
S&L Personnel Advice Centre

4 Steps to help deal with being unemployed!

- Planning
- Budget
- Goal setting
- Understand the situation

Planning

As with everything else a bit of careful planning can get you through the situation without permanent damage. Before you embark on an action plan, consider what you want to do. Take a self assessment test on the Internet and make a list of your dream jobs, what you like and don't like, what type of income you require, what benefits are important, work hours and what type of work environment you enjoy. Consider your existing skills and how you can highlight them in your CV. Also think about skills you need for a new job and plan on how to attain them.

Your planning should involve the people who know you and can help you. Don't try and do it on your own. You require the input of others.

Budget

List your monthly expenses and how much you require to earn a living at this moment. Don't cut your mobile or landline. You need to be able to communicate. If you cut on expenses start with entertainment and luxuries, not essentials. Keep paying your health insurance and instalments on your vehicle or house. Make arrangements at the bank for lower payments if necessary. Rather than falling behind on payments, request in advance some leniency. Don't create new debts. If necessary, take on a part time job to help cover the expenses while you search for work.

Goal setting

If you don't have a job search plan, you can easily end up on the couch every day without accomplishing anything. Make a list of goals for every day and tick them off when accomplished. It will boost your self-esteem, help you to stay on track and shorten the period of unemployment because you are focused. Also make a list for every week and keep to the schedule.

Understanding the situation

If you don't understand the reactions that may follow when you are fired or retrenched, you may feel that you are alone in it and become depressed. The following feelings are normal. If a loved one goes through these stages, try to be supportive. Knowing what to expect may help you deal with unemployment better.

Denial phase

At first a feeling of freedom may arise and then a phase where the whole episode seems unreal. We try not to deal with the feelings because the reality is too harsh.

Anger phase

The next phase is anger or emotional outbursts. Bottling up emotions can cause health problems and lead to irrational behaviour. It is natural to become emotional as reality sinks in. Talk to someone about the situation as it will help you deal with unemployment.

Loss of confidence

The next phase is characterized by a feeling of low esteem. During this phase we feel that we are inadequate. Make a list of your strong points and remind yourself of your worth.

Hostility

Negative feelings to those around us may arise, but we need to learn not to shift blame or be angry at others for our situation.

Hope

We regain our confidence and go on with our lives. During this phase we are able to make plans and work towards goals.

Acceptance

We accept our situation, and even though it still forms part of our lives, we are not controlled by our emotions anymore.

Getting help

The following can also help you to deal with unemployment effectively:

- Walk for 20 minutes a day. It will help you to clear your mind and renew your energy level.
- See a counsellor if your feelings get the best of you.
- Plan three hours a day for job searching.
- Get involved in a volunteer or community help program as you will get a feeling of worth when you assist others and accomplish something. It can also be used on your CV and help you to build a network of contacts and references.
- Get a part time job to supplement your income to help lower financial pressure.
- Spend quality time with your family.