



You've Been Laid Off!

COPING WITH JOB LOSS

You knew that work was slowing down and you even heard rumors that there might be layoffs. You are a hard worker and had given the company your best. You never thought you would be facing this. You know it's not your fault, but you feel like a failure. How can you accept this event and move on with your life?

Stresses of Layoff

Security is essential to life. Your security came from being paid money and receiving respect for your contribution. You were able to provide for yourself and your family's food and shelter. You'll now have to deal with the unemployment lines and services which you thought would never touch your life.

You probably received a lot of self-worth from your job and you may feel "I am what I do." The more you feel this way, the more crushed you will be.

Once you're no longer working, you may feel bored and not know what to do with your time. If your spouse is home, you may bump into each other all day. You may also avoid social situations so that you don't have to reveal your change in job status.

The stress may be enough to make you physically ill. Your family has been affected and your life seems out of control.

Where to Seek Help

Your company's personnel department and the unemployment office will tell you what benefits you have coming and can help with your next move. Get your support network active, even though that may be the last thing you feel like doing.

Talk to friends, clients, mentors, your union officials or workers in an employee assistance program. While insurance lasts, seek treatment for any physical and emotional ills. Social agencies can help when money is short.

A professional counselor can be vital. You have suffered a loss. In losing a job you may go through the same stages as people who are suffering a major loss. Acceptance of the situation comes through grieving your loss so that you can make positive life changes. With help, you may eventually see this shock as an opportunity. You're free to go back to school or you may find a better job.

Counseling may also help get rid of any negative substitutes for job security such as overuse of alcohol or other drugs and overeating. These substitutes can lead to more health, financial and emotional problems. If your job search goes on for more than six months, seek additional assistance.

Solutions

Ask for support from your family and friends. You may feel like clamming up and suffering in silence, but this is the time to talk. Acknowledge your fears, disappointments and other feelings.

If you have children, talk to them about what happened and what you're going to do about it. If you're not frank, their fears will become exaggerated. Assure them that there will be food on the table, but let them help you figure out some ways to conserve expenses.

Keep busy constructively. Take care of your health with diet, exercise and rest. Use your time to get closer to your family. Try not to take the layoff personally.



Talk to friends, clients, mentors and union officials to get your support network active.

See if the personnel department at work can give you constructive criticism on how to improve your strengths. Take time to assess yourself and acknowledge your gifts. Set new goals for yourself. Update your resume. Take a class. Believe in yourself, and your positive attitude will make you happier and more employable.

Five Steps Toward Accepting Job Loss

- ✓ denial
- ✓ anger
- ✓ depression
- ✓ bargaining
- ✓ acceptance