

# Ask the Career Coach: Overwhelmed in Transition

You've lost your job. How do you deal with it?

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I was just laid off and feel so overwhelmed. I knew my company was downsizing, but I kept hoping my position would remain. What do I do now?

Overwhelmed  
Short Hills

Being laid off can be emotional even when you may be expecting it. There will likely be a sense of loss—in this case, your job, your routine and sometimes your confidence. Even though you were anticipating potential change, you may not be emotionally prepared for it.

Some companies offer outplacement services and the use of their Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for support during this transition period. I am not clear if you received either of these services or if there was any transition package—severance payment and information shared with you about your benefits continuation. You may want to review the separation agreements carefully and review them again with a company representative in a few days, once you have processed this initial change.

There are many emotions that you may feel ranging from shock to anger, and eventually acceptance, which enables you to move forward. This loss involves a grieving process that may include missing your daily routine, your colleagues and your sense of belonging. It may take some time to re-establish new routines, set a new schedule and connect with new communities. Your new connections may include your communities ranging from outplacement services; your church, temple or mosque; your hobbies; your book group; your family and friends to just name a few.

While you may be in shock or denial, you may feel numb or detached. These feelings should dissipate shortly. While it is normal to experience grief after a loss, most people move forward eventually with support from family and friends. If you are feeling deep sadness and having difficulty carrying out normal routines or find yourself withdrawing from social activities, please talk to your doctor for professional support.

If you can, take some time to reflect on what you liked about the work you do, what skills you have, what you wish you could do next, and what skills you would like to improve and develop.

- Review your budget. See where you can reduce your expenses to manage your financials according your means.
- Register for unemployment.
- Get comfortable with your transition and think through what you will share with others when you see neighbors during the day or when your routine changes.
- Take some time daily to take care for yourself. For some, this is a workout at the gym, mediation or a walk.
- Create a realistic strategy. It will guide your new daily and weekly routines. It will guide your activities from networking to socializing and find your sense of purpose. There are many free resources available.

**About this column:** "Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to [CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com](mailto:CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com). Lisa Chenofsky Singer is a Millburn-Short Hills resident and the founder of Chenofsky

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