



Student Wellness Centre

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Dealing with a Breakup

Relationship breakups are usually difficult. They interfere with your routine and often affect your desire to function. Other factors, like exams, a history of bad relationships, and lack of support, may complicate the situation and can contribute to the amount of stress you experience during this time.

During a breakup it is normal to feel:

- A lack of energy,
- Emptiness,
- An inability to deal with ordinary tasks,
- Emotionally overwhelmed,
- “Numb” (express little feeling), and
- Difficulty focusing.

Myth: There is one and only one perfect love for me.

As hard as it is to believe right now, it is possible to love more than one person in your lifetime. In time, you will become close to other people and may experience a more intimate connection to one of them.

How you grieve a lost relationship is a process unique to you. Relationship breakups can be one of life’s most stressful times. In fact, you may go through different stages of grieving. Eventually, there will be a

time when you suddenly have new energy and you will focus on future and new relationships. If your grief does not gradually reduce or it continues to interfere with your academics, social life, or other responsibilities, seek help. You may benefit from assistance.

Coping Immediately After

Talk it out. Do not go through this alone. Isolating yourself can increase stress and slow down the process of moving forward. Friends, family, and counsellors can listen and help you form new goals and plans. Putting emotions, feelings, and questions into words may help alleviate some of the confusion you are feeling. If you do not feel like talking to friends, consider getting outside help. Contact the Help Centre or Student Wellness Centre for advice.

Myth: Love conquers all.

No matter how much two people love each other there is a chance that someone may get hurt. Love alone does not solve the conflicts that may arise within a couple.

Feeling angry? Work it out. You may resent your ex for many reasons or you may even be mad at yourself. Put that energy to work positively: go to the gym and work out hard, clean your room or house, or cook your meals for the week.

Having Second Thoughts

- If the breakup was your decision, you may be forgetting the reasons why you broke it off. According to a Nebraska study, about 50% of breakups will pursue their ex at least once and they usually feel worse after doing so. You may be blaming yourself, even if you broke it off. This, coupled with loneliness, makes it difficult to keep one's distance. Stay strong. Focus on your own growth and allow yourself to have fun and do things that you enjoy.
- If writing helps you, write in a journal or practice poetry. Be very honest and do not edit as you go. Since only you will read this, you can be ruthless and clear. This may help you learn new things about yourself and your past relationship. It can also help you remember if you are having second thoughts.

Myth: If I keep myself busy, I will not have to think about the hurt.

You cannot avoid your feelings. Denial may provide temporary relief, but in the long run it may create more despair and prolong the healing process.

Ready to Date Again

One day you will suddenly realize that you have gone a few days without thinking about the other person. This is not the time to jump into a new relationship. Generally “rebound” relationships become more physical than anything else and will likely leave you feeling unfulfilled. Enjoy your friends, family, and try to make new connections. Appreciate the personal growth that this experience has provided. Do not move on before you are completely ready. You do not need to forget about the relationship completely, but you need to accept it before you are ready to move on.

Once you feel ready to seek a new relationship, make sure you feel good about yourself and believe that you deserve a happy, healthy relationship. Give yourself enough time to get to know a potential partner and give yourself permission to move on quickly and gracefully if the relationship is not right for you.

Myth: It is all my fault.

Do not blame yourself. There are two people in a relationship. You are not solely responsible for what happens. It does take two to tango after all.

Grieving After a Lost Relationship

Grief is the most common response when an important relationship ends. Many individuals report experiencing a period of numbness or shock immediately following a breakup. This may occur whether the loss was anticipated or was unexpected.

Following the period of shock, people may experience a time of intense emotional upheaval, during which the full impact of the loss may be experienced. Here, your emotions may be overwhelming and temporarily interfere with your academic, social, or family life.

For most people, the intense emotional pain of grief subsides. Eventually, energy is refocused on the future and new relationships. If your grief response does not gradually lessen in intensity over time and continues to interfere with your daily life, you may benefit from receiving assistance.

Helping Yourself Cope with the Breakup

- Give yourself some time to recover,
- Work to identify and accept all of your feelings,
- Maintain a positive view of yourself,
- Reassure yourself that it is normal for feeling to take an “up and down” course,
- Be careful of “rebounding,”
- Take care of your physical health,
- Seek and accept support,
- Give yourself permission to enjoy life, laugh, and have fun, and
- Get professional help if needed.

More Tips That May Help You

- Think through everything thoroughly, but not obsessively. Consider all the reasons you broke up. Understand that you enjoyed being together for awhile, but the relationship was not what both of you wanted for life. It would have ended eventually, no matter what.

- Keep your space. Even if you have decided to stay friends, you will need to break away completely for awhile. Remember that your ex is also trying to get over you. Be sensitive to that.
- Take care of yourself. Eat nutritiously and get enough sleep. Get fresh air every day and exercise. The natural light will refresh you and exercise will improve your mood.
- Stay safe. Watch for stalking behaviours. If you notice anything, report them to the police or Protective Services immediately.
- Clear out the memories. Get a box and literally put everything that reminds you of that person into it. Give the box away or store it someplace out of sight. In six months you may decide to get rid of everything permanently or you may go through the box and keep some things, but for now you need it gone.
- Find happiness in other areas of your life. Sign up for a new class, get caught up on reading novels, or joining a campus club. Have a good time. They say that the best revenge is living well!
- Avoid using drugs or alcohol. These substances may provide a

temporary escape, but they may also contribute to the stress you are already dealing with.

- Keep your dignity. Sometimes it is our own ego that causes the pain and feelings of rejection or betrayal. You must accept that you are a good person and that you did your best.

Additional Resources

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