



Break-ups: How to Help Yourself Move On

The ending of a relationship can be tough, even if you realize it is for the best. As you navigate adjusting to a break-up there **are** things you can do to help yourself move on and be happy!

Why is dealing with a break-up so hard?

- A break-up is a loss, not only of the relationship but also the plans, dreams and hopes you shared with your partner.
- Many people feel disappointment, grief, and a sense of failure when a relationship ends.
- Break-ups often mean a big change in your daily routine; this abrupt change can feel overwhelming.
- In addition to your routine, *who* you spent time with may change as well. You may lose other relationships associated with your ex-partner. If you do maintain relationships associated with your ex-partner, these relationships may change in some way.
- Your sense of self can be impacted



TIPS FOR GRIEVING AFTER A BREAK UP:

- **Feel the Feelings!** You will likely experience many conflicting emotions; ignoring or suppressing them will only make the grieving process harder and longer. So, allow yourself to experience your feelings, knowing they are temporary.
- **Get Support!**
 - Reach out to friends and family who are supportive. Connecting with others will make you feel less alone. And, try to find a balance between talking about the break-up and engaging in other topics/activities.
 - Prioritize time with those who support, value and energize you and minimize time with those people who don't seem to understand and don't support you.
 - If you lost a lot of friends when the relationship ended, work on meeting new people with whom you can develop new friendships. Try new things, consider joining a student club/org, don't isolate yourself!
- **Remember, your goal is to move on!** It is important to experience and express your feelings, but you don't want to get stuck in negative thinking. Over-analyzing the past and resenting your ex-partner will sap your energy and make it hard to move forward.
- **Keep Hopeful about the future!** Remember there will be many opportunities that will come your way (many you might not even be able to imagine right now).
- **Pay attention to how you are doing overall!** Notice if your reaction to the breakup is causing so much difficulty for you that it is too hard to manage things like school. This is an indicator that getting some additional help may be needed (consider counseling services at PACS)

TIPS FOR TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

- **Nurture yourself!** Plan to do something calming and self-soothing EVERY DAY. Some things to try: meditation, yoga, journaling, music, progressive muscle relaxation, take a walk, or anything else that you find soothing.
- **Listen to what you need!** It's important to be able to say "no" when you really don't want to do something. And, know that what you need will change day to day (even moment to moment).
- **Accept that your emotions will fluctuate!** Healing from a break-up is not a smooth, linear process. While you will feel better over time, it's generally not a steady process.
- **Find your new routine!** It can be comforting to have structure in your life.
- **Wait!** You don't want to make big decisions while you are feeling very emotional.
- **Be Healthy!** Avoid using alcohol, drugs or food to "cope" with your emotions. Choose healthier ways to cope with your distress. Focus on the basics (getting enough sleep, eating right, exercising).
- **Embrace the New!** Try out new interests and fun activities which allow you to enjoy life.
- **Set Limits on Social Media!** It may be tempting, but it is not helpful to spend time looking at your ex-partner's social media posts.



Possible Lessons to be Learned from a Break-Up

A breakup is an opportunity to re-evaluate your life and learn about yourself and your relationships.

Some questions to ask yourself WHEN YOU ARE READY:

- Do you notice a pattern in the types of people you seek out to have relationships with?
- How do you react to stress and conflict? Are there some different ways you could react that might improve your relationships with others?
- How open are you to accepting others for how they really are instead of pushing them to be something you think they "should" be?
- Do you tend to change yourself drastically when you are in a relationship to be who you think your partner wants you to be?
- Do you feel in control of your feelings OR do they seem like they control you?
- Are you able to clearly communicate your needs and desires to others?
- Looking back, what were some things you might have done to contribute to the problems in the relationship?

When thinking about these questions, be honest with yourself BUT do not beat yourself up over past behavior (this is never helpful). Instead, keep the focus on what you can do to help yourself make better choices in the future.



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