

COPING WITH A BREAK-UP

No one ever begins a romantic relationship with the intention of ending it in such a painful way. However, relationships may end and almost all of us experience a break-up. Following the break-up of a relationship, a highly stressful period begins, regardless of the reason for the split and whether you wanted it or not. Even though it might seem scary at first, this period, which triggers all sorts of painful feelings, facilitates the adjustment to the break-up, and in fact, it is an essential part of the healing process.

Common reactions after a break-up

Denial: It can be hard to believe and fully accept that the relationship is over.

Anger: Anger with the partner who has caused pain by contributing to the break-up, is a common reaction.

Fear: You may fear that you will never find love again.

Self-blame & Guilt: You replay your relationship over and over and blame yourself for what went wrong, saying “If I had not done that, we would not have broken up!” You feel guilty about causing suffering to your ex-partner, especially when you are the one who has made the choice to end the relationship.

Sadness: You feel sad because you have lost the dream of what could have been.

Jealousy: You may experience jealousy about your partner potentially falling in love with someone else.

Confusion: You feel different and incomplete, question who you are and the meaning of life without your partner beside you.

Hope: Initially you may fantasize that the split is temporary, and that there will be a reconciliation. As you move forward and accept the reality of the ending, you may start to hope for a new life.

Relief: You may feel a sense of relief after your relationship has ended because you will be able to leave behind the problems and painful feelings you have been experiencing.

All negative emotions we feel when a breakup happens are natural reactions, and no matter how strong the pain, it won't last forever; the intensity of emotions will weaken gradually with the passage of time. In addition, it's important to know that the length and intensity of emotions experienced vary from person to person depending on the nature of the relationship and the degree of attachment.

Self-care tips

Allow yourself to feel. Emotions that you feel during the post-breakup period are natural and normal. Letting yourself accept and confront unpleasant feelings head-on, rather



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than suppressing or ignoring them, can help ease the pain of a split.

Give yourself time to heal. When you are coping with the pain caused by a break-up and going through a particularly depressing time, it is important to be patient, and give yourself time to heal before you are ready to have another relationship or make life-changing decisions.

Take care of your body. You can speed up the process of healing by taking control of your health and well-being through balanced nutrition, adequate rest and exercise. Otherwise, your symptoms may get worse.

Keep up daily self-care routines. Keep up doing the things you loved pre-split even if they are the last things you want to do. Participating in activities such as yoga and trekking could minimize the physical and emotional impacts of stress and boost your mood.

Give yourself permission to focus on yourself. Cutting ties with your ex and turning attention to yourself and the rest of your life will help you survive a break-up. Try not to think about your ex, who is no longer part of your life, and whether s/he has moved on; or dwell on the reasons for the break-up.

Don't go through it alone. When you cope with a break-up, talking with a trusted friend or family member about what you are going

through helps you feel better and more connected to others, and, consequently, not to feel alone.

Spend time with people who support, value, and energize you. You will probably go through mood swings. You may want to talk over the breakup, for example, and need someone who truly listens to you, without judgment. You may need to engage in activities you enjoy. Surround yourself with people who are positive and make you feel comfortable.

Evaluate the relationship and the breakup. You can even learn from the experience and grow into a stronger, wiser person. Perhaps you acquired valuable knowledge during your last experience followed by a break-up, which you will take with you into a future relationship.

Get outside help if you need it. If your negative emotions increase day after day, if you tend to consume more alcohol, or take non-prescription drugs, if you think that no one can empathize with your experience and your painful feelings associated with the split, if you don't share your feelings and if you feel as though you might physically harm yourself or others, contact a psychological counselor. A professional can suggest healthy coping mechanisms to get you over the pain of the split and to move on with strength.

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