

## SELF CHECK

You may like to check out what you are doing or can do to manage your loss and take care of yourself.

I am:

- Eating, sleeping and exercising well.
- Talking to supportive friends frequently/daily
- Keeping the routines of my life going - work, sport, interests and friends
- Not making any big sudden decisions about my life
- Accepting this situation and making choices for myself
- Taking special care of myself in ways I value
- Minimising and avoiding drugs, alcohol, and smoking.
- Avoiding extra responsibilities during this healing time
- Treating my partner respectfully
- Expressing myself creatively through art or writing

## WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

If you would like to make an appointment to see a counsellor to learn more about this topic, please contact the counselling service on your campus.

Distance students can contact any one of the campuses. Please tell the receptionist if you need an urgent appointment.

## CONTACT DETAILS

### ALBANY

Health and Counselling

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (09) 443 9783

Email: Studenthealth@massey.ac.nz

### MANAWATŪ

Student Counselling Service

Turitea Campus, Palmerston North

Hours 8.30am - 5.00pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (06) 350 5533

Email: s.counselling@massey.ac.nz

### WELLINGTON

Student Counselling Service

Hours 8.30am - 4.30pm

Monday - Friday

Phone (04) 801 2542

<http://crow.massey.ac.nz>

<http://health-counselling.massey.ac.nz>

# HOW TO COPE WHEN YOUR PARTNER LEAVES YOU

## STUDENT COUNSELLING



# HELP! MY PARTNER JUST LEFT ME!

When you have been in a meaningful relationship you and your partner have usually made an investment in the relationship and in each other.

When your partner decides that the relationship is no longer working for them, that they would rather be with someone else or with no-one at all, it can be an extremely difficult time.

## THE PERSON LEAVING MAY:

feel guilty about leaving, or their reasons for leaving, and consequently may not want or be able to give clear "reasons" for going.

be dealing with their own issues that make it difficult for them to stay in the relationship.

be unwilling or unable to make a longer commitment to you or the relationship.

have developed different goals which would preclude them continuing in the relationship

If you still want to be in the relationship then you may find it hard to accept any of the "reasons" your partner gives for wanting to leave the relationship. You may keep trying to get a proper "reason" out of them with no success and increasing frustration for both of you.

## YOUR REACTIONS MAY INCLUDE:

**DENIAL/DISBELIEF** – they're not serious, they just need some "space," there's been a misunderstanding, they can't mean it, they are just "stressed/drunk/tired" and will feel different tomorrow/next week/after exams.

**NEGOTIATING** – if I do this, my partner will come back, "I promise to...", "I won't nag about... anymore."

**ANGER** – "How dare they! After all I've done. They owe me an explanation!" "They will have to hear what I have to say. It's so unfair."

**DEPRESSION & DESPAIR** – "I'm no good." "There's something wrong with me, I can't live without them," "I'll never meet anyone else," "I'm too fat."

## HOW DO I COPE WITH THIS?

Feeling hurt and upset is natural - most people take some time to recover from a broken relationship. You can't decide on when you'll start feeling better, but you can take steps to start moving in that direction.

People often go through a range of strong feelings, and have a lot of confusing thoughts. It is as if the jigsaw that was your life has been thrown up in the air and one significant piece is missing. Now you have to re-adjust and create a new life and it takes a while for the pieces to land and fit together again.

Cry, punch the pillow, talk out loud, and do what you need to do. You have "lost" something important and tears are an important way for men and women to express their sorrow.

Talk to your friends or family, have a cry on their shoulders. Build a supportive network of people who are comfortable discussing feelings. Don't be afraid to ask for help, we all need help someone.

Try and keep your sleeping, eating and exercise programmes running, although some disruption to these may occur, see a GP or counsellor if you are concerned or not coping.

Pamper yourself. Long bubble baths with a good book, coffee/ glass of champagne, soft music, candles etc. work well for some.

Your concentration may be affected, so make lists, take breaks, give yourself some leeway to do things (don't try and do things at the last minute or take on new responsibilities)

Minimise and monitor your use of alcohol, smoking, caffeine and drugs to avoid the added complication of addiction issues. We sometimes use these substances to escape and help block out the pain.

Keep the routines in your life going - work, play, sport, interests, and friends. Avoid making big sudden decisions about your life.

Draw, paint or write poetry or a journal to get the feelings out and express yourself creatively. Look back on this when you feel stuck and remind yourself of how far you really have come.

See this as a good opportunity to think about what's important to you, adjust and refocus on long term goals. This may not have been your choice but how you respond is.

## WHAT MAY I BE DOING TO MAKE THINGS WORSE?

Avoid excessive promiscuity or rebound relationships; don't start a new relationship before fully working through the issues around the ending of this relationship.

People choose this because it is often a time of intense and painful feelings, including loneliness, and the wish to avoid these can be strong. You take your unresolved grief as "baggage" to complicate the new relationship and slow your healing.

Refusing to accept your partner's decision and their right to make it will prolong your grief.

