

Following Job Loss: Tips For Family and Friends

Call it what you want — being laid off or downsized, getting dismissed or fired, receiving your pink slip or your walking papers, losing your job hurts. It hurts not only you, but also your family and friends who care about you. Losing your job ranks among the highest in stress-causing situations and can have a profound effect on your emotional well being.

Family and friends may recognize that you are cycling from denial, anger, frustration and eventually adaptation. They may worry that the effects of job loss are long lasting. They worry about you largely due to the fact that society trains us to identify ourselves by how we provide for our family. A job loss can lead to the loss of one's identity, which can result in the loss of a purpose in life.

Give this handout to your family and friends as a means of helping them with supporting you.

For family and friends, it is helpful to:

Ask "How are you doing?"

Talk about what changes will and won't occur with regard to household tasks, child care and general maintenance.

Understand that conducting a job search is a full-time job in itself.

Understand that you may feel anger and emotionally uncertain. Set time aside to discuss how this loss is affecting you.

Remind your family member of his value to you. Be supportive through comments such as, "I know you're working hard" and "I know this is very difficult," or by asking such questions as, "How can I help you right now?"

With your significant other, develop a practical budget and live within your means.

Talk with your significant other about your real goals and priorities and how to accomplish them.

It is not helpful to:

Assume that your unemployed friend has nothing to do all day.

Let frustration and anger build up toward your loved one or friend. Talk about it instead.

Complain about how your unemployed partner is spending her time or how she is conducting the job search.

Spend money or use credit cards the same way as before or to purchase expensive items without first discussing.

Miss out on this opportunity to re-evaluate your individual and family goals and priorities.