

STRATEGIES for MINDFUL LIVING

Courtesy of UAB Employee Assistance & Counseling Center

Coping with a Breakup or Divorce

A breakup or divorce can be one of the most stressful and emotional experiences in life. Whatever the reason for the split — and whether you wanted it or not — a divorce or breakup can be extremely painful because it represents the loss, not just of the partnership, but also of the dreams and commitments you shared. A breakup also brings uncertainty about the future. These unknowns can often seem worse than being in an unhappy relationship. This pain, disruption, and uncertainty mean that recovering from a breakup or divorce can be difficult and take time. However, it's important to keep reminding yourself that you can and will get through this difficult experience and even move on with a renewed sense of hope and optimism. Explore tips below for coping with a breakup or divorce.

1. Allow yourself to grieve the loss of the relationship. Grief is a natural reaction to loss, and a breakup or divorce involves multiple losses: loss of companionship and shared experiences, loss of support, be it financial, intellectual, social, or emotional, and loss of hopes, plans, and dreams
2. Don't fight your feelings. It's normal to have lots of ups and downs, and feel many conflicting emotions, including anger, resentment, sadness, relief, fear and confusion. Trying to suppress or ignore them will only prolong the grieving process.
3. Talk about how you're feeling or write in a journal.
4. Remember that moving on is the end goal. Getting stuck in hurtful feelings like blame, anger and resentment will rob you of valuable energy and prevent you from healing and moving forward.
5. Remind yourself you still have a future. Be encouraged by the fact that new hopes and dreams will eventually replace your old ones. Know the difference between a normal reaction to a breakup and
6. depression. Grief can be paralyzing after a breakup, but after a while, the sadness begins to lift. Day by day, and little by little, you start moving on. However, if you don't feel any forward momentum, you may be suffering from depression.



SELF-CARE TIPS

- Make time each day to nurture yourself — spend time with friends, go for a walk, listen to music, enjoy a hot bath, get a massage, read a favorite book, take a yoga class or savor a warm cup of tea.
- Pay attention to what you need in any given moment and speak up to express your needs.
- Stick to a routine, which provides a comforting sense of structure and normalcy.
- Try not to make any major decisions in the first few months after a separation, breakup or divorce.
- Avoid using alcohol, drugs or food to cope.
- Explore new interests, which gives you a chance to enjoy life in the here-and-now, rather than dwelling on the past.
- Fuel your body with nutritious foods, plenty of sleep and physical activity.
- Connect face-to-face with trusted friends and family members, and cultivate new friendships.
- Spend time with people who support, value and energize you.
- Get outside help if needed, such as counseling or a support group.

— Adopted from [helpguide.org](https://www.helpguide.org)