

# Involuntary Separation



## Coping with Involuntary Separation

Finding out that you are losing your job often comes as a shock. It can be devastating to lose not only your source of income, but also your sense of identity, your daily routine, your coworkers, and security that comes with employment. Being separated involuntarily is a type of loss, and often results in grieving reactions. It can be helpful to understand that your reactions and feelings are a normal part of processing this loss. Also provided are some ideas on how to help yourself move forward.

### Common reactions to job loss

- › Shock and disbelief
- › Anger and resentment
- › Sadness and depression
- › Guilt
- › Difficulty concentrating or thinking clearly
- › Feeling overwhelmed
- › Fear and anxiety
- › Difficulty sleeping
- › Changes in appetite
- › Little motivation or interest in things
- › Intense feelings of stress
- › Lowered self-esteem
- › Physical reactions such as a headache, upset stomach, or fatigue

### The grieving process

It is common to grieve the loss of a job similarly to grieving the loss of a person or something else important in your life. The grieving process is different for everyone. The important thing to remember is that grief does not happen in linear stages. Rather, there are four tasks that most people work through during the grieving process.

- › Accepting that the loss has happened.
- › Giving yourself permission to explore and express your feelings related to the loss – this may include times of intense anger, guilt, sadness, etc.

- › Adjusting to a world without that job - mentally, emotionally, and physically.
- › Moving forward - searching for and obtaining a new job or career.

### How to move forward

- › You may want to take a little time off before job searching to recharge and relax. Allow yourself time to process what happened.
- › Try not to make any major decisions until the intense emotions have subsided.
- › Know that involuntary separations are a financial decision by the company. It is normal for your self-esteem to be affected; try to keep in mind that it was not your fault.
- › Evaluate your satisfaction with your career. This may be a good time to change your line of work or go back to school. Think of this as an opportunity to make some positive changes in your life.
- › Make a plan. What are you looking for in a job? What are your goals? What are your interests? How will you job search? When will you job search?
- › Update your resume. Focus on your strengths and experience.
- › Surround yourself with friends and family who love and support you.
- › Review your budget. Get together with the appropriate people in your life and decide together where costs can be cut.