**Coping with Divorce**

A break up or divorce can be one of the most stressful and emotional experiences in life. Even when a relationship is no longer good, a divorce or break up can be extremely painful because it represents the loss, not just of the partnership, but also of the dreams and commitments you shared. It can turn your whole world upside down making it hard to get through the day and stay productive. But there are things you can do to get through this difficult adjustment.

**Recognize that it’s ok to have different feelings.** It’s normal to feel sad, angry, exhausted, frustrated, and confused. You may also feel anxious about the future. Accept that reactions like these will lessen over time.

**Give yourself a break.** Give yourself permission to feel and to function at a less than optimal level for a period of time. You may not be able to be quite as productive on the job or care for others in exactly the way you’re accustomed to for a little while. Take time to heal, re-group, and re-energize.

**Don’t go through this alone.**  Sharing your feels with friends and family can help you get through this period. Consider joining a support group where you can talk to others in similar situations. Isolating yourself can raise your stress levels, reduce your concentration, and get in the way of your work, relationships, and overall health. Don’t be afraid to get outside help if you need it.

**Take care of yourself emotionally and physically.** Be good to yourself and to your body. Take time out to exercise, eat well, and relax. Keep to your normal routines as much as possible. Try to avoid making major decisions or changes in life plans. Don’t use alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes as a way to cope.

**Avoid power struggles and arguments with your spouse or former spouse.** If a discussion begins to turn into a fight, calmly suggest that you both try talking again later and either walk away or hang up the phone.

**Take time to explore your interests.** Reconnect with things you enjoy doing apart from your spouse. Sign up for a class, invest time in your hobbies, volunteer, and take time to enjoy life and make new friends.

**Think positively.** Things may not be the same, but finding new activities and friends, moving forward with reasonable expectations will make this transition easier. If you have children, family traditions will still be important but some of them may need to be adjusted. Help create new family activities.

If you find yourself struggling with this issue and would like additional support, please contact VITAL WorkLife at 1-800-383-1908. Your EAP benefit includes face to face counseling sessions as well as unlimited telephone counseling available to you day or night.

Mental Health America. “Coping With Separation and Divorce.” http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/separation-and-divorce