

Coping with Divorce Stress and How to Help Kids

Coping with Separation and Divorce

Moving through a separation or divorce is difficult. You may find yourself stressed as you adjust. **Here are tips to help you with the adjustment:**

Embrace Your Feelings. It's common to feel sad, angry, exhausted, frustrated and confused. You may also be nervous about your future and financial security. Accept that emotions such as these will lessen over time. It's natural to be a bit intimidated during this transition.

Love Yourself, permit yourself to feel. Give yourself a break and realize you may not be able to be quite as productive for a little while. It takes time to heal, adjust and regroup. Give yourself a chance to re-energize.

Get Support. Sharing your feelings will help you get through this period. Isolating yourself can raise your stress levels. Join a support group. Get support from friends and family or professional help.

Be Your Best Friend. Be good to yourself and your body, Exercise, eat well and support your emotional health. Be mindful to not suppress your feelings by using alcohol, drugs or cigarettes to cope.

Avoid control games. Don't engage in power struggles and arguments with your spouse or former partner. If a conversation starts to turn into a fight, calmly recommend that you both try communicating again later and either walk away, hang up the phone or stop texting.

Find the New You. Reconnect with things you enjoy. Socialize, get involved in activities you like. Sign up for a class, rekindle your hobbies, volunteer, enjoy life, and make new friends.

Be Positive. Who you hang around with, may be how you act. Are your friends positive? Moving forward with reasonable expectations works better with positive support.

Life will get back to normal with patience.

Tips for talking to kids ...

If you have children, here's a short list of tips that can help your young children and teens cope.

Reassure, listen and respect your kids. Make sure your kids know that their family is still a unit although there are two homes now. Kids need to know that your divorce is not their fault. Listen to and ease their concerns and be compassionate to their needs.

Stability is king. Maintain routines, keep your kids' daily and weekly routines as familiar and stable as possible.

Consistency is best for your kids, make sure to agree in advance with your ex on bedtimes, punishments or other daytime decisions.

Be a Good Listener. Your children need to know they can rely on you. Make and keep realistic promises. Keeps out of divorce topics or divorce issue discussions.

Don't include your children in adult conflict. Do not argue or talk negatively about the other parent in front of your children. Don't use your child as a messenger or make them feel like they must take sides.

Quick Tips to help kids cope:

1. Praise honesty.
2. Help kids identify emotions.
3. Help kids identify feelings in words.
4. Offer comfort and support.
5. Be mindful and keep yourself healthy.
6. Keep track of your child's emotions and behaviors.

Most kids are resilient to change. What exacerbates and prolongs their stress and anxiety is when kids feel torn between two fighting parents.