

Dealing with job loss

Today's business environment is constantly evolving as it adjusts to market trends, new competition and technology, etc. Restructuring, outsourcing and downsizing are all commonplace and reflective of our ever-changing world.

Job loss may be common, but it is still a stressful experience financially, mentally and emotionally. Unexpected job loss is often coupled with emotions like fear, anxiety, denial, anger and sadness. Questions about one's identity and purpose may arise. Many wrestle with feelings of powerlessness. Your relationships and overall sense of well-being may also be impacted by job loss.

Change involves saying goodbye to the old normal as you knew it, which can be hard. It can be tempting to immediately assume the worst and feel overwhelmed by fear and sadness. However, the reality is change can also bring great opportunity.

The following suggestions may help you as you navigate the goodbye process and your way forward.



Acknowledge your grief

The loss of a job is just that: a loss. Grief is natural and normal when one experiences a loss. Taking the time to acknowledge what you are feeling by writing it down or talking to a friend or a professional can help you process through your grief.



Be kind to yourself

Self-care is very important. Eat well. Get enough sleep. Connect with those you love. Be purposeful about taking breaks to unwind. Avoid using alcohol, substances and junk food excessively. Use your sense of humour. Be kind to someone. The mere act of doing for others is rewarding and chances are, it will also enrich the relationship with that other person.

Keep a positive attitude

While you may not have been in control of your job loss, you are the master of your attitude. You may have negative, fear-based thoughts come into your mind about the situation and your ability to successfully navigate it. Purposely counter those thoughts with evidence to the contrary. When have you successfully navigated challenges in the past? What helped you then? Is there anything you can apply in this situation? Accept that change involves a period of uncertainty. You were used to the way things were. You knew your role and how to do it well. Now, you are exploring what your new normal will look like. This phase is characterised by discomfort, but also creativity. Maintaining a flexible mindset can help you consider diverse perspectives and identify new opportunities. People can have a wide range of emotions while they work through uncertainty, both positive and negative. Acknowledge your feelings and be purposeful to think positively.

Plan for your financial needs

- **Evaluate all income sources.** Your company may have included financial or other benefits as part of your departure from the company. Understand the details and how to leverage the resources provided. Consider exploring possible unemployment benefits offered by your area.
- **Create an emergency spending plan.** You may choose to decrease your spending by avoiding nonessential purchases until you have identified your next career step.
- **Consider temporary insurance.** There are various ways to acquire health insurance and your previous employer may offer some type of benefit.

Evaluate education and career goals

Revisit what gives you a sense of purpose and satisfaction at work. Explore options for new careers and training.

Make your next step

- **Network** – Talk to your friends and acquaintances about your desired job and what you can offer in the role. Ask them to connect you with people who may have openings.
- **Make a plan** – The length of time it takes to find a new job can vary. Keeping a routine and writing out daily goals can help keep your motivation strong and make your job search productive. Stay calm. Be positive. Focus on what's in your control. Consider temporary work while you are looking for a permanent position.
- **Build your team** – Connect with family and friends for support. Explore any options for counselling your employer may have provided as part of your departure from the company.



Remember:

This is a season. You have made it through difficulties before and you will get through the loss of your job. Stay positive and look for the opportunity in the change.



Critical support when you need it

Visit optumwellbeing.com/criticalsupportcenter for additional critical support resources and information.



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