

Handling Job Loss

What does job loss mean to you? How do you interpret and define “the event”? You can allow job loss to immobilize you, freezing your life and work, or, you can move forward with a positive outlook. Your choice. Consider these “predictable symptoms” and some ways to respond.

PREDICTABLE SYMPTOMS IN REACTION TO JOB LOSS

- Loss of self-esteem and sense of self-efficacy
- General and specific anger
- Unspecified fear and anxieties
- Family tension and apprehension
- Interpersonal blame and projection
- Fear of the future
- Role ambiguity
- Helplessness and hopelessness
- Physical symptoms and somatic hyper vigilance
- Self-imposed meanings that will distort thoughts and feelings

THINGS YOU CAN DO IN RESPONSE TO JOB LOSS

- ***Practice healthy personal habits.*** Exercise regularly, eat wholesome foods and don't turn to drugs or alcohol.
 - ***Don't catastrophize.*** Watch your thoughts to be sure you don't dwell on “the worst case scenario” thus bringing yourself further down.
 - ***Try to find any “silver linings” to the event.*** Were you thinking about a career change anyway? A relocation? Opportunities to work closer to home?
 - ***Seek support from others.*** Social support (from friends and family) is one of the most effective buffers to stress.
 - ***Voice your frustrations in appropriate ways.*** Whether in writing or in spoken words, say what you feel to the appropriate parties and in the appropriate ways. Don't bottle up your emotions.
- Take action to cope.*** Do not sink into a passive attitude and inactivity. Instead, re-work your family budget; reduce expenses. Begin the process of finding another job by reaching out to contacts, redoing your resume and applying to new positions.