



FACING A PERSONAL CRISIS

All of us have experienced an emotional crisis at one time or another. Indeed, occasional crises are part of life, giving us the opportunity and challenge to cope and grow as we move through the difficult period of transition or change.

Some crises occur quickly and unexpectedly, such as the sudden death of a close relative, a serious accident, or the onset of a medical illness. Other crises build up slowly over time, such as a marital breakup, the difficulties of a progressive illness, or an impending job layoff. Some crises are even predictable and part of the normal life cycle, such as the arrival of a new baby (especially the first), the last child's leaving home, or the adjustment from work to retirement.

All these different crises require new ways of behaving and thinking, and may leave us feeling temporarily confused and upset. How should we attempt to cope? How can we help ourselves? It is good to remember that within every crisis there is the opportunity to grow and learn to deal with adversity.

Outlined below are some basic guidelines and suggestions that you might want to consider when you are experiencing a period of crisis:

1. **DON'T PANIC.** It is good to remember that almost every situation can be improved – and that a workable solution sooner or later will be found. Painful feelings must be experienced and lived through. A rush of strong feelings and an urge to cry or shout are common reactions to the stress of crisis and do not mean that one is “going crazy.”
2. **REMOVE OR AVOID WHAT IS CAUSING OR WORSENING THE STRESS.** Further arguments with a spouse, child or co-worker while tempers are flaring seldom resolve anything. It is also important to avoid using drugs or alcohol since they may make it harder to think clearly and can lead to feeling even more depressed or irritable.
3. **CALL UPON EXTRA RESOURCES.** Now is the time to reach out to friends and family for support. Professional help (including legal or financial advice) may be useful or necessary. Find someone who can listen to you.
4. **CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS.** Many people in crises feel “trapped” or “lost” or may feel that “their world has come to an end.” A painful event like the death of a loved one or the loss of a job will disrupt the normal routines of life, of course, but other avenues should be explored. Try to consider a range of alternatives, even if some of them at first seem impossible or less than ideal.



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5. **BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF.** It takes time to adjust to a major change in one's life. Some important decisions may have to be made, but avoid rash or impulsive actions during a period of crisis.
6. **BE AWARE OF PHYSICAL REACTIONS.** Feelings like "being punched in the stomach" or "stunned" are natural reactions. Let yourself heal. Treat yourself carefully, pamper yourself.
7. **USE THE CRISIS.** Explore other options rather than perceiving the crisis as evidence of personal defeat.
8. **DEAL WITH ONE ISSUE AT A TIME.** Don't overload yourself with demands – ask for help.
9. **FOCUS ON THE FUTURE.** Don't spend valuable energy punishing yourself with regrets and "if only..." Seek answers and new directions.
10. **KNOW WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUR AT FAMILY SERVICE COUNSELING AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER,** such as:
 - Marriage counseling
 - Family mediation (for divorcing couples)
 - Parent-child conflict counseling
 - Special services for older people
 - Counseling for the hearing impaired
 - Displaced workers program

If the above guidelines don't help in coping with a crisis, that is the time to seek assistance. Friends, family, and other support groups such as FSCC can help protect us from harmful effects of stress.

Family Service Counseling and Community Resource Center is only a call away. Fees are based upon an adjusted scale according to income and family size.