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# Bethel Olentangy

## Psychological Services

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An association of independent practitioners

### PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO HELP GET THROUGH A DISSOLUTION/DIVORCE/SEPARATION

- 1) Develop a good support system, friends or others you can share your feelings with. Find a support group of others who are going through the same.
- 2) Journal and/or be mindful to express your anger, hurt, sadness out so that you can start to move on. Also look at what you can learn from this relationship so that your future relationships/friendships are healthier, and you learn what you need/value, and what to avoid. (Many of us choose spouses which help us to recreate the family we grew up in, including its dysfunctionality: it is what we know.) Having insight into what works and doesn't work for you and why helps you to not blame yourself for all that went wrong (or to accept this blame from your spouse), or to blame your spouse for all: it takes two to tango in most situations.
- 3) Make time to grieve, but also time to be occupied/busy with other things, have fun, so that you're not obsessing about this 24/7. Use thought-stopping if need be, to think about alternative things which might bring some relative level of contentment in some arena (e.g. your job, developing friendships, your becoming more assertive or expressing your feelings more.)
- 4) Look at how to self-nurture, take care of yourself through exercise, healthy eating, getting enough sleep.
- 5) Now that you're in this situation, look at this as something that you can learn from. This is an opportunity to make life better than it has been in the past. In the long run, there's little sense, after you've learned all you can learn from the situation, to dwell on what has happened but instead to move on.
- 6) In the long run, look at how you can "let go" of your anger so that you don't carry it around as a burden which affects how you relate to others. This gives too much power to your previous spouse to continue to negatively affect your life.
- 7) Learn to be alone and feel comfortable with being alone.
- 8) Consider how you can use this experience to deepen yourself spiritually, and deepen the meaning in your life. The healthiest of people use whatever crises happen in life to find deeper meaning.
- 9) Develop good stress management skills to help take you through the worst aspects of the divorce/dissolution process.
- 10) If you're helping children through this process, make sure that you take care of yourself first so that you have some energy to give them. (// to putting your oxygen on first in an airline disaster.) This also allows you to stay positive and optimistic with them, helping them to maintain a relationship with their father rather than criticizing him.
- 11) Keep your own integrity, don't stoop to whatever manipulations your ex-spouse might be using. Be the best person you can be, and this will likely help your spouse to be more kind in this process too. (this is a role model for your children as well.)
- 12) Stay optimistic, look for the positive in all.
- 13) Think about what strategies have worked well for you in other times of stress or change to get through this time.
- 14) New relationships- wait at least 12 months after your divorce is final before making a new commitment. You NEED the time alone to process, to make sure you really see this new person in your life as s/he is, and that you're not projecting onto them issues from your previous spouse.