

Welcome to your life

The tassels have been flipped. The pictures framed. You've enjoyed the post-college graduation honeymoon period.

Now what?

It's no surprise that going from school to the "real world" can bring stress, anxiety and other mental health challenges. What matters is how you respond, says [Rachel Yuhas, LCPC](#), a psychotherapist at OSF HealthCare.

Common issues

Yuhas says it's not uncommon for recent college graduates to fall into temporary adjustment disorder. She says that's not full-blown depression or anxiety but rather temporary symptoms seen during a life adjustment period. The person could isolate themselves, have decreased motivation or have difficulty maintaining a routine.

Sending out resume after resume with no job offers can also lead to frustration and feeling down.

"If you're not able to find your dream job right now, find a filler," Yuhas suggests. "Work at the library. Food service. Volunteer. It can build your resume. That work doesn't mean anything. It's just a way to stay busy and active."

What about making friends? You hear anecdotally that it's tough to do so in adulthood. Your college friends have gone off on their own, and now you're in the 9 to 5 grind.

Yuhas concurs. "It's challenging," she says.

"Your coworkers can be your friends. That's OK," Yuhas suggests. "Some people don't want to be friends with their coworkers, and that's fine too. So find ways to put yourself out there. I've had people go on friend-finding apps or join a workout class. They have a community of the same people they see all the time. Even just daily socialization. Go to the grocery store. Be around people."

And lastly, Yuhas says if you have to move back in with your parents for a while after college, don't feel ashamed. Rather, she says to take advantage of the reduced cost of living. And show your gratitude for that, of course.

Ways to cope

"I tell people: get in a routine, especially if you've graduated from college and don't have a job lined up. It can be really hard if you don't have things going on throughout your day. Have a sense of purpose," Yuhas notes. "If gyms are your thing, join a gym. You're getting socialization and helping your body and the chemicals in your brain. Go to the library. Join a community group."

"If you do get a job, be mindful of the Monday through Friday routine," Yuhas adds. "Make sure you're doing [pleasurable] things on the weekends, not just the same meal prep and laundry. Try to break it up and have things not be super consistent."

Parents and other loved ones should also take an active role in helping the young adult blossom, Yuhas says.

"Be open. Be there for that person. Notice things and make observational statements like 'Hey, I've noticed you've been late to work a couple times. How are you?'," Yuhas says. "Or 'I noticed you've been having trouble doing your laundry' or 'You haven't been getting out of your room when you come home from work. How are things going?'"

"Gentle check-ins and observations are better than accusing them," she adds.

If the stress of young adulthood is too much to manage or if the person is a threat to harm themselves or others, see a mental health provider right away. One-on-one sessions, sessions with the parents or group sessions are all options. The provider could even help with career coaching.

"It's a non-judgmental space to talk about the shift in your life. Because it is hard," Yuhas says.

Learn more

Read more about [mental health resources](#) available at OSF that can help build life skills. Some resources, like [behavioral health navigators](#) and support groups at hospitals like the one Yuhas works at, are available even if you are not an OSF patient.