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Tips from the Divorce Support Club

My Spouse Wants a
Divorce: What Do I Do?

1 Know where you are in the **grieving cycle**

Everyone's divorce journey is unique. All these stages are completely normal reactions to a breakup.

Denial

you find it challenging to accept the reality of the situation.

Anger

you find it challenging to accept the reality of the situation.

Bargaining

you blame yourself for the breakdown of the relationship.

Depression

the reality sinks in, leading to feelings of hopelessness and despair.

Acceptance

you acknowledge the end of the relationship, and begin to heal.

2 Look at the body's stress responses

When you're in the early stages of separation or divorce you are likely to feel stressed. This can take you into different kinds of stress responses.

Fight mode: this might look like arguing, being aggressive or trying to defend yourself.




Flight mode: you may run away from the situation in the hope that it turns out okay.

Freeze mode: this is where you respond by not doing anything at all.

Flop mode: this is where you try and appease the other person.

3 Soothe your stress responses

When you're in the early stages of separation or divorce you are likely to feel stressed. This can take you into different kinds of stress responses.

-  **Slow your breathing down.** Experiment with different techniques, breathe in and count to 5, hold for 2, breathe out for 7. This will help calm your nervous system.
-  **Hit pause.** Unless you are in danger there is nothing you actually need to do in these early days of a separation or a divorce.
-  **Focus on touch.** Try soothing the place you feel anxious with gentle circular motions, or put on some fluffy slippers and enjoy the feeling of softness.

4 Name your feelings and ride the wave to shore

The emotions involved in a divorce can be intense and overwhelming.



It is useful to recognise and name the feelings that you are experiencing in order to know what you need to get through them.



Remember, feelings are always transitory. They do not last forever.



A useful strategy is to picture your feelings as waves. As you feel a wave of emotion, acknowledge it, and instead of pushing through it or trying to avoid it, imagine riding the emotion out as a surfer rides a wave to shore.

5 Know your support network

Setting up a support network is a practical way of getting ready for your divorce. Here are some examples of who to include:

Friends and Family

Friends and family: spend time with the people who help you feel good, who are kind and supportive but not intrusive. Pick people who won't drain your energy.

Legal Advice

get some tailored legal advice on your available options. Everyone's divorce is different, so it is important to be advised on your specific situation and position.

Emotional Support

this could be a therapist or a coach. Heightened emotions during a divorce can push things off course, so having some emotional guidance can be beneficial.

6 Split your day into smaller chunks

When everything seems too overwhelming, try splitting your day into smaller chunks of time, and congratulate yourself each time you finish that chunk.

1. It does not matter if you split your day into big or small chunks.

2. You may want to start off by chunking you day into hourly chunks...

3. For instance: get up, have a shower, make breakfast, get dressed.

4. Over time, you will be able to manage bigger chunks.

7 Things to do and things to avoid

Here are ways that you can take good care of yourself during this period. Be gentle with yourself, and avoid the coping strategies that are listed below, they will make you feel worse in the long-run.

Do

Eat little and often: have small meals if you are struggling to eat. Focus on slow energy-releasing foods.

Exercise: spend a bit of time outside in the fresh air.

Sleep: create a bedtime routine that calms you.

Avoid

Caffeine: particularly in the evening.

Too much alcohol: although a temporary relief, it can exacerbate underlying issues.

Working 24/7: or keeping so busy that you are exhausted.

Drugs: as with alcohol, drugs are a coping strategy that can detrimentally affect your health.

8 Some helpful **social media reminders**

Here is a helpful checklist of things to remember about social media.



Block, unfriend, or unfollow your ex - you don't need to see what they are doing anymore.



Ask your friends to avoid telling you what your ex is doing.



Don't vent on social media.



Remember that what you see on social media does not always reflect reality.

9 Focus on what you **can control**

Focus on you and not on what your ex is doing. Here are some things that you can control.

1. What you watch on TV.

2. What music you listen to.

3. What you look at on social media.

4. The questions you ask in your head.

5. Who you spend time with.

6. What you wear.