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Rebuilding after Mass Furloughs

Michelle Price

St. John Fisher College, mprice@sjf.edu

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Rebuilding After Mass Furloughs

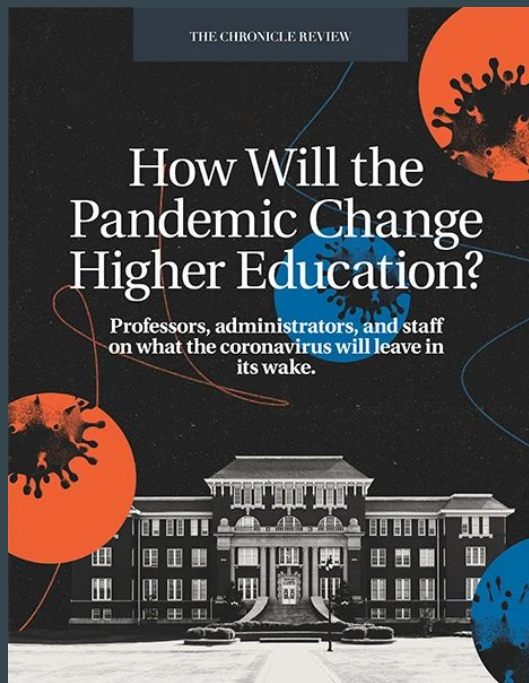


Michelle Price
St. John Fisher College
Fall 2020

Abstract

During the summer of 2020, due to COVID-19 and preventative financial measures taken by the college, 70% of the library staff at St. John Fisher College were furloughed for approximately three months. This presentation is from the viewpoint of an employee who was furloughed and returned during wave one. What did the process of rebuilding look like? What words did we even use to describe what was happening? Employees who were furloughed returned at three different time points, creating three waves. The library developed an on-boarding process to address policy and protocol changes and revised it to address emotional issues. Elements of debriefing were implemented into employee messaging. Even with planning and care, it was recognized that recovery from such mass furloughs could benefit from additional support of professionals outside of librarianship. A journey to seek assistance began and is still underway. One of the emotional pieces to address was grief or living loss. A change in employment status from active to furlough could trigger a lot of different features of grief like loss of identity, loss of trust, loss of security (financially, physically), and a loss of dreams or expectations. The presenter will share examples of how grief had affected and still affects her daily work even though her employment status has returned to active.

This is not a presentation on....



Higher Education's response to COVID and budgeting.

St. John Fisher's response to COVID and furloughs.

The representation of Libraries during furloughs.

- ACRL Presents: Advocating for library workers during uncertain times: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=554Nm7nV8Lk&feature=youtu.be>
- ACRL Furloughs and Layoffs: Advocating for Library Workers <https://acrl.libguides.com/c.php?g=1014690&p=7675549&t=58693>

This is a presentation on...

- 01 | Creating a New Vocabulary
- 02 | The Logistics of Returning from Furlough
- 03 | Utilizing Incident Debriefing
- 04 | Addressing Grief with Library Employees



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Us versus Them: Finding New Vocabulary



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Creating language for groups of employees. **Waves.**

Person-First Language, Negative and Condescending Terminology, APA 7 page 136-137.

Language that implies restriction.

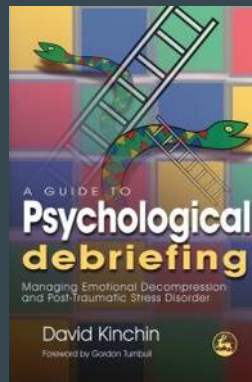
Furloughed Employee

Employee that was Furloughed

Onboarding

Table 2.4 Model: The three-stage revised debriefing

Stage	Name	Content
Introduction		
Stage 1	The Facts	What was happening <i>before</i> the incident? What happened <i>during</i> the incident? What happened <i>after</i> the incident?



Debriefing Elements: Facts.

“All library staff were offered their jobs and everyone is coming back on staff.”

Hanna, D. R., & Romana, M. (2007). Debriefing after a crisis. *Nursing Management*, 38(8), 38–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.NUMA.0000286190.06433.0b>

Onboarding

Daily Morning Meetings

Google Sheets for accessibility.

Group daily agenda by topic, speaker, or availability of information.

Structured meetings with presenters, meeting moderator, and chat monitor.

Types of Grief

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/between-the-generations/201904/4-types-grief-nobody-told-you-about>

1. Loss of Identity:

A lost role or affiliation. They're tasked with grieving who they thought they were and eventually creating a new story that integrates the loss into their personal narrative.

2. Loss of Safety:

The lost sense of physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Families experiencing eviction and housing instability who feel unprotected and unstable.

3. Loss of Autonomy:

The lost ability to manage one's own life and affairs. A person experiencing a financial setback who feels a lost sense of autonomy as they rely on others' help.

4. Loss of Dreams or Expectations:

Dealing with hopes and dreams going unfulfilled.

Living Loss

Living Losses: Nonfinite Loss, Ambiguous Loss, and Chronic Sorrow 107

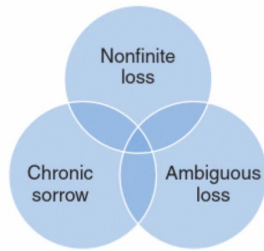


FIGURE 7.1

Overlap of Nonfinite Loss, Ambiguous Loss, and Chronic Sorrow.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Living losses occur with great regularity in everyday life. Some of these losses effect change in us in subtle ways, and the adjustments to our assumptive world is minimal. However, *living loss* experiences continually shift the sand where we are standing, resulting in an ongoing sense of disequilibrium and adjustment. Not only can we no longer be the same as we were before, but any ideas or dreams about what the future would hold get wiped out from our projections about what we hoped our lives would be like. Losses that are ongoing in nature require frequent accommodation and adjustment, and they provoke a profound grief response that is also ongoing and unpredictable in nature. When living losses require us to rebuild our assumptive world, counselors must be able to journey alongside a sometimes arduous and prolonged process, helping clients to see their deeper strengths and resilience as they grow and deepen in the midst of their ongoing grief and adjustment.

Winokuer, H., & Harris, D. (2012). *Principles and practice of grief counseling* (1st ed.). Springer.

Case #1 Employee Experience: Loss of Dreams & Opportunities

Situation:

I missed a book chapter acceptance and a Systematic Review professional development opportunity with Ithaca College.

Employee emotion:

I carried resentment for others who got to carry on with scholarly work and connections.

Unaddressed consequences:

In isolation, I felt like I was the only one that didn't move ahead professionally.

Applied Remedy:

I shared my missed opportunities with a trusted co-workers so I could acknowledge that they hurt me, but that I wasn't going to dwell on them.

Other examples of Lost Dreams or Lost Opportunities?

*Other Remedies from Co-workers?
From Supervisors?*

Case #2 Employee Experience: Loss of Identity

Situation:

An all campus library email draft erroneously didn't include information on research and instruction services.

Employee Emotions:

Fear that others will think I am irrelevant or replaceable.

Unaddressed Consequences:

Continued loss of identity and loss of trust.

Applied Remedy:

I used the chat feature in Zoom to express my sentiments instead of unmuting to speak. Positive were getting the whole sentence out without worrying about emotion attached to my voice.

Other examples of Lost of Identity?

Other Remedies from Co-Workers?

From Supervisors?

Seeking Outside Help



College EAP

Director of Campus Wellness Center

Mental Health Counseling/Psychology Faculty

Rochester Regional Library Council

Personal Relationships with Professionals

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Michelle Price, MLS, MA

Science, Health Science and Special
Collections Librarian

I am the liaison to the Wegmans School of Pharmacy, the Wegmans School of Nursing and the Departments of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computers Science, Mathematics and Statistics. Committed to personal interaction and library instruction, I empower the St. John Fisher College community to find answers to their questions. MLS, SUNY Buffalo; MA Secondary Education, Southeast Missouri State University.

mprice@sjfc.edu, 585-899-3743