

REDUNDANCY SERIES:

COPING WITH THE INITIAL SHOCK

The initial Trauma

Being told that you've lost your job is a really difficult moment. It's perfectly normal to have feelings of being rejected, grief and why me? Allow yourself to feel these things. You'll most likely feel grief for the loss of financial security, personal status, identity (both personally and professionally), the social side of work and perhaps the safe feeling of being competent and needed in your role. Redundancy in fact ranks with the highest stress and trauma incidents in life such as death, serious illness, relationship breakdown and moving to a new house.

The Grieving Process

Grief has a cycle and it's likely that the following emotions and feelings will crop up for you. Denial, Anger leading into bargaining, Depression and finally Acceptance. It's important to know that each and every one of these emotions is valid and you should allow yourself to sit in each stage without judging yourself.

The natural reaction could be to try to 'bargain' with your Employer and try to convince them that this decision is a mistake. 'I will work longer hours and harder'. 'I can be more flexible'. The reality is that the decision has been made and you should put your emotional energy into negotiating a package that you are satisfied with.

During this time, you should allow yourself some 'me time' in the form of walks, connection with family and friends and perhaps practices like meditation. The Calm App is a really great starting place. Explain to your family that you may not be quite yourself so that they can understand if anger and sadness crop up.

Why me?

We have to address this question. If an organisation is not fully shutting down this can be a really difficult emotion. The worry here is that personal confidence takes a knock. It can be described as that playground

feeling of being the last one picked for a team. It can have an impact on dignity and confidence. It is a legal requirement that Redundancy selection is fair. It is a basic tenet of Redundancy that it is not a reflection of past performance. However, an organisation has a right to look at the roles and skills that they need for the future. Try to see that it is not a personal decision, but a business decision about the role, not about you as a person.

How will my Organisation be without me?

You may have strong feelings about the decisions being made and want to voice them. However, your responsibility now is to get yourself together. Assemble your thoughts about what you need and give yourself the time and space to move forward to a different and hopefully even better life.

Telling Family and Friends

This is a really tough thing to have to do. You may want to protect your partner/ children/ wider family by telling them that there's nothing to worry about and that all is going to be ok. Whilst this is coming from a good place it is not the time for false declarations. You must level with them and give them the chance to support you. You can gently explain that you don't have the answers and that it will take time to work out what the future looks like. They may also feel very scared so try to empathise with them without any false promises. Be kind and caring.

For more information go to www.hrforbetterworkplaces.ie