



Forgiveness may be difficult... but worth it!



AuMHC Spring Luncheon featuring The Capitol Steps

What to do when you lose your job.

How to grieve the loss and get back on your feet again!

Any time “grief and loss” are mentioned in any context, we automatically relate it to the death of a loved one. But in the United States today there is another devastating form of loss taking place. A form of loss that borders on a national epidemic, and whose affect on people may have tremendous consequences over a longer period of time. We are talking about the loss of a job.

Last year in this country, the unemployment rate rose to 10%. On the average, more than 434,000 people lost their jobs every month between the fourth quarter of 2008 and the end of the third quarter of 2009. That's more than 5 million people in the last year that have had their incomes cease and their lives severely interrupted.*

In this country and in our culture “you are what you do.” Attend a party and you will introduce yourself as “John Smith, Director of Operations for XYZ Company,” or “Hi, I’m Janet Jones with ABC Bank.” We all do it, almost as automatically as shaking hands. This is how we share who we are with other people. It also gives us value in the social order of our culture.

What happens when we lose our job?

The loss of a job is a psycho-social issue. It affects your functioning in every way. People hide it, people don't talk about it, and most people exist in a state of denial for a period of time. Job loss can be an assault on your personal self...the core of your being has been violated. You must allow for a period of grieving, letting your self begin the healing process. If a loved one dies, there is a funeral. Neighbors and friends bring food. Notes and cards are sent. These are the socially acceptable ways of supporting a person after the death of a loved one. When you lose your job, none of these things happen and it can take up to two years to fully recover from it.

Now what do I do?

The first thing you need to do if you lose your job is to sit down with your family and be honest with them about how you lost your job, and that as a family, you need to come up with a new plan to overcome the obstacles you are about to face. This plan needs to be built on your strengths not your weaknesses. It is imperative that you not dwell on how you lost your job, but rather on how you're going to get the next one. After all, you have been successful obtaining employment in the past; there is no reason to assume that you won't be successful in the future.

Find a daily routine. Get up, get dressed, get out of the house and go somewhere that exposes you to resources that can lead to employment include such places as county Workforce Centers. This can help put you in contact with the resources and people who can help you get a new job, but just as important, this routine can instill in you a sense of forward mobility...a sense that you're doing all you can to get back to a “normal” life.

Take time with your children. It's good for you and good for them. Being honest about your circumstances can actually strengthen family bonds, and with it you gain the moral support you need to move forward.

Get it in writing. Start a journal and write down your plan each day. Create a long-term and a short-term plan. Make notes on

Things to do if you have lost your job:

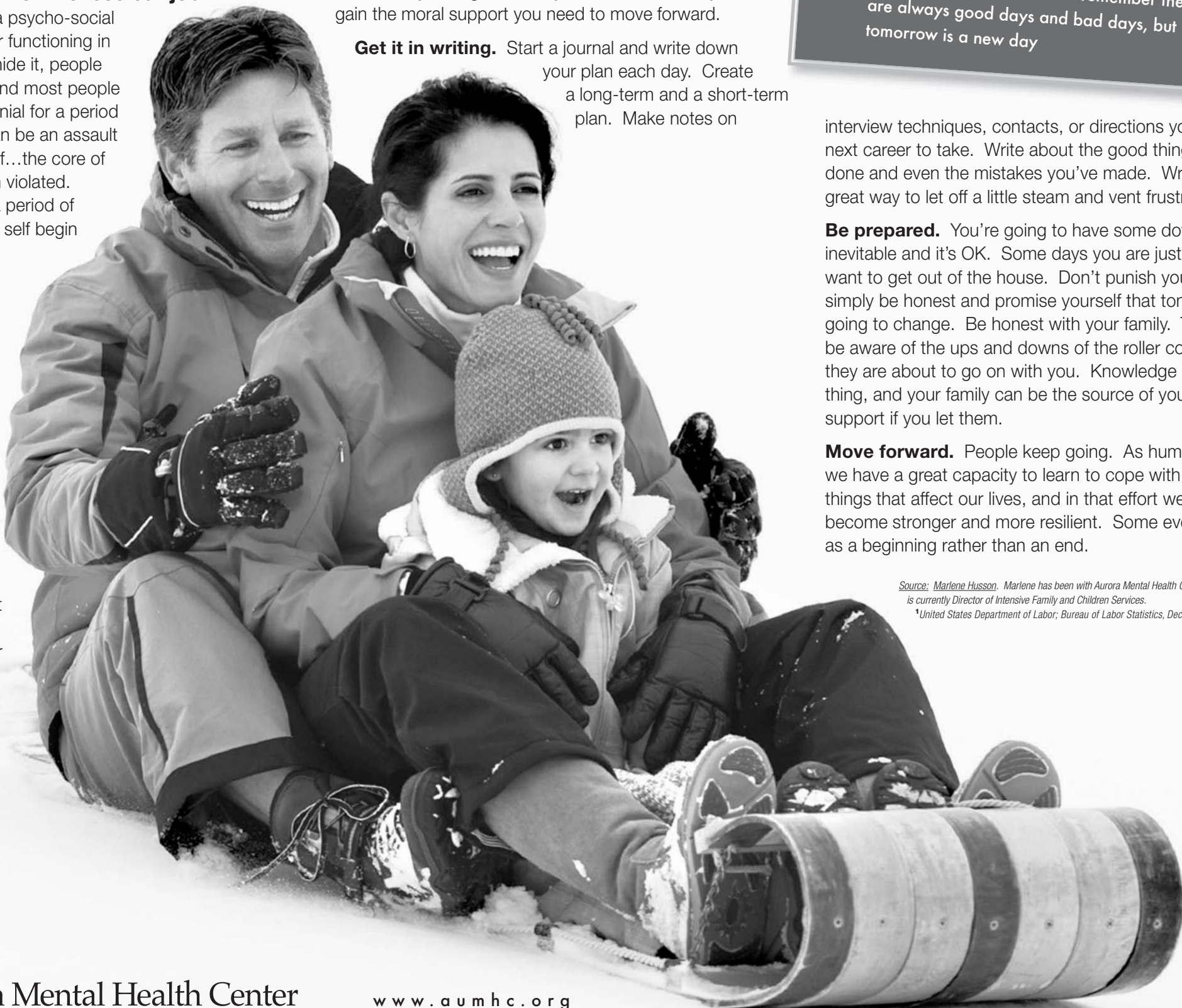
1. Talk with family or close friends about what happened and how you feel
2. Apply for unemployment online
3. Develop a daily routine
4. Plan your day
5. Look to the future (update your resume, talk with a career counselor, let everyone you know that you are looking for a job)
6. Evaluate the possibility of a change in career
7. Look into classes that can increase or enhance your work options
8. Work on developing a realistic budget
9. Spend some time volunteering, it feels good to help others
10. Be kind to your family and try and understand their feelings
11. Give yourself a pat on the back for taking on the challenge of finding another job
12. Be patient with yourself and remember there are always good days and bad days, but tomorrow is a new day

interview techniques, contacts, or directions you want your next career to take. Write about the good things you've done and even the mistakes you've made. Writing is also a great way to let off a little steam and vent frustration.

Be prepared. You're going to have some down days, it's inevitable and it's OK. Some days you are just not going to want to get out of the house. Don't punish yourself over it, simply be honest and promise yourself that tomorrow you're going to change. Be honest with your family. They need to be aware of the ups and downs of the roller coaster ride they are about to go on with you. Knowledge is a powerful thing, and your family can be the source of your greatest support if you let them.

Move forward. People keep going. As human beings, we have a great capacity to learn to cope with the negative things that affect our lives, and in that effort we seem to become stronger and more resilient. Some even look at it as a beginning rather than an end.

Source: Marlene Husson. Marlene has been with Aurora Mental Health Center for 23 years, and is currently Director of Intensive Family and Children Services.
*United States Department of Labor; Bureau of Labor Statistics, December, 2009



Forgiveness may be difficult... **but worth it!**

Now that the holidays are over you may feel let down and disappointed. Maybe you didn't have the money to buy the gifts you wanted to give to others. Possibly you were hoping your spouse would do something special and it didn't happen. Or, you might have experienced conflicts during the holidays. The holidays can bring up past hurt feelings, feelings of anger and loneliness. How do you handle all that?

How about starting with forgiveness? There is increasing evidence that when we forgive, we help ourselves to improved health and happiness.

Now it's the New Year and with it comes a flood of new expectations, New Year's resolutions, self-improvement, diet, exercise, etc. You may need to spend more time with your parent who is ill. But what if your parent has been hurtful or wasn't there for you when you were a child?

We have all experienced hurt. Sometimes it is hard to let go of hurt feelings or feelings of injustice. We feel resentment and anger. We mentally replay the situation that we were wronged or misunderstood, and feel anger over and over again. Reliving that memory creates a biological stress response resulting in increased levels of stress hormones. Your muscles become tense, your blood pressure and heart rate rise, and your nervous system is on alert. In studies at the University of Tennessee, forgiving a parent or friend for betrayal was associated with lower blood pressure, lower heart rate, and a reduced workload for the heart muscles.

Continued resentment, with the increase of stress hormones can result in a diminished immune system. You are more likely to become ill. Physical pain is worse. Studies on people with chronic back pain found that those who practiced meditation focusing on converting anger to compassion felt less pain and anxiety.

People who talk about forgiveness during psychotherapy sessions experience greater improvements than those who don't.

Forgiveness builds stronger relationships. Women who were able to forgive their spouses and feel benevolent toward them resolved conflicts more effectively. Forgiveness can result in longer marriages and better social support, both



indicators of well being. When you forgive someone, you take responsibility for your own happiness, rather than blaming your lack of happiness on the person that hurt you.

How do you get started?

Understand forgiveness then decide to forgive. Forgiveness is the act of granting pardon for something or to someone; letting go of resentment. Forgiveness does not mean you condone the act that hurt you. It doesn't require any confrontation or acknowledgement from anyone. Forgiveness is not something you should feel pressured to do.

Begin by taking note of what you appreciate in your life. Have a foundation of gratitude. "Focus your attention on the positive things that have happened. This creates a biochemical experience that makes it more likely that forgiveness will occur." *Frederic Luskin, PhD, director of the Stanford University Forgiveness Project.*

Change your perceptions of the situation. That is, change the story you tell yourself from one of resentment and grief, to one of hope. This can reduce stress and lay the groundwork for forgiveness. Try to understand the other person's point of view and empathize with him/her. Visualize how you will think and behave with the person you are forgiving in the future.

Forgiveness is not pretending everything is fine. It's not stuffing away your anger. And, it's not forgetting. Yet you can have a past hurt without dwelling in the emotions. Acknowledge your painful emotions. Learn how to cope with intense feelings. Reduce your stress. This might include meditation, taking a walk, deep breathing, yoga, or even prayer. If you can't come to terms with these issues by yourself, you may want to seek professional help from a therapist. There are specific practices that can diminish hostility and increase positive emotions, allowing you to experience a release of resentment.

Most people will be better off if they forgive others for wrongs experienced during life. Forgiveness is essential to happiness. Forgiveness can open doors to health and deepen connections to yourself and your loved ones.

Source: Laurie Reeder. Laurie has been a psychiatric nurse practitioner for over 27 years. Currently Laurie works with the Adolescent/Child & Family Teams for Aurora Mental Health Center.

Mental Health Tips –

How to deal with stress

No matter what your life is like, or what you do for a living... life itself can be very stressful. Too much stress can damage your health, your mood, your focus, and your relationships with others.

Here are ten things you can do to help ease the stress in your life, or at least help you cope with it.

1. Connect with others.

Humans are social animals and we tend to do much better when we feel supported, valued and understood. Join a book club, a basketball league, or learn to play golf. Take a class, catch up with old friends, or help a neighbor.

2. Stay positive.

Negative thinking can draw you into a shell that's hard to escape from. Think negative...be negative and negative experiences will come your way. Be positive, think positive and positive people will be attracted to you.

3. Get physically active.

The human body was designed to move and the benefits of stress relieving hormones generated by the body will soon become obvious.

4. Help others.

If you help your neighbor, both of you benefit. Volunteer with a community organization, or just smile at a stranger. Do good, feel good.



5. Get enough rest.

You are more likely to accomplish all the things you want to in a day if you got enough sleep the night before.

6. Create joy and satisfaction.

Feeling good is good for you. Do something you enjoy, laugh, tell a joke...positive emotions can help you bounce back from stress.

7. Eat well.

You need good fuel to function well. Eat regularly, snack well, and don't miss a meal. Spikes in blood sugar can affect your mood and cause more stress.

8. Take care of your spirit.

Connect with whatever you feel is meaningful. It can be religion, nature, art, music, or anything that gives your spirit peace and comfort.

9. Learn to deal with hard times.

Face adversity head-on. Get support. Learn to write down potential solutions, plans, even the effects stress has on you. We get better when we learn.

10. Get professional help if you need it.

If the problems in your life are preventing you from functioning, professional help can make a big difference.

Contact Aurora Mental Health Center, 303.617.2300.

Living Life to the Fullest

Aurora Mental Health Center's 6th Annual Spring Benefit Luncheon

Featuring Live! **The Capitol Steps** • Friday • May 7, 2010

Crowne Plaza Denver International Airport Convention Center • 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.



The Capitol Steps is the most hilarious political satire group in the country!

The Capitol Steps have performed for the last five Presidents. The only complaints seem to come from politicians who are NOT included in the program. To quote Former President George H.W. Bush, "The Capitol Steps make it easier to leave public life."

The Capitol Steps have recorded 29 albums and have been featured on NBC, CBS, ABC, NPR, and PBS.

Reserve your Sponsorship Now!

10% DISCOUNT

if reserved by February 1, 2010!

Sponsorships:

Platinum: \$4,000

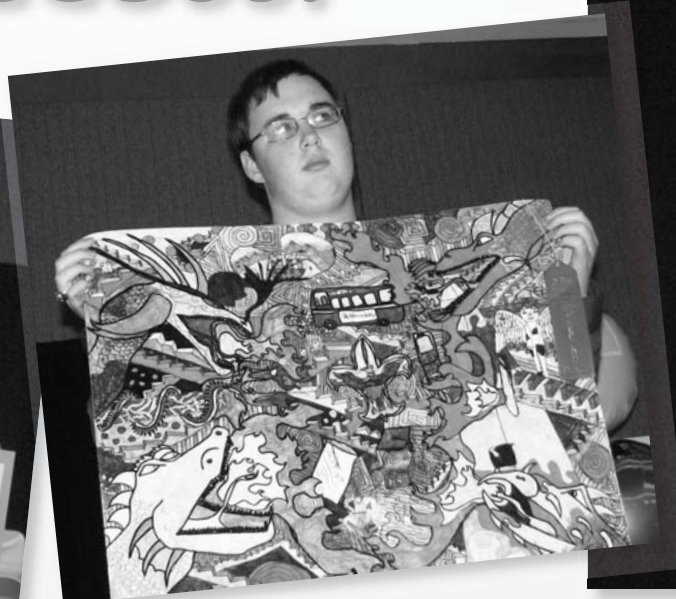
Gold: \$3,000 • Silver: \$2,000 • Bronze: \$1,500

Table: \$1,000 • Individual: \$100

To reserve your sponsorship or for more information, contact Heather Jackson at 303-617-2313 or email heatherjackson@aumhc.org.

To purchase individual tickets online, go to www.blacktie-colorado.com/rsvp and enter event code: CapitolSteps.

The Aurora Mental Health Center's Annual Celebration and Art Contest was a huge success!



At this year's Annual Celebration and Art Contest we received 153 pieces of art from 18 local schools.

11 students received top honors for their entries in the Living Life to the Fullest Art Contest, sponsored by Aurora Mental Health Center. The awards were presented at the Aurora Mental Health Center's 34th Annual Celebration. The event took place on Wednesday, October 21 at the Red Lion Hotel Southeast in Aurora, Colorado.

Students from Aurora Public Schools, Cherry Creek Schools, and Aurora Mental Health Center submitted their best art piece based on the theme: What does "Live life to the fullest" mean to you? All pieces were displayed and recognized at the annual celebration and the winning students in each category were awarded prizes.

Winning students include:

First Place Winners

- Grades K-3: Darian Macias
- Grades 4-6: Elly Rose Smith
- Grades 7-8: Isabella Eilo
- Grades 9-12: Oliva Mira Montes

Second Place Winners

- Seth Rice
- Ryan St. Germain
- Viola Jones
- Chris Camenzind

- Director's Choice Awards: Jorge Luis Ontiveros, 3rd Grade; Jessica Kantra, 5th Grade; and Joseph Kobby Jonah, 11th Grade.

Mission Statement

Aurora Mental Health Center is committed to creating healthy and secure communities by providing the least restrictive service that ensures quality, appropriate, and efficient care.

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Everyday, lives are changed by the services provided by Aurora Mental Health Center. This year, as we all face challenging times, those we touch at the Center need your help more than ever. With our new secure online giving options, you can set up a one time or recurring gift that will support services that make a difference in the lives of children, individuals, and families in our community. Visit www.aumhc.org and click on "Your Support!"

Donating to Aurora Mental Health Center



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