

2 Taking Care of Things

Taking Care of Yourself

Going through a separation can be extremely stressful for you and your family, and you should first of all take care of yourself both physically and emotionally before you can take care of anything else.

1. Don't be afraid to show sadness

Take time to grieve and to go through the healing process. A loss that is not mourned can result in you not letting go of your interest in your former partner's life. You have every right to dedicate time for crying, reflecting on your life, or simply being alone.

2. Resolve anger and resentment

Separation may bring on feelings that can affect you for years. Emotional flashbacks or bitter feelings can be stirred up when you see your former partner or hear about what he or she is doing. It is important to resolve your anger and resentment in a healthy way in order to move on.

3. Reclaim yourself

Separation means that it's time to establish a new sense of identity by moving from "we" to "I". Try to view this time in your life as a chance to start over. Think about what you have always been good at and what brings you joy and happiness in life. It helps to remember the strengths you had before the relationship. It also helps to reach out to trusted friends and family members, talk to the Elders and other counsellors to help sort out your feelings. Acknowledge yourself and start over.

4. Keep to your routines

Although separation can very easily throw your daily routine into a chaotic mess, try to avoid this as much as possible, especially where your children are concerned. A familiar routine and stability provide comfort, and the more you can keep to your day-to-day schedule, the easier it will be to cope.

5. Stay busy and active

For your mental health, keep yourself busy, socially and intellectually. Having an active lifestyle can also take your mind off the stress you may be experiencing.



6. Stay healthy

Just as your mental wellness is essential to managing stress, so is your physical health. Be sure to eat a balanced diet, exercise regularly to stay fit, and work off the stress in a productive way.

7. Don't rush into decisions

Take all the time you need to think about making any major life-altering steps such as changing careers or starting up a new relationship. If you make important decisions when you are under a lot of stress you may regret them later.

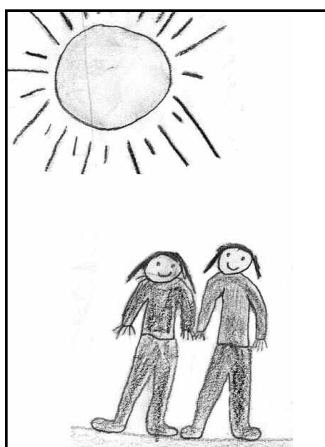
8. Be positive

In some ways, the end of your relationship may seem like a failure, but you shouldn't look on it that way. Over 40 percent of all relationships end in separation! Think of the new possibilities your separation opens up that were not available to you before.

9. Plan for the future

When the timing feels right to you, make plans for your future. Set up goals for yourself, and develop a plan of how you can achieve them.

Other Considerations



Cody, Nipisikopahk Middle School

Taking care of your children

As you well know, separation is hard on children too. Reassure them that they are not responsible for the separation. Tell them that you both love them and will continue to be there for them.

Working with other parent

Although your relationship is undergoing many changes, you need to continue working on the task of parenting together.

Dealing with changes in your other relationships

There may be changes in the way you relate to friends you had as a couple, and to your extended family and your ex-spouse's extended family. You need to deal with these relationships in a healthy way.

Dealing with the legal issues

Legal decisions regarding your separation will require making some important decisions, and you have to be well-prepared to make them.

Dealing with your finances

It is likely that your finances will change upon separation. You may have short-term problems dealing with a drop in income. You will need a different short-term and long-term financial plan.

Where to go from here

Separation is a major change in your life. It can also be a time to plan where to go from here. With courage and determination, this can be an opportunity for you and your children to learn about yourselves in a new way and to become stronger.

Taking Care of Things: Checklist

Think about where you are in the process of taking care of the following:

	Not much progress yet	Beginning to make progress	Making good progress
Taking Care of Myself			
1. Showing sadness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Resolving anger and resentment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Reclaiming myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Keep to my routines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Staying busy and active	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Staying healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Not rushing into decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Being positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Planning for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Considerations			
Taking care of my children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with other parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with changes in my other relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with the legal issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing with my finances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Contract with myself

I will review this checklist in _____ (weeks/months' time) and compare where I am then in the process of dealing with my separation.

Moving Forward

Here are some ways that parents cope. Check off the options below that you wish to work on. Think of other activities that you might want to consider as a way of moving forward.

PARENTING

- Establish a flexible routine with your child and stick to it.
- Enroll your child in an activity he or she enjoys.
- Get a babysitter so you can have a regular night out.
- Reserve a time each week that you and your child can look forward to sharing.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Share your feelings and experiences in a support group.
- Get professional help with any area of your life that seems to keep you off balance.
- Help others as a volunteer or friend. In doing so you will feel good about yourself and may learn more about yourself.
- Look at your behaviour and decide if it keeps you from being a better parent.
- Attend a cultural event or a self-help event.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

PHYSICAL

- Exercise daily, or as often as possible.
- Join an exercise class or start one yourself.
- Go camping with groups or clubs.
- Join a sports team.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

ENJOYMENT AND SOCIAL

- Join a social club.
- Pursue single-parent activities within your community, church, or at work.
- Read a good book, learn to play an instrument.
- Try a hobby you really enjoy.
- List things you've enjoyed doing in the past or things you might enjoy doing in the future.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

SELF APPRECIATION

- Compliment yourself when you've done a good job of parenting
- Don't compare yourself with other parents who appear to be perfect. (Chances are, they aren't.)
- Ask for help when you need it, you deserve it!

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____