

Self help matters.

Helping you to find your solutions

Dealing with Change

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Change is the one constant in life. And change is happening all around us. We start school, form friendships, go to high school, then college or university, have relationships, get a job, maybe get married, change jobs, possibly have children, maybe change relationships, move home, deal with bereavements along the way and face the prospect of our own end of life.

While there is a lot of positivity in many of these life stages, there's also an under-acknowledged stream of losses. Positive or happy times can mask losses – birthdays represent a loss of youth, a promotion may trigger a loss of a previous work identity, marriage may introduce a loss of being independent, having children may present a loss of freedom, moving home may feel like a loss of your previous social community and so on.

Life becomes about coping better with each loss as it emerges, so that each subsequent loss is managed on its own merit rather than being tinged or tainted by the trauma of previous losses.

Top Tips

Denial. This is a self-protective mechanism to limit the pain from loss and can be associated with both a desire to “move on quickly” or ignore what’s happened.

Immersion. Stay in the moment and absorb the impact of the loss. This is when you’ll feel the greatest hurt or pain, but it’s a way to take stock before you can regroup and muster the strength and power to move on methodically, down through the steps illustrated below;

Acknowledge. Name the loss, how it occurred and the consequences. It’s normal to *feel* the loss and that it can hurt.

Perspective. To understand a loss, put some perspective on its meaning for, and impact on, you. What is the value or importance to you?

Accept. As you move through the process, accept what’s happened and recognize the changes.

Mourn. Don’t force it if it isn’t there, but if it is, it’s OK to be sad and mourn what’s been lost.

Meaning. As you achieve some space from the most painful aspects of the loss, reflect on the positive meanings that could emerge from the loss. This could be about the new opportunities that open up.

Transformational growth. Embrace the shift that a loss can reformulate into a positive gain. It can sound almost “disrespectful” to seek out a gain from a loss, but it’s more disrespectful *not* to acknowledge the learning or opportunities that can emerge. It may open a door that might have felt closed or clear the fog that enveloped us.

In this way, birthdays acknowledge the loss of youth and celebrate the virtue of wisdom and experience. A promotion appreciates the loss of former work identities and revels in the new roles and tasks that provide new friendships and opportunities. Marriage marks the passing of singledom and welcomes a shared life with a partner. And having children erodes previous freedom to introduce a new family of involvement and activity.

Every cloud has a silver-lining.

Resources

MOODZONE

Boost your mood, cope with stress, anxiety or depression or simply improve your overall emotional wellbeing.



Opening Hours: Online

www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/low-mood-stress-anxiety.aspx

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

Want to know how to feel happier, more confident & worry less right now? Would you like to learn new ways of dealing with what life throws at you?



Opening Hours: Online

<https://littf.com/>

THE MIX

Provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 via online, social and mobile.



Opening Hours: Online

www.themix.org.uk

MINDFULNESS FOR STUDENTS

Helping you to stay calm, focused & better manage the pressures of student life.



Opening Hours: Online

<http://mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/>

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN SERVICES & SUPPORT

A range of support resources for everyone at University



www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/support

BIG WHITE WALL

Online community of people who are anxious, feeling low or not coping who support and help by sharing what's troubling them. This is a free, online, moderated service and confidential.



Opening Hours: Online

www.bigwhitewall.com

If you are experiencing a crisis - please contact any of the following

- **Emergency Services** - telephone 999 (Free) 24 hours
- **Samaritans** - telephone 116 123 (Free) 24 hours
- **Breathing Space** - telephone 0800 83 8587 (Free) Mon-Thu 6pm-2am, Fri-Sun 6pm-6am
- **Nightline** - telephone 01224 272829 (local rate) term-time only, between 20.00-08.00
- **NHS 24** - telephone 111 (Free) 24 hours

For other support resources, please see - www.abdn.ac.uk/counselling