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Family Support Agency

Managing the stress of separation or divorce

Family Mediation Service

Suggestions for coping with stress

1. Learn to relax. Relaxation techniques do need to be learned.
If you are very tense you may say you can't relax. However, there are special techniques to train people to relax.
2. Work off stress - physical activity is a great release.
3. Talk to someone you really trust. At this time it is often difficult to seek support but it is very important.
4. Be fair to yourself. Take responsibility for your own feelings and needs. It's OK to cry if it makes you feel better. Maintain a sense of perspective; try to avoid blowing issues out of all proportion.
5. Anger can be one of the strongest emotions during and for some time after the separation. It is a normal response. Allow yourself to be angry. Find acceptable outlets for anger and frustration.
6. Avoid people who create anxiety. You can't be everything to everybody. Delegate responsibility to others. People often want to help but do not know how. If friends offer help, accept it, if it will make things easier. If others take you for granted and you feel you are taking on too much, say no sometimes without feeling guilty.
7. Try to think positively and not allow yourself to focus on negative things.
8. Try to take time out for yourself and involve yourself in activities that you find relaxing.
9. Get the balance right; be kind to yourself and others.

Helpful hints

Breathe it away

Inhale deeply, exhale with a sigh a few times. Let your tension go as you breathe out.

Hold it

Say "Stop", pause and steady your thoughts. Now take a fresh look.

Escape it!

Notice something enjoyable around you.

Stay with it for a few moments.

Attack it

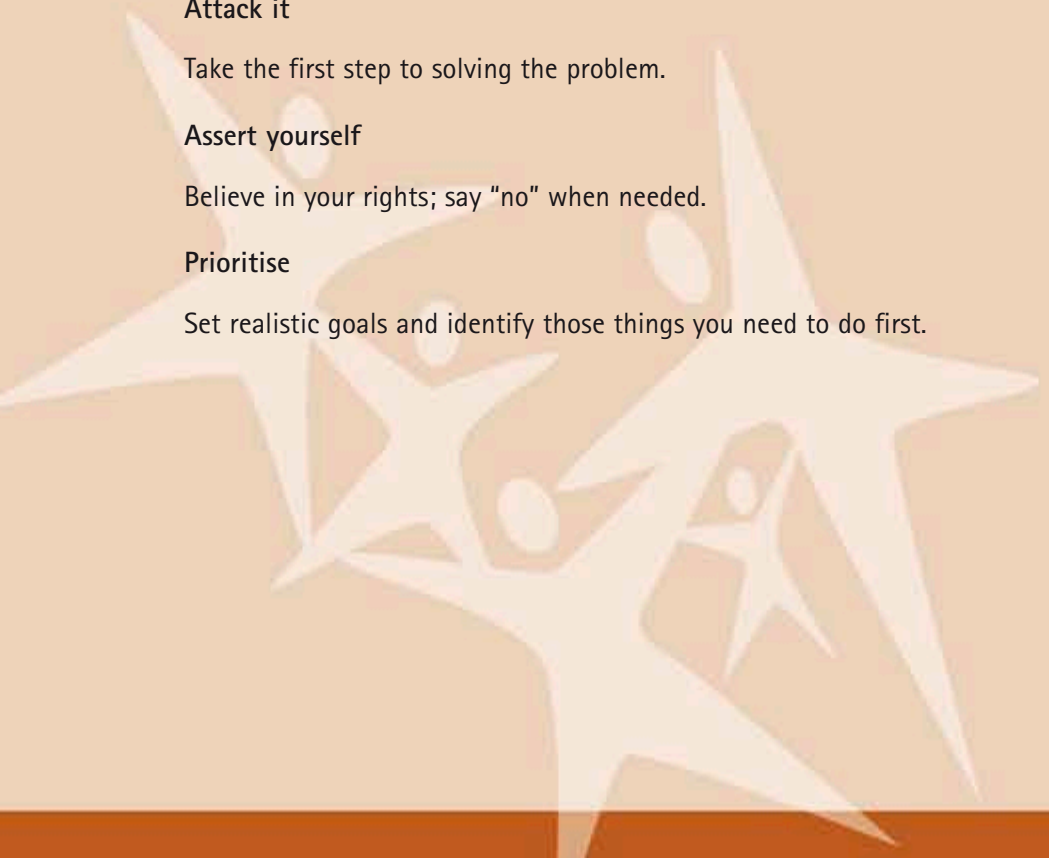
Take the first step to solving the problem.

Assert yourself

Believe in your rights; say "no" when needed.

Prioritise

Set realistic goals and identify those things you need to do first.



Managing the stress of separation or divorce

Everyone experiences a crisis at different points in their life. A change of job, marriage, the birth of a child, all present a crisis. These events are expected and can be prepared for. Separation and divorce are unexpected events and because of this are great sources of stress, often affecting a person's self esteem. It is important to care for yourself during this time. Stress is an inevitable part of living which, if managed well, can enhance quality of life.

The Family Mediation Service is a state run service staffed by professionally trained and accredited mediators. It was set up in 1986 and now operates under the auspices of the statutory Family Support Agency. There are 16 offices located around the country.

Full-time offices are located in the following cities:

DUBLIN

St. Stephens Green House,
Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2.

Telephone: (01) 634 4320 Fax: (01) 662 2339

LIMERICK

3rd Floor, Riverpoint, Lower Mallow Street, Limerick.

Telephone: (061) 214310 Fax (061) 312225

CORK

Hibernian House, 80A South Mall, Cork.

Telephone: (021) 4252200 Fax: (021) 4251331

GALWAY

Ross House, Merchant's Road, Galway.

Telephone: (091) 509730 Fax: (091) 567623

For information on the location of other offices, please contact one of the above numbers or visit www.fsa.ie/familymediation