

Ways to Cope with the Stress of Job Loss

Give yourself time to adjust. Allow yourself some time to absorb what has happened in order to deal with the initial emotional reactions of yourself and significant others. If possible take a day or two days off to help you cope with your emotional and physical reactions to stress. Relieving stress (if possible) before job searching may make the process easier and more effective.

Don't be ashamed. There is little stigma (if any) attached to losing your job to economic factors. It is not a matter of personal failure to lose one's job due to budgetary restraints.

Tell your family and friends as soon as possible. Being open and honest will help you obtain immediate support from the most important people of your life. They may also be a source of job information or future contacts.

Use community, university, and networking resources. Reach out and use services and contacts to the fullest potential.

Deal with your feelings and fear directly. One way to reduce anxiety is to clarify what you are most afraid of (i.e., never finding a new job) and work on a plan to deal with that fear. Perpetual anxiety is a paralysis and may negatively affect reaching goals.

Take care of your health. Exercise, sleep, meditation, relaxation, discussion, planning and good nutrition are more important than ever during the stress of unemployment. Use extra time to set up an exercise program and avoid the use of drugs and alcohol to deal with stress. Take scheduled breaks from your job search to allow time for positive activities.

Plan your future. Use this time as an opportunity to define professional goals, acquire training, etc. that will help you pursue your "dream" job.

Get professional help, if needed. If you are feeling very sad and/or in despair and it does not improve over time and/or if you are feeling paralyzed by anxiety or your sleep is consistently disturbed, seek help from a mental health professional. If you unemployment has led to relationship problems; you may want to seek assistance from a family or couples counselor to help deal and express the feelings of stress related to unemployment.

Additional Information:

- http://www.hreo.ku.edu/policies_procedures/termination/uss_layoff
- http://www.hreo.ku.edu/policies_procedures/termination/ups_non_reappointment