

# FD Consultants

## Psychosocial Support and Trauma Specialist Services

### Facing Restructure & Redundancy - A Guide for Staff

The need for large organisations to cut costs and significantly reduce their workforces has been an increasingly common consequence of the recent economic downturn. It may be that you have actually been informed that your role is to be made redundant, or you may be aware that your organisation is restructuring and that jobs are likely to be lost as a result. Perhaps voluntary redundancy has been offered to you as an option. If any of these issues are present in your working life right now, you are likely to be experiencing a range of emotions, alongside having practical concerns about the future.

Here are some guidelines on how to manage what may feel like uncertain and unsettling times:

- *If your role is made redundant, try not to take it personally, no matter how shocked or upset you may initially feel.* The decision to make redundancies will not have been taken lightly within your organisation and many factors beyond your control are likely to have contributed to decisions about which roles to 'let go' - usually financial constraints creating a need to downscale, relocate or change the organisational focus. Understanding why the decision to make your role redundant was made can help in terms of processing and accepting the news. Therefore, do ask your manager or HR representative for more information if you feel this is not clear.
- *Finding out the facts about the redundancy process and your redundancy package will help you to prepare for leaving your job - both practically and psychologically.* Your manager or HR team should be able to give you key details. However, you may also wish to gain independent advice and support. [ACAS \(Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service\)](#) provides free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law. Their website gives details regarding your rights and legal issues relating to redundancy/your role being made redundant.
- *Sharing the news of your role's redundancy with others can, understandably, feel difficult.* If you have a partner or dependents you may feel concerned about the impact this redundancy will have on them. You may also envisage friends, family or other key people in your life worrying about you or even judging you in relation to your redundancy. Whilst, of course, it is important that you share the news selectively, and in a way that feels right to you, there are likely to be people in your life who will need to know. Therefore, telling them is something that will have to be faced. Holding onto knowledge of this redundancy alone may also amplify your feelings of stress and uncertainty, whereas telling others can ease this. Key people in your support network will hopefully be able to help you face the future and find a way forward if you let them know. On this note, if you are the partner, family member or friend of someone whose role has recently been made redundant, try to avoid comments that might seem overly optimistic or non-empathic - such as telling the person it may be 'for the best', 'catastrophising' the situation, or suggesting they may in some way be to blame. Instead, try to accept their feelings in relation to the situation and support and encourage them as they look for new work.
- *If you are going through redundancy, accept that you are likely to experience a range of emotions, which may feel intense and sometimes uncomfortable.* Having your role made redundant is a loss and, unless you have opted for voluntary redundancy, it is a loss that lies beyond your control, with significant implications. As with other forms of loss, such as bereavement, no matter how much you may have anticipated the news it is likely to come as a shock when you hear you will be losing your job. You may experience different, and sometimes conflicting emotions, such as sadness, anger, relief, excitement, fear and disbelief - and the emotions may come in phases. Feeling things in this way is usually very normal. Although, at times, you may have to hold your emotions in, it helps to try not to push them away completely. Finding someone impartial and understanding to talk to about how you feel can be very helpful. Therefore, it may be worth finding out if your organisation has an EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) or could help you access some counselling, career coaching or mentoring.

- *Aim for a 'good enough' ending.* Leaving a job early, or against your wishes, is unlikely to result in the type of ending you may have wanted when you envisaged moving on from your current role. That's not to say you can't end in a way that feels meaningful and that will help you process your redundancy, though. Once you know your end date try your best to find out what may need to be done with regards to 'handing over' your work or caseload - seeking support from your manager, HR representative and team as necessary. Even if relations with your colleagues aren't great it can be a good idea to try to settle any outstanding conflicts at work or, at least, to let them lie whilst saying goodbye. If you have strong feelings that you need to express, or feedback you would like your colleagues or organisation to hear, an 'exit interview' with a member of HR personnel is usually the most constructive way to manage this. Also, if there are people in your workplace who you will miss significantly when you leave, think about ways in which you can stay in touch. Whilst you may not be seeing them as regularly as you used to, it's likely you'll still be able to maintain a relationship with the people who are important to you.
- *After leaving your organisation you will experience change in many areas of your life and some changes may feel harder to address than others.* Unless your redundancy settlement was substantial, you may have, of course, to cut back and budget. Rather than letting worries about money run away with you, take some time to sit down and think about this clearly, alongside your partner if you have one, or anyone else you support, or who supports you, financially. By thinking things through objectively you should be able to differentiate the 'essentials' in life (things such as mortgage, rent, utilities etc.) from the 'non-essentials' or 'luxuries' that you may be able to forgo or spend less on. It will be important to maintain your morale over the weeks and months after you have left work, though, so don't try to cut out everything in life that brings you happiness or helps you unwind. Are there ways in which you could do these things with less expenditure? Your sense of routine will also change after redundancy so it helps to think ahead about how you will spend your time when you're not working. Of course, it's likely you will need to spend some time looking and applying for new jobs. Try to create set periods of time to do this in order to keep the process contained and to avoid feeling overwhelmed. There is only so much you can do in a set period of time when job-hunting, and it's important not to let it get in the way of things that will contribute to your overall and ongoing resilience - such as maintaining healthy patterns of sleep, diet and exercise, and remaining connected to family and friends.

## Summary

Whilst it may initially feel shocking and destabilising, a significant change like redundancy can create an opportunity for you to reprioritize and evaluate what's important in your life, perhaps making some long overdue changes of your own volition or taking a new direction with regards to your work or lifestyle. Making rash decisions upon hearing the news is not usually advisable but starting to think slowly about changes you might want to make in the wake of your redundancy can help you through. Coming through this situation may, in the long term, be something you look back on with a sense of pride in your own resilience and adaptability, or pleasant surprise when you consider where it took you. If you feel some additional assistance may be of benefit, FD Consultants are accustomed to supporting members of staff affected by restructures and redundancies. Please do contact us to discuss your circumstances and needs, and to find out how we may be able to help.

## About FD Consultants

FD Consultants support anyone who has been impacted by trauma through work or personal circumstances, whether directly or indirectly. We offer consultancy to organisations when implementing a trauma management programme and duty of care policies for psychosocial support. FD Consultants offer services to enable individuals to remain resilient in highly stressful environments and situations.

We support individuals suffering trauma, vicarious trauma, stress, and burnout. We believe in working and walking alongside individuals or organisations empowering them to find their own solutions and we strongly believe everyone can recover from mental health challenges with the right help and support.