Navigating Layoffs — With Strength & Clarity

Canada / Ontario Edition

🧡Before we begin

If you've just been laid off and you're feeling numb, panicky, ashamed, angry or all of it at once…

There's nothing wrong with you.

Your nervous system is responding to shock.

This guide isn't here to rush you into "fixing" your life.
It's here to help you feel steadier first, then take the next right step, gently, one at a time.

You don't have to figure everything out today.

🧭 Module Overview

Use this as a **2-week stabilizer + action plan**:

☐ The first 2 weeks
☐ Emotional waves that follow
☐ Practical next steps (Canada / Ontario)
☐ Hard conversations (scripts you can copy)
☐ Rebuilding (when you're ready)
☐ Resources + safe peer support

PART 1 — The First 2 Weeks (Start here. Always.)

Step 1 — Stabilize (5 minutes)

Choose ONE. (Not all.)

☐ 5–4–3–2–1 grounding

Name: **5 things you see**, **4 you feel**, **3 you hear**, **2 you smell**, **1 you taste**.

☐ Box breathing

Inhale **4** → hold **4** → exhale **4** → hold **4** (repeat **4 times**).

☐ Permission sentence (say slowly)

> **"I don't have to solve my life today. I just need my next step."**

Tiny reminder: The goal is not perfection, it's regulation.

Step 2 — Get clarity in writing (same day if possible)

Your brain will spiral when details are fuzzy. Get them **in writing**.

Ask your employer/HR for:

☐ **Last day worked** + **last day paid**
☐ **Termination letter** (or written confirmation of termination)
☐ **Severance details** (amount, schedule, conditions, payout method)
☐ **Vacation payout** (if any) + how it's calculated
☐ **Benefits end date** + continuation/conversion options
☐ **ROE timeline** (and whether it will be electronic)
☐ **Your single HR contact** (name + email + phone)
☐ **Any paperwork you must sign** (and deadline)
☐ **Any non-compete / confidentiality / release** documents (request a copy)

🔥 Important

Do not feel pressured to sign anything immediately.
If there's a release, you can say:

> "Thanks, I'm reviewing it and will respond by [date]."

Helpful phrases (copy/paste)

- “Can you confirm **severance, benefits end date, and my HR contact** in writing today?”
- “When will my **ROE** be submitted to Service Canada?”
- “Who should I contact if I have **benefits questions tomorrow**?”
- “Can you confirm **my last day paid** and whether **vacation pay** is included?”

📌 Quick Documentation Tracker (Print this page)

HR Contact: _____
Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Last day worked: _____ **Last day paid:** _____
Severance offered ($): _____ **Paid:** ☐ Lump sum ☐ Salary continuance ☐ Other: _____
Benefits end date: _____ **Conversion option:** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure
ROE submitted: ☐ Yes ☐ No **Expected date:** _____

Documents received:
☐ Termination letter
☐ Severance letter / offer
☐ Release to sign (if any)
☐ Benefits details
☐ ROE confirmation
☐ Final pay stub
☐ Record of vacation payout

Step 3 — Protect cash flow (today or tomorrow)

This is not “budgeting perfectly.”
This is lowering fear so your brain can think again.

A) Must-pay list (next 30 days)

☐ Rent/mortgage: $_____
☐ Utilities: $_____
☐ Groceries: $_____
☐ Phone/internet: $_____
☐ Transportation: $_____
☐ Minimum debt payments: $_____
☐ Insurance: $_____
☐ Other: $_____

Total must-pay (30 days): $_____

B) Money snapshot (5 minutes)

☐ Cash on hand: $_____
☐ Chequing/savings: $_____
☐ Credit available: $_____
☐ Severance expected: $_____
☐ EI expected: $_____ (estimate if unsure)

C) Quick actions

☐ Pause non-essentials for 30 days (subscriptions, extras)
☐ If needed: call creditors early and ask for hardship options
☐ If you have family/partner: share a simple plan, not panic

Creditor call list (if needed):
☐ Credit card 1: _____ Outcome: _____
☐ Loan: _____ Outcome: _____
☐ Rent/landlord: _____ Outcome: _____

Step 4 — Apply for EI (don't delay)

☐ Apply as soon as employment ends
☐ You can apply **before** receiving ROE
☐ Many employers submit ROE electronically
☐ Always confirm details on **Service Canada**

EI Application Date: _____
Service Canada reference / login note: _____

Step 5 — One supportive act (not job search yet)

Choose ONE.

☐ Tell one safe person:

> "I don't need advice, I just need company."

☐ Join a peer support space (see Part 6)
☐ Take a 15-minute walk without your phone
☐ Eat something warm + drink water

PART 2 — What You're Feeling Is Normal

You may cycle through these more than once.

😶 Shock / Numbness

Feels like: "This isn't real."
Try: Water + 10 slow breaths
Reminder: Your brain is protecting you.

⚠️ Practical Panic

Feels like: racing thoughts, money fear
Try: Write worries for 10 minutes → circle top 2 controllables
Reminder: You only need the next step.

🙈 Shame / Isolation

Feels like: "I'm disposable."
Try: Send one text asking for check-in
Reminder: Job loss is an event not a verdict.

🔥 Anger / Betrayal

Feels like: replaying the meeting
Try: Write the rant, don't send it
Reminder: Anger is often grief in armor.

🌱 Acceptance (with backslides)

Feels like: "Okay. I can move."
Try: One 25-minute task
Reminder: Messy is allowed.

PART 3 — Practical Basics (Canada / Ontario)

Employment Insurance (EI)

☐ Apply as soon as work ends
☐ Confirm rules on Service Canada (they change)

Record of Employment (ROE)

☐ Employer must issue ROE after interruption of earnings
☐ Often electronic you don't need a paper copy to apply

Ontario termination & severance

☐ Ontario law sets minimum standards
☐ Some qualify for more under common law
☐ Free legal clinics can help you understand your options

PART 4 — Scripts for Hard Conversations

Talking to HR

> “I’m following up to confirm in writing:
> my last day paid, severance details, benefits end date, and when my ROE will be submitted.
> Can you also confirm you’re my main point of contact?”

Talking to family/partner

> “I got laid off. I’m feeling overwhelmed.
> I don’t need solutions right now, just calm support while I handle the first steps.”

Asking for job leads

> “I was impacted by a layoff and I’m exploring roles in [X].
> If you hear of openings or recruiters, I’d appreciate an intro.”

Handling insensitive comments

> “I know you mean well, I’m focusing on practical next steps right now.”
> “I’m not ready for silver linings yet.”
> “One day at a time.”

PART 5 — Rebuilding (Only When You're Ready)

A gentle 4-week rhythm

☐ Week 1: paperwork + stability
☐ Week 2: resume + LinkedIn refresh
☐ Week 3: applications + conversations
☐ Week 4: iterate + protect mental health

Interview reframe

> "My role was impacted by organizational changes.
> I'm proud of my work and excited to bring my skills in [X] to a team that needs [Y]."

PART 6 — Peer Support (Safely)

Peer groups can help emotionally + practically.

Guidelines:
☐ Don't share private legal/financial details
☐ Avoid naming companies while emotions are raw
☐ Ask for specific help (recruiters, contract leads, resume review)

🧡 PART 7 — For Managers & HR (Optional)

A layoff can be structured and human.

What helps:
☐ Clear next steps
☐ One main contact
☐ Plain language
☐ Follow-up Q&A within 24–48 hours

Human script:

> “I’m really sorry I know this is a shock.
> This isn’t a reflection of your value.
> I’ll walk you through the next steps clearly, and you’ll have one point of contact.”

🔗 Ontario Quick Resources

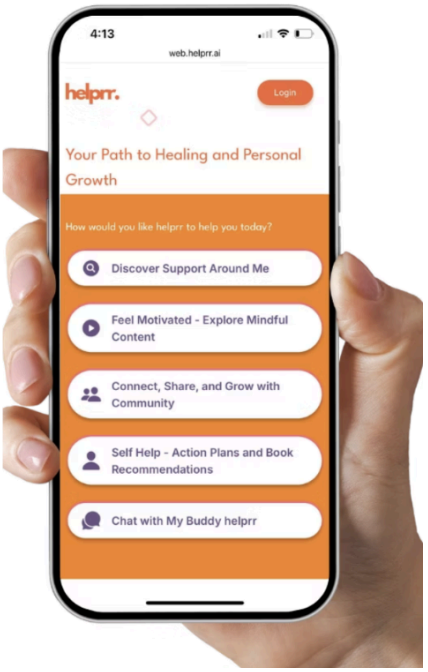
Official & legal supports

- 🔗 EI overview (Service Canada)
- 🔗 Apply for EI
- 🔗 ROE guide
- 🔗 Pro Bono Ontario hotline
- 🔗 Legal Aid Ontario clinics

Employment supports

- 🔗 Employment Ontario
- 🔗 ESA: Termination of employment
- 🔗 ESA: Severance pay

Helprr is here with you, every step of the way 🧡



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