



Teenhelp

menu

Separation - How am I going to cope?

Q.

How can I deal with how I feel?

A.

1. Talk to someone you trust



That could be:

- One or both of your parents
- A family member
- Your friends
- A teacher, tutor or school guidance counsellor
- A friend's parent
- Sports coach
- Youth worker

You have a lot to deal with. Having at least one person who can listen, provide support, answer questions and give advice when you need it can make all the difference. It's better not to hide your feelings and pretend that everything is okay when it isn't.

2. Don't bottle up your feelings

Ways to work through your emotions include:

- Crying. It's okay to cry. It's a normal reaction and a healthy release of your emotions. Find some quiet space to think about what's happening.
- Write a poem or a song, compose some music, draw a picture.

- Listen to music.
- Use physical activity, such as sport or dancing, to work through feelings such as anger and frustration.

3. Write things down

- Writing down your thoughts, in a diary or journal, can help you to think clearly, and work out what you want.
- Write a letter to one or both of your parents about how you are feeling or questions you might have, and then talk with them about it afterwards.
- Go online to a chat room or forum or create a blog. This can sometimes help you work through your thoughts and feelings before talking about them with someone you trust.

Caution

If you do chat online, **never** use your real name or put any personal information in your profile. It's very important to safeguard your privacy and protect yourself from online predators.

4. Keep up the same routines

It's important that you get on with your own life and as many of your normal activities as possible - such as school, seeing friends, sports, clubs, music and hobbies.

5. Stay in touch with your friends

Try not to keep yourself away from friends or put off having them over to your house. Let them know what's going on. Remember, don't cut yourself off! If you spend long periods alone, it's likely to make you feel more lonely and upset.

'Going with my friends helped... they gave me a break and made me feel good about myself.' (Girl, aged 14)

6. Do things you enjoy

Sometimes it can be hard to get the separation out of your head. Take a mental break and switch off for a while. Spend time doing things you enjoy. Treat yourself. Have some fun. It's good to have a laugh!

7. Talk with other teenagers in the same situation.

Most communities have support groups for teenagers whose parents have separated, such as [TeenBetween](#) or [Rainbow's 'Spectrum' programme](#). Talk to your parents about getting involved or check out the [Finding Help](#) section.

'It [teen counselling] has kind of taught me how to speak and talk about how I felt... so it's easier now to say how I feel.' (Girl, aged 16)

Q.

What can I do if my feelings don't change?

A.

There are many feelings about separation that are common, such as sadness, anger and confusion. The intensity of these feelings usually lessen over time. But sometimes emotions such as sadness or anger won't go away, continue to hurt deeply and make it hard for you to enjoy the good things about your life. When this happens, talk with someone you trust about the way you feel, like a parent, friend or a close relative.

Remember

It's better to ask for help or advice rather than struggle on alone. Never be embarrassed about asking for help. Everyone goes through difficult times in life at some point.

It's possible to talk with people outside your family too. Other people who can help are:

- A friend's parent
- A teacher, tutor or school guidance counsellor you trust
- Sports coach
- Youth worker
- Your family doctor

- A counsellor or therapist

There is always someone to help when you are sad, feeling depressed or your emotions feel out-of-control. Check out the [Help Section](#) for contact details of support services for teenagers.