OF COMPASSION AND UNDERSTANDING?
- CONNECT WITH THEM.**

Moving On to New Opportunities

When you are ready to bounce back, identify your direction. What do you want to bounce back to? There are choices to be made. Take control over your new course. Take advantage of the opportunity to evaluate your needs and those of your family at this point in time of your life.

Research has identified the following attributes as internal strengths that help foster resilience and can help you regain your sense of self-confidence.

Attributes that Foster Resilience:

Optimism	The ability to reappraise situations and their impact in a more positive light than they initially appear.
Mission in Life	A self-assigned purpose that creates a sense of meaning.
Faith/Spirituality	Often religious in nature, the belief in something of higher purpose.
Humor	Finding a way to laugh.
Moral Compass	An inner guide that distinguishes a sense of right and wrong.
Role Model	Emulate desirable behaviors seen in others.
Sociability	Comfort in engaging and connecting with other people.
Altruism	Interest in helping others.
Self-efficacy	Belief in one's own ability to exercise control in a meaningful and positive way.
Training	Access to external guidance that helps formulate solutions.
Hardiness	A personal quality combining a sense of commitment, control, and challenge in the face of stress.
Perseverance	Maintaining a course of action despite its challenging conditions.
Mindfulness	Living in the present. Knowing what we need, what we don't need, and when it's time to reach out for some extra help.
Problem Solving	Solution-finding behavior.
Decisiveness	Determines a course of action and commits to it.
Pursue Meaning/Growth	Searches for alternative explanations, meaning and understanding to enhance adaptability and outcome.

In summary, to bounce back and move toward resilience:

- Talk about the loss of the position with significant others.
- Engage your strengths (compare to the list of attributes above) and build on them.
- Do simple things to take care of yourself: eat healthy, maintain fluids, get regular sleep, exercise.
- Maintain your routines and stay engaged in your responsibilities.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.

You have experienced adversity before. You have strengths within yourself that have proven to be effective. Use those strengths and build on them. And remember, you still have access to your EAP, Personal Assistance Services – they can also be a great source of information and support. Call (800) 356-0845.