

UNEXPECTED EMPLOYMENT CHANGE

Each person's experience is unique and personal and reactions differ. You may experience some of the following:

Shock – disbelief at what has happened

Numbness – the event may seem unreal, like a dream

Fears – of how you will survive financially, that you may not be able to get another job

Panicky irrational feelings – other apparently unrelated fears

Anger – at who “caused it” or “allowed it to happen”, you may react to the injustice and senselessness of it all, generalised anger and irritability

Sadness – about the losses of every kind, for the loss of trust and that the world is less safe and predictable

Helplessness and shame – you may think you are a failure

EFFECTS ON BEHAVIOUR

The effects can be expressed in many ways and in various combinations. You may experience some of the following:

Tension – more easily startled, general agitation (physical or mental)

Sleep disturbances – inability to sleep, thoughts that prevent sleep, replaying the events

Dreams and nightmares, fearfulness, intrusive memories – interfere with your concentration, daily life

Irritability and social withdrawal – you may have mood swings and a need to be alone

Depression – about the event or past events, non-specific depression

Physical sensations – tiredness, breathing difficulties, headaches, tense muscles, aches and pains, loss of appetite, loss of sexual interest, nausea, diarrhoea or constipation, and many other symptoms

These are all normal – you are not abnormal if you feel them.

HOW LONG WILL THESE REACTIONS LAST?

These reactions are common. Expressing them allows nature to heal. They usually only last for a short period of time and gradually diminish over the first few weeks. Different reactions may be dominant as time goes by.

These physical and emotional symptoms are normal. They develop in people facing stress, threat or loss and are responses which help the person adapt. They can be, however, unpleasant or distressing to those affected, and their families.

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Head for Business Heart for People

FOR YOURSELF

Using some of the following hints may help to alleviate the emotional pain associated with a stressful event:

- Name the positive unchanging aspects of your world
- Make sure you have plenty of sleep
- Eat a variety of good fresh food (fruit, etc)
- Exercise regularly – e.g., walking, swimming
- Talk to family, friends, or workmates; it is important not to isolate yourself
- Keep yourself occupied with work, a hobby, sport or family activities
- Take care not to increase your consumption of cigarettes, coffee and alcohol
- Don't tell yourself you "should" be coping better, as this just increases the pressure on you – it is normal to feel stressed after emergencies and disturbing incidents

FOR YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

- Spend quality time with the person, offer your assistance and a listening ear
- Give them some private time
- Help them with any arrangements or everyday tasks
- Help them to re-establish a normal schedule as quickly as possible (if possible, include them in activities with others)
- Don't take their anger or other feelings personally
- Don't tell them they are "lucky it wasn't worse" - this is not helpful to someone who has been through a very difficult period
- Instead, tell them that you are sorry such an event has occurred and you want to understand and assist them

THE FOUR C'S OF CHANGE

Challenge	See the change as a challenge
Control	Focus on the things you can still control, not what you cannot
Connections	Rely more on your connections, network for support
Commitment	Commit to seeing and understanding the bigger picture, change is more accessible with greater understanding

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