

BOLD Visions

Jewish
Family
Service of
Western Massachusetts



Urgent Economic Response Initiative

Online Resources

I can't believe this is happening to me.

We're hearing this from many people – men and women, young and older workers alike – who find themselves suddenly unemployed. Some were just starting out on careers they thought would be profitable and rewarding. Others have years of experience in demanding fields. They're worried about the future. They're worried about today.

At times like this, it's so important to find support. This may include assistance with job hunting, networking, counseling, financial aid, and guidance on reassuring our children. The good news is that support is available. What follows are highlights of and links to helpful resources.

Looking After Yourself

Job loss can lead to a downward emotional spiral and tension at home. Many people experience irritability, difficulty concentrating, and sleep problems. Working with a counselor - even on a short-term basis - can make a huge difference. Jewish Family Service Counseling (<http://www.jfswm.org/>) provides family, couples, individuals and children's counseling to anyone. A fee scale is available to those lacking health insurance.

Job Searching – The Importance of Staying Connected

Many people feel enormous shame when they lose a job, even when the news is full of stories about so many others in similar circumstances. This causes many to lose contact with colleagues. This in turn takes them "out of the loop" and limits their opportunities to learn about available positions.

Websites about surviving job loss (<http://www.layoffsurvivalguide.com/>) and job hunting (<http://www.job-hunt.org/>) offer many suggestions on networking in person and online.

Before you venture into search mode for your new job, check the resources and information on job search skills at <http://www.parnossahworks.org/Parnossah/Resource.aspx?s=JobSearchSkills>

Writing a strategic resume is the key to getting your resume noticed by employers. Learn about a STAR resume, action words and writing a winning cover letter at <http://www.parnossahworks.org/Parnossah/Resource.aspx?s=ResumePrep>

Tips for handling interviews, both in person and on the telephone and the best method of explaining a lay-off are available at <http://www.parnossahworks.org/Parnossah/Resource.aspx?s=InterviewSkills>

Studies show that as many as 60% of jobs are never advertised. Therefore networking may be the most important aspect of your job search. Brush up on your networking at <http://www.parnossahworks.org/Parnossah/Resource.aspx?s=NetworkingSkills>

Web-Based Job Hunting Resources

Web-based job search tools can be useful in a job search. However, web-based research should be just one part of a comprehensive job search campaign. Other important job search tools include networking, developing marketing materials (resumes, cover letters, etc.), career resource centers (company research, print resources, professional support and subscription job databases (available at libraries). Some web-based tools include:

Job Hunt database - <http://www.jobhunt.com>

Jobs for Students, Recent Graduates, Expatriates and Adventure Seekers - <http://www.aboutjobs.com>

Clearinghouse for Jewish Communal Jobs - <http://www.jewishjobs.com>

America's Job Bank - <http://www.ajb.dni.us>

Best Jobs USA - <http://www.bestjobsusa.com>

Craig's List for Western Massachusetts - <http://westernmass.craigslist.org/>

One search all jobs: Indeed - <http://www.indeed.com>

Monster - <http://www.monster.com>

Career Builder – job listings and resume postings - <http://www.careerbuilder.com>

Non-profit jobs, volunteer opportunities and internships - <http://www.idealists.org>

Federal job bank - <http://www.usa.gov>

Search by industry, community or job type - <http://www.nationjob.com>

10-Minute Resume - <http://www.10minuteresume.com>

Reassuring Your Kids

Children are generally sensitive to their parents' anxiety. They're also overhearing family discussions and news broadcasts about job loss. Children under five benefit from reassurance about their immediate safety. This may be all they can understand, although they might need to hear it repeatedly.

Older children have a better grasp of consequences following job loss. Helping them frame this as a temporary situation is important. They may also benefit from joining in family discussions and taking action, such as assisting with babysitting, household chores, and cooking. For more information about talking with children and teens during challenging times, visit <http://www.aboutourkids.org/>

Making Ends Meet

There are many government programs to help people of limited means stay on their feet financially. The Department of Transitional Assistance provides emergency services to children, families and elderly as well as job assistance, cash assistance and food stamps. Learn more about DTA at <http://www.mass.gov/dta>. Jewish Family Service also provides limited, one-time emergency financial assistance. For more information, visit http://www.jfswm.org/urgent_response.html

Staying Healthy

Staying healthy means having access to health care. If you've been laid off, your employer is obligated to provide you with information about continuing your health insurance through a COBRA plan.

The Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance provides health insurance assistance through the Medical Security Program for residents of the Commonwealth who are receiving unemployment insurance benefits. Massachusetts is the only state in the nation to offer a health care plan for unemployment insurance claimants, by providing assistance with the cost of existing health insurance premiums or by covering the cost of actual medical expenses. If you are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits in Massachusetts, you should find out if you and your family may also be eligible for health insurance coverage under the Medical Security Program (MSP) by calling the Program at 1-800-908-8801. For more information, visit [http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=elwdsbtopic&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Claimants&L2=Unemployment+Insurance+\(UI\)&L3=Help+With+Health+Insurance&sid=Elwd](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=elwdsbtopic&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Claimants&L2=Unemployment+Insurance+(UI)&L3=Help+With+Health+Insurance&sid=Elwd)

Commonwealth Care is an insurance program for uninsured individuals with incomes that fall within certain guidelines and who meet other qualifications. For more information about Commonwealth Care, visit the Massachusetts Health Connector at

<http://www.mahealthconnector.org/portal/site/connector/menuitem.a6bd9ea72595da2ea87b5f57c6398041/?fiShown=default>

Getting a Good Night's Sleep

Good sleep helps us feel more relaxed and mentally sharper. While it is certainly challenging to sleep well during tough times, there are sleep "hygiene" steps that have proven effective. And many of them are very easy to do. For instance, make sure you don't work in bed. Instead try to have a designated area for working. Even if this area is the kitchen, it's better than the bedroom, a place that is best associated with rest and calm. For more suggestions, visit

http://www.sleepfoundation.org/site/c.huIXKjM0Ix/b.2417141/k.27D9/Home_of_the_Sleep_in_America_Poll.htm

Connecting with the Community

Now more than ever people need each other for emotional support. This connection can come from many places – religious institutions, community centers, book discussion groups, volunteer work. Library websites list book discussion groups. For ideas about volunteer work, visit

<http://www.idealists.org/>

Other Resources

In addition to the above topics, Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts has compiled a resource directory of services available locally as well as some state and federal resources to help you and your loved ones through this unexpected and difficult period.

These highlights only touch the surface of available support. Jewish Family Service can connect you to others. Please call (413) 737-2601 or toll free (800) 942-0670.

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