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## **FOR RELEASE**

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### **Five County Solutions**

#### **“Helping You Manage Between Jobs”**

##### **Part Two in a Ten-Part Series**

Were you shocked to learn you are losing your job? Did you wonder how it could be happening? These are normal reactions to losing your job. Most people go through a grief process when they lose their job.

Psychologists say that people who know what feelings they might experience have an easier time dealing with the loss. Each person's reaction may be different due to their own perceptions and past situations, so don't expect everyone to understand how you feel or be feeling the same emotions.

Losing your job can not only mean income lose but also identity lose. People who experience job loss usually go through different stages of grief and may move back and forth between stages. They may also stay in a certain stage for awhile. In this article we will be discussing the first two stages of grief from a job loss.

The first stage of grief is shock and denial. You were not planning this and probably feel confused, upset and want to blame someone. Others may just feel numb and unsure. Making decisions or taking actions can be very difficult at this time. Some people have a hard time performing simple, routine tasks during this time.

Denial is not uncommon but prolonged denial can cause devastating consequences. Denial is a way we protect ourselves from facing something that has happened (or will be happening) that is painful. Continued denial prevents us from actions we need to take.

Stage two is anger. This is a feeling that may intensify during this time. You wonder what could have been done and why didn't someone do something. You want to blame someone but may be unsure of who to blame. When this happens to some people, they have a feeling of helplessness or they may turn the anger on themselves.

Anger can be caused by feelings of failure, being unappreciated, exploited, manipulated, uncared for

and/or humiliated. Others may experience anger from feelings of helplessness, frustration, anxiety, fear, or resentment. Emotional outbursts can be damaging to family members and others. It is important to acknowledge these feelings of anger and find an appropriate way to expressing it.

Steps in this stage include understanding that you will feel angry, and you will need to find an appropriate way to express it. You need to question yourself as to if your anger is reasonable. What are you expecting to happen? Are you objectively looking at the situation?

Check your reaction to the anger. What behavior are you exhibiting? Did your reaction increase your stress level or hurt others emotionally or physically? If so, you need to immediately find more appropriate ways to react to your anger. If this is difficult you should seek outside help from a counselor or pastor.

Talking to others about the situation or writing down your feelings to figure out what you should do next can help calm feelings. Try to find ways you can improve the situation by discussing it as a family or making changes in your budget now.

Try relaxation techniques or an active sport to help you de-stress. Even playing a musical instrument or listening to music may help release the anger and stress. We will discuss ways to deal with stress in an upcoming news article.

Below is a checklist which can help you learn how you are dealing with the situation. Ohio State University Extension wants to help you be able to say “yes” to all the questions. We will be providing information through these news articles and fact sheets in the next few weeks, contact us for more information. This checklist is from Penn State entitled “How are You Handling Unemployment?”

To judge how you are dealing with the transition, check the answer that best describes you.

- 1) Have you taken steps to find outlets to cope with your anger?  
Yes                      No
- 2) Have you sorted your losses into those that you can retain (old friends), replace (income), rebuild (a new job using current skills), and relinquish (the concept that good jobs last forever)?  
Yes                      No
- 3) Have you taken steps to deal with your feelings of depression and worthlessness?  
Yes                      No
- 4) Have you been open and honest in your relationships with family and friends?  
Yes                      No
- 5) Have you stepped back and looked at where you were and where you want to go in life?  
Yes                      No
- 6) Have you created short-term goals for yourself and checkpoints to gauge your success?  
Yes                      No
- 7) Have you gained an understanding of resources available to help you?  
Yes                      No
- 8) Have you studied your recent work and life experiences for clues to new possibilities for future employment?  
Yes                      No
- 9) Have you evaluated how your work skills fit into job requirements today and in the future?  
Yes                      No
- 10) Have you developed a concrete plan of action to regain employment, including first steps that you are in the process of accomplishing?  
Yes                      No

Review those questions that you have checked with a No. These are areas that you need to focus your

energy on. Turning the experience of unemployment into a new beginning for your life will require you to experience the process of loss and to take control of your responsibility to reshape your life. (Source: Adapted from "Bouncing Back When Your Income Drops" Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, Cooperative Extension, 2000)

Next week we will explain the other stages in grief due to a job loss. Please contact Melanie Hart at 937-9971 or [hart.382@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:hart.382@cfaes.osu.edu) if you want more information or resources.

(References:

Boelter, L. and LeFebvre, J. (2006). Taking Care of Yourself, *Managing Between Jobs*, University of Wisconsin Extension

Ferry, N. (2000). Making Sense of My Losses, *Bouncing Back When your Income Drops*, Penn State University Cooperative Extension

University of Minnesota Extension, (2001). The Importance of How you View the Situation, *Adjusting to Suddenly Reduced Income*.

"This material has not been peer-reviewed for statewide distribution."

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