

Greetings,

For help, hope, and healing, St. Michael Lutheran offers their [Caring Ministries](#) with Director, Julie Berchtold, who is available to all who seek resources or assistance. Julie can be reached at 239-939-4711 x 227 and she welcomes and looks forward to your call.

Read on for an encouraging word ...

From the Pastoral Counselor

(Article from Reverend Dr. Rick Armstrong,
contributions from *HealthDay* News)

I have two relatives and three good friends who have lost their jobs recently. I really want to help, but I don't want to try to tell them what to do, because I don't know what they should do (getting a job now doesn't seem possible). I want to understand what they are going through; maybe listening is the best way to help. What do you think? CS-Orlando

You seem like a good caregiver — not trying to solve other's problems, instead trying to understand and seemingly support them in that way.

A job loss really represents multiple losses. There's the loss of the financial ability to support yourself and your family if you don't have savings. There may be the loss of self-respect, and the respect of others. For some people, there's a loss of identity, security and daily structure. At the extreme end, there are people who lose meaning and hope. Losses of any type might result in depression and anger.

If one is lucky enough to only experience a short-term job loss, the effect on the mind and body will likely be minimal, said stress expert, Dr. Jeff Brantley, director of the Duke Integrative Medicine in North Carolina. "It's when stress becomes chronic that all systems of the body are affected," he said. But, he added, "if you're mindful of your reactions, you can go a long way toward controlling them."

If you've lost your job, there are several ways you can react. One is with calm, thinking, "I can find another job, and I have money saved, so it will be all right." Or you might react with "catastrophic thoughts," such as you'll never find a job again, or you'll lose your house, and that will cause a reaction within the body. An important element is the perception of the situation and the narrative a person assigns it. The Chinese symbol for crisis contains two elements; one is danger, and the other is challenge or opportunity.

Its important not to look through the danger lens only — look through the challenge lens as well and try to figure out what you're leaning from this experience, even if it's just learning how to deal with stress better.

But it's not only those who've lost their jobs who are feeling stressed these days. Families of those who are unemployed, and even those who still have their jobs, are also being affected. Some refer to that as "survivor's guilt" which I'm told is present in the workplace today along with the fact that workplaces are much more stressful. Some have said that as they wonder about keeping their jobs they are grateful that they still have a job, even though they're asked to do more and more.

Coping with Job Loss

(Adapted from the U. S. Labor Department on handling sudden unemployment)



Experts say there are a number of things you can do to ease the stress of unemployment:

1. Tell your family about the job loss, and reassure children that it will be OK. Don't try to keep the job loss a secret.
2. File for unemployment benefits right away, and find out about continuing your health benefits.
3. Take a few days of "me" time and pamper yourself to get into a better mindset.
4. Turn your work day into a day of looking for work.
5. Take some time for reflection, and use this opportunity to figure out what type of work might really make you happy.
6. Don't isolate yourself. Continue to socialize. Look for volunteer opportunities.
7. Exercise regularly, eat well to keep yourself healthy, and to help stave off depression.
8. If you find that you just can't shake that anxious feeling practice some sort of relaxation, such as prayer, meditation or yoga. Try to change your thinking by writing down three positive affirmations every day. This helps you realize what your best qualities are, and helps to re-channel your thoughts in a more positive way.
9. If you find that you just can't look for a job anymore, or if people are telling you that you're irritable or angry all the time, or if you're withdrawing from people and activities you once enjoyed, or you're turning to alcohol or other substances to feel better, seek professional help.