

Coping Strategies for Recovering from a Break-Up

Objective

To identify ways to cope following the end of a romantic relationship.

You Should Know

When a relationship ends, it can be challenging to recover your emotional balance. Here are some typical experiences you might go through after a break-up, with some strategies for coping with the difficult feelings you may have. Check off the items you are experiencing, and then check the strategies you will try to help you cope more effectively. Add your own thoughts and ideas.

LONELINESS

- Tell yourself it is normal to feel lonely after a break-up, and that you can get through this. Breathe slowly until the feeling passes.
- Identify supportive people in your life and make a plan for increasing your contact with them, such as a weekly lunch date with a good friend.
- Use an online meet-up group or join a local organization to find people with common interests (not for romance – just for friendship and activity).
- Your idea: _____
- Your idea: _____
- Your idea: _____
- Your idea: _____

OBSESSING ABOUT YOUR EX

- Talk to a therapist, counselor, or coach about your past relationship.
- While you grieve the loss of your relationship, identify at least two positive things in your life and spend equal time on them (for example, playing with kids or grandkids, spending time with a pet, or doing a hobby).
- If you can't stop thinking about your ex, give yourself a specific time to write in a journal about him or her. Then put the journal away and turn your attention to other things.
- Practice focusing on the present. Do a challenging task and keep your mind on it.
- Your idea: _____
- Your idea: _____
- Your idea: _____
- Your idea: _____

FEELING BAD ABOUT YOURSELF

- Make a list of your positive qualities.
- If you know you made mistakes in the relationship, write out action steps for behaving differently in the future.

- Find a way to help someone else. Volunteer in the community or help a friend or family member with a project. This will boost your self-esteem better than almost anything.
- Your idea: _____
- Your idea: _____
- Your idea: _____
- Your idea: _____

Notes:

Reflections on This Exercise

Do you have a better understanding of what you can do to cope following your break-up? Why or why not? Explain.

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
