

## **Ways to Manage the Effect of Job Loss on Family and Finances**

Acknowledge the impact on the family. Anticipate that everyone will be affected by the job loss. Be as patient, kind and caring as possible with the family member, who has lost their job and yourself. Whether or not the family member who is laid off is showing reactions and feelings, this is a time of significant loss and adjustment for them. As much as possible, show respect, support and belief that together the family will get through this time of challenge.

Find support outside the immediate family, so each person may air feelings and reactions that may not be constructive to discuss at home. If individual or family problems become more than can be resolved within the family, take advantage of professional help by contacting CARE Services for Faculty and Staff.

### **Communicate about changes, adjustments and reactions**

Discuss together the impact of changing daily patterns, roles and responsibilities during the time of unemployment. Negotiate tasks and duties as the need arises. Avoid bringing up old conflicts and disagreements; rather use this as an opportunity to work out new arrangements. Schedule time for family members to check in with how they are doing, e.g. at a family meeting or outing. Listen and do not get defensive.

### **Tell your children what has happened**

It is best to tell children what has happened in a brief and matter of fact manner. Depending on their age, they will have more or less questions about what has happened. Reassure them that you will handle the challenge and that the family will work together. Adolescents may resent not having money for outings or clothes. Acknowledge their upset, but explain the necessity of restricted spending. This may be an opportunity for them to find ways of earning some income.

### **Replace financial panic with planning**

An effective way to deal with the understandable anxiety about finances is to pull together, face the realities as soon as possible, and come up with a plan. Here are some ideas:

- **List together all of your household expenses**
- **Figure out ways to trim unnecessary expenses**
- **Develop a new budget and spending plan and have a family meeting to explain it**
- **Contact creditors before you become late in payments to set up a payment plan**
- **Pay secured bills first – e.g. mortgage/ car loan and then pay for necessities like heat, food**
- **Consider refinancing a mortgage or using equity to gain a line of credit, if appropriate**
- **Make maintaining medical coverage a priority**
- **Access reliable help when needed, e.g. Consumer Credit Counselors can help with creditors**

*CARE Services staff are available to meet with employees or family members who are experiencing difficulties. Call for a free, confidential appointment at 510-643-7754.*

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