

# The Path Forward

NAVIGATING UNEXPECTED JOB LOSS



BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

Supported by the Province of British Columbia



DISTRICT OF  
100 Mile House



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# Introduction

Residents in Prince George and the surrounding region have faced uncertainty in the last three years including a global pandemic, inflation and the declining economic health of the forest.

We know that it can be hard to know what to do when trouble strikes, but we also know that everyone needs a hand sometimes. This guide has been designed to provide help when help is needed.

Lessons learned from forestry workers who lost their jobs during the 2019 curtailments and closures of local mills in 100 Mile House, B.C. guide the information offered here. Our hope is to honour the lived experiences of those forestry workers and their families, and to lighten the load for those impacted by industry changes and unexpected job loss in the future.

Lastly, a sincere thank you to the people who shared their stories of job loss and recovery with the researcher whose work informed this project. When a tree falls in the woods, it really does make a sound.



“

*Hardships don't wait  
until you're ready.*

– Canadian author  
Marty Rubin



# How to use this book

By nature, humans are hardwired to resist change (unless we know for sure it will be beneficial, like a lottery win). When change happens to us, especially when we're taken by surprise, most of us resist and react first, and problem-solve later. Keep this information handy for a time when you are ready to read it. That may be before a job loss, soon after, or many months down the road.

By taking time to become:

- Informed (What do I need to know?),
- Prepared (What can I do now?), and
- Proactive (How can I regain some control of my future?)

...it will be easier to find and take the right path forward.

The local and provincial resources shared throughout this guide were selected as “first points of contact” for people experiencing unexpected job loss. There are many more services that could be of great help to people in this situation. It is anticipated that the services included a) will be operating with the same contact information in the foreseeable future and b) are informed and able to direct people in crisis to any service needed throughout the community and province.

This guide is organized by sections:

Each section addresses a different issue that a person might face when dealing with job loss. The sections are colour-coded and labelled on the outside of each page.

## SECTION 1

How are we going to pay the bills?

## SECTION 2

What am I going to do about a job?

## SECTION 3

I didn't expect to retire so soon.

## SECTION 4

I'm worried about my kids.

## SECTION 5

Looking after myself

The sections also contain the following:



**Checklists:** These lists identify steps to take and different people to talk to.



**Workbook features:** These are areas you can use to write down your thoughts, useful information, and other things that you may do to help as you plan for your future.



**Resources:** Within the sections, for quick reference, useful resources are contained in coloured boxes.



**Action scenarios:** These are descriptions of what to do in specific situations, such as calling a resource provider. They include examples of what to say.



# What can the government do for me?

Local governments try to anticipate and prepare for economic changes, challenges, and opportunities in the community. Provincial governments and the federal government track industry trends and allocate funding to respond to unemployment needs across the country.

In times of crisis in a community, all levels of government work together to support everyone impacted. This includes helping the appropriate support agencies with transition responses, such as coordination, facilitation, and implementation of services, to make sure that workers have access to the resources they need to deal with the challenges they are facing and get back on their feet.

Keep these contacts handy. You can phone, email, write letters, and ask for appointments to request advocacy during industry instability and layoffs.

## RESOURCES

### Local municipal government

#### City of Prince George

The local government liaises with all levels of government, service providers, educational representatives, and industry to identify needs, advocate for the community, and respond to the closure of major manufacturing facilities.

250-561-7633

[www.princegeorge.ca](http://www.princegeorge.ca)

### Regional government

#### Regional District Fraser-Fort George

The regional government's role is very similar to that of local government in terms of participating in the response effort during major economic disruptions and advocating for the region as a whole.

#### **Find your area director by:**

1-800-667-1959

[district@rdffg.bc.ca](mailto:district@rdffg.bc.ca)

[www.rdffg.bc.ca](http://www.rdffg.bc.ca)

### Provincial representative

Local MLAs advocate to the Legislative Assembly for the needs and interests of their constituents. Find your local MLA at:

[www.leg.bc.ca](http://www.leg.bc.ca)

### Federal representative

Local MPs advocate to Parliament for the needs and interests of their constituents. Find your local MP at:

[www.ourcommons.ca](http://www.ourcommons.ca)









A person wearing a light blue button-down shirt is shown from the chest down, sitting at a wooden desk. They are holding a blue and white pen and writing on a white notepad. The background is a warm, textured brown wall. A large white circle is positioned in the upper right, containing a quote. A smaller white circle is on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the person's arm.

“

*We were on a pretty good path in life until the mill closed. It was like this giant tree crashed down right in front of us and everything stopped. It took us almost the last two years to crawl through that debris and to find a way to get back on track.*

– laid-off forestry worker

## SECTION 1

# How are we going to pay the bills?

Let's tackle the biggest worry first. In a survival situation, shelter, water, fire, and food are key priorities. It's no wonder paying the bills and getting food on the table is the first concern when facing job loss. Without a reliable income, our very livelihoods are threatened.



Take stock of current expenses ...  
and cut them where you can.

- Sort your “fixed” expenses (e.g. mortgage) from “discretionary” expenses (e.g. vacations).



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[illegible]

- Seek out cheaper rates for fixed expenses.



(e.g. Enquire about cheaper cell phone plans.)

[illegible]



- Consider cutting down on discretionary spending.



## WAYS TO SAVE:

(e.g. Cancel entertainment subscriptions  
or apps you don't use as often.)

[illegible]

Step 2:

Have a family meeting and discuss “needs” vs. “wants”.

- This may sound obvious, but there is nothing easy about a change in lifestyle—even a temporary one. Include everyone in the household. Job loss is a family crisis.
- Expect that kids and teens won't adjust to going without as well as their parents. Resiliency is one the most important skills young people can practice, and this is an opportunity to do so.
- Be creative. Maybe some items on the “wants” list can be achieved at lower to no cost? Most wants can be planned and saved for, and some can wait for better economic times.

### Step 3:

Call in the professionals.

- Make an appointment with the bank. Discuss mortgage, credit payment deferrals, or debt consolidation, and the implications. Sometimes, it's just not worth it. Sometimes, it helps you keep your assets.
- Seek out financial support available through your employer, union, the government (Employment Insurance), provincial programs set up to address job loss, and short-term help that may be available through local nonprofits. The provincial government sends small pockets of funding to local nonprofits to address the needs of people in crisis. These funds are given with stipulations as to how they can be spent. The key is to ask the right questions to the right person.





**ACTION SCENARIO**

When calling a resource, you might say:

“Hi, my name is Joe Clarke. I was recently let go from the mill. I’m on E.I. now but I can’t make ends meet. Is there any help available to cover:

- Rent/Utilities
- Food
- Gas cards
- Diapers/Formula
- School clothing/Supplies
- Sports fees/Equipment

I’d like to come in to talk with someone about what is available. What time works?”

If you don’t feel your request was heard, request the email of the manager and ask again. It may be that they need to better understand your situation to help you. It may be that they can direct you to another program in town that can help. Be your own advocate or appoint one (a spouse, adult child, neighbour, or friend).

**ADDITIONAL NOTES:**

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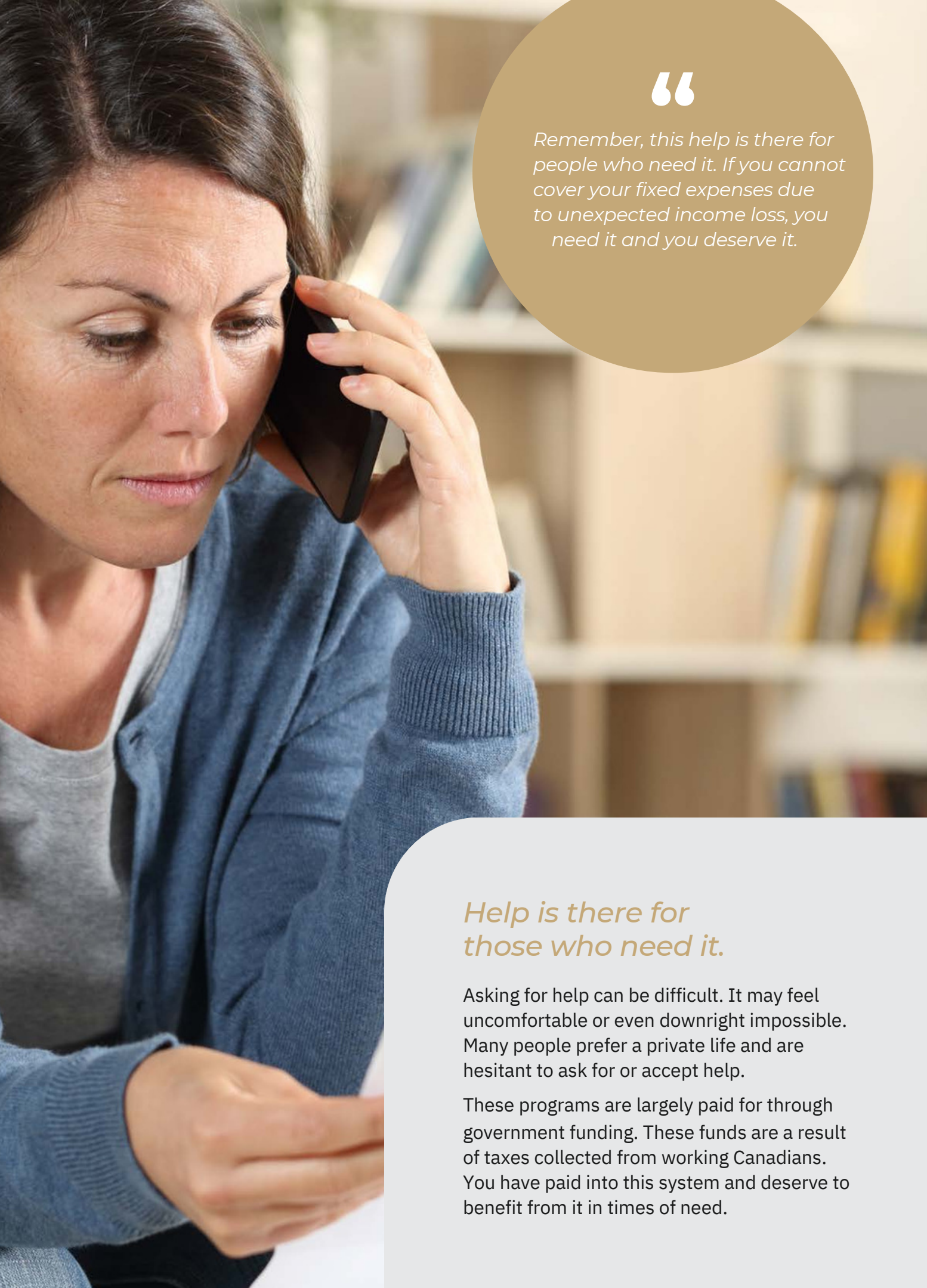
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“

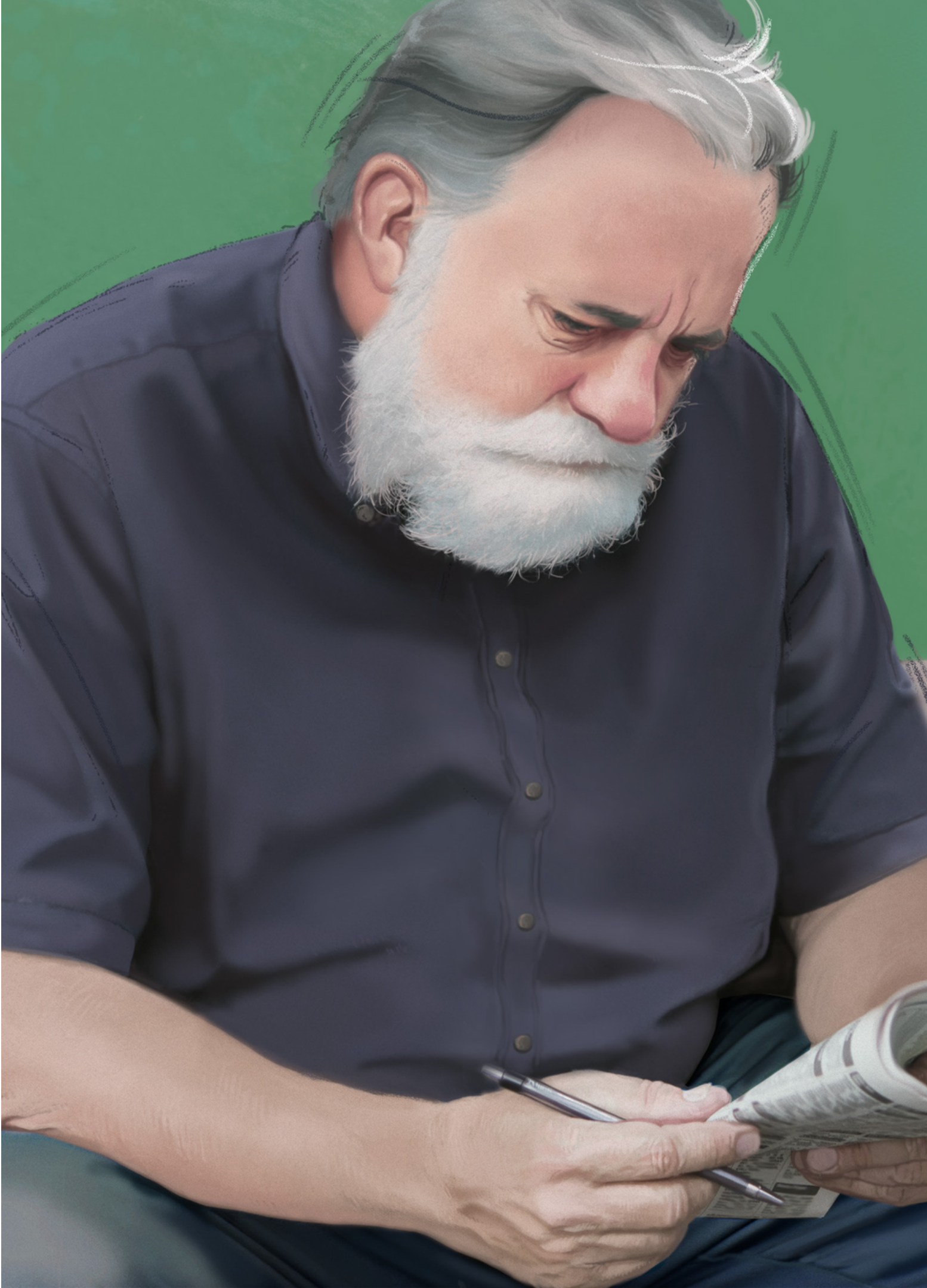
*Remember, this help is there for people who need it. If you cannot cover your fixed expenses due to unexpected income loss, you need it and you deserve it.*

### *Help is there for those who need it.*

Asking for help can be difficult. It may feel uncomfortable or even downright impossible. Many people prefer a private life and are hesitant to ask for or accept help.

These programs are largely paid for through government funding. These funds are a result of taxes collected from working Canadians. You have paid into this system and deserve to benefit from it in times of need.







“

*Your head is just not on straight when you have ten decisions you have to make. You are quick to make decisions that might not be good.*

– laid-off forestry worker

## SECTION 2

# What am I going to do about a job?

Making more money goes hand in hand with making the money you do have stretch. But it can be overwhelming to take stock of everything when making life-changing decisions around new employment, finances, and possible relocation. Here are some ways and resources to help with the process.



## Employment Insurance

It isn't easy to live on Employment Insurance (E.I.). For most people, it's a significant reduction in income and it doesn't cover all fixed expenses, like housing or food. Even so, make sure you apply for and get E.I. if you qualify for it.

Check your eligibility for E.I., and apply online at [www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca) by searching "employment insurance benefits". The process is tricky and many people need help. To get help, you can call 1-800-206-7218 or go to a Service Canada location.



### RESOURCES

#### Service Canada location

##### Prince George

1363 4th Ave, Prince George, BC  
1 800-622-6232

#### WorkBC

The local centre offers free help with resumes, job search, skills assessment and training.

1600 15th Ave, Prince George, BC  
(236) 601-9111

[www.workbc.ca/WorkBC-Centres/Cariboo/Prince-George](http://www.workbc.ca/WorkBC-Centres/Cariboo/Prince-George)

**Important:** Unless you've been working in human resources, don't go about resume-building and job-hunting alone. The local WorkBC Centre is funded by the provincial government to help you at no cost. They will also be aware of any training and education opportunities that are available to you. Some programs are partially or completely funded, and some have a cost to the participant.

## Job and retraining readiness

You may not feel ready to look for a job. Don't worry, you're not alone. Most people don't have an up-to-date resume but they should! Workers gain new skills over the years, whether by obtaining a certificate for a one-day safety course or by gaining experience. But it can be hard to remember all that you have accomplished over the years, especially when stressed over job loss.



### ACTION SCENARIO

Here's how you can get started:

- Jot down notes of all the courses you've done over the years.  
List career highlights, moments you're proud of, and problems you've solved.
- What "hard skills" do you have?  
e.g. certifications or experience doing specific tasks
- What "soft skills" do you have?  
e.g. communication skills, teamwork abilities, ethics, or your ability to prioritize and organize tasks



*The employment centre did an amazing job of communicating about what they offered, the courses on how to use computers, webpages, and telling businesses about us as potential employees.*

– laid-off forestry worker



## Hard and soft skills

Hard skills are something *you have*, and soft skills are something *you are*. When you've been working in the forestry sector for a long time, it may feel intimidating to try to transfer your hard skills to new employment in a new industry. This is where your soft skills can help you along the path forward.



### YOUR HARD SKILLS:

(e.g. forklift licence, heavy equipment operation/maintenance, mathematics)

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### YOUR SOFT SKILLS:

(e.g. training others, attention to detail, problem-solving)

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## RESOURCES

Check with the local post-secondary education institutions to find out what training opportunities may be available. They can also let you know what programs they are offering and what prerequisites you need to enter. You do not need to have completed secondary school to enter post-secondary. There are entrance exams and upgrading courses offered instead.

### University of Northern BC

3333 University Way, Prince George, BC  
250.960.5555  
[www2.unbc.ca](http://www2.unbc.ca)

### College of New Caledonia

3330 22 Ave, Prince George, BC  
250.562.2131  
[www.cnc.bc.ca](http://www.cnc.bc.ca)

### Kopar Administration Ltd.

2211 Nicholson St S Prince George, BC  
250.596.2517  
[www.koparadmin.ca](http://www.koparadmin.ca)

### Skilled Trades Employment Program

3851 18th Ave Prince George, BC  
250.614.8903  
[www.stepbc.ca](http://www.stepbc.ca)



## Temporary and new income streams

Families of forestry workers laid off during the 2019 curtailments and closures of local mills have shared a variety of ways they pivoted to cover expenses before longer-term solutions were found, as follows:

- Spouses returned to work or increased their hours.
- Laid-off forestry workers sought work out of town, with some families staying behind in the South Cariboo and some following along to new communities.
- Some workers retrained for complementary sectors or sought work in their industries.
- Others who qualified for the Bridging to Retirement program were faced with unique challenges as they left the workforce earlier than planned.

Ultimately, what a person decides to do will depend on their personal circumstances. Family size and ages, mental and physical health, financial commitments and resources, and transferable skills are some factors to consider.

Check in with your:

Union  
Coworkers  
Employer  
Peers

Ask about possible:

Training opportunities  
Financial supports  
Employment opportunities

“

*If you are moving out of province there are a lot of things you need to know. Different tax systems, health systems that don't connect with other provinces, moving bank accounts, and remembering that automatic withdrawals stop when you change accounts. Sometimes there are multiple moves—all expensive and disrupting to a family.*

– laid-off forestry worker







“

*This is a good, supportive and generous community. During events like the wildfires and mill closures, people stepped up in so many ways.*

– service provider

### *Remember, you're not alone.*

Talking with someone who knows you and your situation well can be what's needed to sift and sort through these tough decisions. Mill workers laid off in 2019 shared that the people in their life—family members, friends, neighbours, and co-workers—were instrumental in their ability to recover from unexpected job loss. Problem-solve and share ideas with the people who know you and your family best.









### SECTION 3

## I didn't expect to retire so soon.

In most cases, retirement is a welcome milestone. It's something people look forward to for decades. But when retirement happens early and unexpectedly, it can feel like a consolation prize.

Some workers who took the Bridging to Retirement program option during the 2019 mill closure and curtailments in 100 Mile House shared that the sudden end to their careers excluded the typical celebration of what is normally seen as a huge accomplishment. They felt they needed to hold back any positive talk about their retirement from coworkers who had other worries like young children and large mortgages. It's hard to celebrate leaving when other people in your life are grieving the loss of the same workplace.



## The Bridging to Retirement program

As of 2022, the Bridging to Retirement program is an option for people in B.C. 55+ years old who have worked full-time for a B.C. mill or as a contractor for the forestry sector for at least two consecutive years. Provincial programs may change eligibility criteria, titles, or availability over time.

## How to plan for retirement


Retirement is one of the biggest transitions to happen in life and it's one that people typically prepare for in advance. Some things to consider are:

- Where and how you want to live
- Changes in monthly income/budget
- Extended medical coverage and insurance
- Tax deductions, credits, and expenses


### RESOURCES

#### Bridging to Retirement

For information about the Bridging to Retirement program, visit:

 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/supports-for-forestry-workers/retirement-bridging-program>


For a current list of other support programs, eligibility requirements, and more, visit:

 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/supports-for-forestry-workers>

### RESOURCES


#### How to plan for retirement

**Retirement planning checklist:** This resource will help you to take steps to manage your financial well-being, including things like budgeting, insurance, taxes, and pensions.

 <https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/retirement-planning/retirement-checklist.html>

**Personal bank:** Making an appointment with your bank to discuss mortgage deferrals, debt consolidation, investments, retirement income, and more is an important first step. Ask about penalties for mortgage/debt payment deferrals, consolidation, interest savings/increases, and other opportunities.

**Seniors First BC:** Retirement is personal and there are a lot of considerations. For links to credible guidelines for retirement costs and considerations for Canadians, check out:

 <https://seniorsfirstbc.ca/getting-help/retirement-planning>

**Financial planners:** Available at banks and via investor businesses, financial planners help you take stock of your assets and your debts, and make choices around how to make your money work best for you in retirement.

#### **Early retirement programs/Severance:**

A union representative can help explain your options. Consult with coworkers who are making the same decision. Look into the Bridging to Retirement program for the forestry sector, 2022.



“

*Life in retirement will unfold  
and become clearer as time  
goes on. Celebrate with the  
people close to you.  
You've earned it.*

I DIDN'T EXPECT TO RETIRE SO SOON.

THE PATH FORWARD | NAVIGATING UNEXPECTED JOB LOSS

## *You have worked hard.*

When retirement comes early, a person may feel unprepared and overwhelmed. Even with the best planning and preparedness, people may find themselves unsure of how to best spend their time. What you thought you would do may look different when the time comes to do it.







“

*It was very upsetting watching the younger guys, those you knew had little kids. [There was] fear and confusion—people were overwhelmed*

– laid-off forestry worker

“

*We're going to have to sell the house.*

#### SECTION 4

## I'm worried about my kids.

Job loss is a family crisis. While parents have life experience that helps them keep faith that the dust will settle, kids see economic insecurity as absolute. There is a lot to discuss when there is sudden unemployment in the family. Worries and ideas are shared back and forth among parents, and small ears often take these as inevitable facts.





## RESOURCES

### South Fort George Family Resource Centre

Free services including counselling, parenting support, infant supplies, and more. The staff can direct you to other child and family supports in the community and province.

1200 La Salle Avenue Prince George, BC  
250-614-9449

[www.sfgfrc.com](http://www.sfgfrc.com)

### Axis Family Resources

185 Quebec St, Prince George, BC  
250.564.9064

<https://axis.bc.ca/>

### KidSport

A family of four that earns less than \$51,000 is eligible for up to \$400/per year per child to cover registration costs of a sport/activity.

#### Apply online at:



<https://kidsportcanada.ca/british-columbia/prince-george/>

#### For questions, email:

[pgkidsport@sportbc.com](mailto:pgkidsport@sportbc.com)

#### Apply with a paper application:

KidSport Prince George  
1100 Patricia Blvd  
Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

**Note:** Local sports clubs may have alternative ways to ensure kids can continue their activities through financial hardship. Ask about sponsorships, reduced fees, volunteer opportunities to reduce fees, and equipment swaps. For example, offer to clean the space in lieu of registration fees.

## Recognizing stress and its effects on children

When facing job loss, it's hard to not have stressful discussions or to not express frustration, anger, or worry around the kids. Even if you manage to keep it to a minimum, kids pick up on the stress their parents are under. You can help them by including them in the conversation and letting them ask questions and share their thoughts.

One of the ways kids show they are struggling is through their behaviour. Some kids will act out or behave younger than their age. Others will try to fix their parents' troubles by stepping up to help in any way they can. Behaviours, especially challenging ones, are outcomes of emotions. Figuring out what emotions are behind the behaviour and helping kids process them is what leads kids back to balance.

### Signs of life

You might have to dig deep to do this, but everyone in the family will benefit from keeping "signs of life" in the family. Survival can't take centre stage all the time. It isn't good for the kids and it isn't good for you. Ask yourself what activities give you energy and what activities drain it. Identify and take the time to do fun family activities, such as:

- Walking the dog together
- Playing catch
- Joking around
- Spending time with friends



## Getting help

Free counselling and crisis support for kids are available but some are out of town, and those that are offered locally often have wait lists. Kids who have the most complex mental health needs or who are at risk of self-harm are seen first. Private counselling is costly.

Navigating the mental health system is difficult, especially while under stress. One way your family doctor or local nonprofits can help is by finding out what supports are available and helping improve your access to them. If you're feeling overwhelmed, let someone help you simplify the process.


## RESOURCES

### Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

The centre helps families across the province navigate the mental health system, connect with peer support, and access resources and tools to support well-being. Learn more about mental health for children at:

 <https://keltymentalhealth.ca>

Read more about how unemployment impacts kids and how to help:

 <https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/parenting/helping-kids-deal-with-parents-unemployment/#gs.4vtel1>







## RESOURCES

### Getting winter ready

Taking care of things at home before the snow flies makes life easier, especially when working away. By planning ahead, losing heat during a cold snap is less likely, and everyone will feel more comfortable. Read about ways to prepare your home for winter at:



<https://blog.renovationfind.com/winter-maintenance-checklist-for-canadian-homeowners>

Vehicles require a lot of care to carry your family safely to work, school, and sports in the winter. Taking steps to get ready is a way a person who finds themselves working out of town can care for their family and their assets. It also might mean there is less work to do around home on your days off. Plan ahead and prepare your vehicles for winter by looking at:



<https://www.carhelpcanada.com/winter-maintenance-checklist-vehicle>

### Working as a family unit

Learning to operate as a family unit in a new way while working away takes some “buy-in” from everyone in the family. The Metlakatla Development Corporation (near Prince Rupert, B.C.) published an excellent BC Work Camp Survival Guide for families in 2017. Check it out here for tips on how to thrive as a family and as an employee while working away:



<https://workcampsurvivalguide.ca>

## Taking care of things at home when working away.

For those who choose to keep their homes in the Prince George and go to work out of town, new considerations arise. Preparing for seasonal home and vehicle maintenance, making emergency plans, and finding child care are a few of the things that might be on your mind.

If you have a partner who works as well, you may be scrambling to cover the school run. If you live alone, you might be seeking out a service to care for pets. Each person who works away from home has their own unique ducks to get in a row before setting on a new path. To help prepare, think about the following:

- Plan ahead: What is likely to come up while I’m away?
- Close to home: Help neighbours and let them help you.
- Barter and borrow: What do you need help with, and what can you offer?
- Simplify: Are you taking on too much? Is there anything you can drop for a while?

It's unlikely life will carry on as usual when a person goes from working in town to away, especially unexpectedly. Here are some ways you can be ready:

- Expect that things will change and new challenges will arise.
- Drop what you can and find creative ways to take care of things at home.
- Offer after-school child care to another family in exchange for snow removal in the winter.
- Pick up groceries in town for the neighbours who are quick to help you when the sink springs a leak.



“

*My family would come babysit so I could take a break, during my husband's time off he would take the kids out for the day giving me time to unwind ... I realized if I don't take care of myself, I can't take care of everything else.*

– worker's wife (BC Work Camp Survival Guide, Metlakatla Development Corporation)



### *Community is for everyone.*

There are some things we either can't pay for or that can't be bought. Building into a community can cover those gaps and makes life easier for everyone. The saying "it takes a village" isn't only for raising children. It takes a village to raise a barn, too.







“

*Anxiety was high and I found that when making major decisions, anxiety outrode logical thinking.*

– laid-off forestry worker

## SECTION 5

# Looking after myself

People work hard for what they have. That includes their jobs. When a person loses their job and steady income, they face a lot of unknowns. The job search isn't easy, especially when you're still recovering from the shock of an unexpected closure.

Job loss is one of the major stressors a person goes through in life. Job loss is loss. Not everyone grieves unexpected layoffs the same, and some people have a harder time than others.



## The five stages of grief

### 1. Denial: “This can’t be happening to me.”

A person feels stunned, in disbelief, and may be convinced that a mistake has been made or that the employer won’t follow through with layoffs.

### 2. Anger: “How could they do this to me?”

A person may feel angry at their employer, coworkers, union, politicians, or even themselves. Anger can be misdirected, and a person might take it out on their families at home. But anger can also serve a purpose when it comes to job loss. It can help a person muster the energy to push through the disappointment of losing what was to go find out what can be.

### 3. Bargaining/Desperation: “What if...”

Applying for every job in town in a panic or cycling through all possible scenarios that could have been or should be are ways people may react next.

### 4. Depression: “It’s hopeless.”

Whether it creeps in or hits you early on, some sadness is to be expected when facing job loss.

### 5. Acceptance: “I have to get on with life.”

A person doesn’t have to like that something happened to accept that it did happen. One person may get to this stage quite quickly, but for others, it may take years. It all comes down to a person’s ability to cope with what has taken place.

“

*In small towns, when big things happen, everyone knows everyone, so sometimes it's hard to reach out for help.*

– laid-off forestry worker

## My family is worried about me.

For the most part, kids are emotionally healthy if their parents are ... but what if a parent is not doing okay? How would you know?

Our work shapes our identity. It is the cornerstone of how we plan our week. An abrupt stop to that routine is like having the rug pulled out from under you.

But that rug is a steady pay cheque.

It is no wonder that a person feels shocked first, in disbelief. It is common to feel frustrated, low, worried, or even humiliated. You may even feel angry one minute and sad the next. Taking care of yourself is key to taking care of your kids and your family. Put on your own oxygen mask first.



### ACTION SCENARIO

How can I take care of myself?

- Let your friends and family know what is going on.
- Get enough sleep.
- Avoid increased alcohol/cannabis use.
- Keep your routines (the best you can).
- Exercise—take your dog for a walk!
- Tackle a project you’ve been putting off at home.
- Focus on the things you CAN control.



## What if I need some help?

Local community organizations will have heard the news of curtailments and closures as well. They will have met to discuss how this is likely to result in a greater need for crisis counselling and accessing resources to help make ends meet. That means they are anticipating your call and are getting prepared to help you the best they can. Take this as reassurance that your needs are important enough to ask for help.

### How do I know if I can't do it alone?

- If people who know you well are telling you that you need help
- If you have increased alcohol and/or cannabis use
- If you haven't been able to enjoy things that you used to for some time
- If you have panic attacks or uncontrollable anger
- If you have (or have persistent thoughts to) hurt yourself or others



## RESOURCES

This is the beginning of the path forward. Read about a different perspective on job loss as being an opportunity to re-evaluate and re-imagine the future: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-new-resilience/201012/whythe-loss-your-job-could-be-gain-your-life>



## ACTION SCENARIO

### Calling to ask for help

It is hard to ask for help, especially the first time. For people who have supported themselves and never needed to ask for anything, it can seem impossible. We do live in a small town, but mental health and community services are confidential. Let them know you're nervous about that right off the bat. The person on the other end of the phone should be able to explain to you their confidentiality policy and put your mind at ease.

### Try starting your call by saying:

"Hi. I'd like to talk to someone. I was let go from my job and I'm not coping well. I'm hesitant to ask for help because I don't want everyone in town to know about it."



### HERE'S SOME THINGS I'D LIKE TO TALK ABOUT...

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## RESOURCES

Read more about signs that you or a loved one may need **support with mental health**:



<https://northmemorial.com/10-signs-that-you-or-a-loved-one-may-need-mental-health-support>

Nonprofits that can let you know about free services

### Canadian Mental Health Association – Northern BC

Free services include connecting people with mental health services available in the community, domestic violence counselling, and support to navigate accessing community and government services.

1152 3rd Ave, Prince George, BC

250-564-8644

✉ [inquiries@cmhanorthernbc.ca](mailto:inquiries@cmhanorthernbc.ca)

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### Community Counselling Centre

1811 Victoria St. #206, Prince George, BC

250-562-6690

Read more about how job loss impacts mental health, and strategies to bounce back at:



<https://cmha.bc.ca/documents/unemployment-mental-health-and-substance-use>

Read more about mental health for all ages at:



<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/mental-health-support-in-bc>

There is some stigma around mental health and illness, but it's getting better. People are sharing their stories about how getting help from a doctor or a counsellor got them through hard times.

If you can't get your mind around taking care of your mental health for your own sake, do it for your family. Start with a call to your family doctor. General practitioners can prescribe anti-depressant and anxiety medication. Aside from some free services available via local nonprofit organizations and government programs, there are local counsellors and counsellors who work virtually and have fees. Typically, a private counselling session costs over \$80/hour.

Some employers have extended medical coverage to cover part or all of the fees for a set number of sessions.

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*There was just so much going on it would be easy to just shut down and not know what steps to take to move forward.*

– laid-off forestry worker

# What can I do to help myself?

Taking care of your well-being while working your way out of job loss is like paddling to shore against the wind. You know it's the only way to get where you want to go, but it's hard work.

## 1. Make time:

Do things you enjoy, and take time to rest. It takes a lot of mental energy to undergo a job search or adjust to early retirement. You can't draw water from an empty well and you won't have the reserves you need to take the path forward without taking care of yourself.



PHOTO: PAULSEN

## 2. Give time:

Offering time and skills to make your community a better place, like coaching youth sports or volunteer firefighting, is a good way to keep your feet on the ground when life feels out of control due to job loss. These opportunities give you somewhere to be, let you regain some sense of purpose, and might even offer new employment leads through building community connections.

## 3. Give it time:

Most people take at least six months to find meaningful work after a lay-off. When people do things in a rushed way, they make more mistakes. And if they're impatient and stressed, they can't think clearly. Big decisions need to be made when it comes to employment, possible relocation, and retirement. Tread carefully and thoughtfully.

Health is important and caring for it is a priority. People have different barriers to feeling strong and ready to take the next step. Age, chronic conditions or pain, and genetics all play a role in how healthy a person feels. Do what you can with what you have.

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*I think if there are any pre-existing problems these will definitely surface when you go through something like this. There might be things you have never dealt with that will begin to surface and that sure adds to how you cope.*

– laid-off forestry worker



## RESOURCES

### St. Vincent De Paul Society

Food Hampers. Volunteer opportunities are available.

1220 2nd Ave Prince George, BC  
250-564-7871

St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store  
Clothing, household goods.

1180 3rd Avenue Prince George, BC  
250.562.5136

### Salvation Army

Food hampers, diapers, formula, clothing.  
777 Ospika Blvd Prince George, BC  
250-564-4000 ex 227

### Canadian Mental Health Association – Northern BC

Programs vary, but support for seniors, emergency housing, food, and other help may be available. Programs are not restricted to mental health clients.

152 3rd Ave, Prince George, BC  
250-564-8644  
inquiries@cmhanorthernbc.ca

### Active Support Against Poverty (ASAP) Community & Family Services

Helps distressed people with emergency food, clothing.

7775 Ospika Blvd, Prince George, BC  
250-563-6112

## What if I need some help?

Locally, we have a range of services and supports for people in need, at little to no cost. Many people are unaware of what is available and how to access it if they haven't needed to do so before. Local services include:

- Free counselling
- Programs and help for children and families
- Access to computers/printers
- Resume-building and job search help
- Free food and clothing
- And more

Prince George has free services for seniors, people with disabilities, domestic violence counselling/emergency housing, and addictions help.

If you're feeling frustrated and ready to give up, let a local non-profit bridge the gap and do some of the run-around for you. They can support you in the process by giving you a quiet space to do a virtual appointment or by helping you understand how to complete forms for a child care subsidy or a training application.

Lighten the load where you can. That could mean that even though your most pressing need is to find a new job, you lessen your overall stress by getting some help with the technology aspect of the job search. It could be getting free diapers and formula for a month so you can make the truck payment.





### *Take a hand, lend a hand.*

Whatever you do to lessen your stress during unexpected job loss or retirement helps. Take a hand when you need one, and give one when you can.



# The path forward

When times are toughest, putting one foot in front of the other is sometimes all a person can do. Moving forward is just that; one step at a time. Finding the path itself isn't always easy, and moving forward takes courage, tenacity, and some blind faith that better times are on the horizon.

## Job loss is not the end of the road. Even retirement is a new beginning.

To find your path forward, stay:

**Informed:** Find out what is happening and how it will impact your life.

**Prepared:** Take stock of what you can get done now to make life easier later.

**Proactive:** Stay behind the driver's wheel of your life. Make things happen.

Life doesn't unfold in a straight line. When setbacks happen, reorient and keep on moving along the path forward.

Major industry changes are a community crisis. All along the path are neighbours, friends, and coworkers. Some chip in and clear the way of obstacles where they can. Others offer shortcuts or supplies to make the journey easier. If we do what we can and take what we need, everyone will make their way through to the other side.





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*Thank you for all your efforts to improve all of this and make it a better process for the future. [It's a] huge project and many complexities in so many areas. Thank you for reaching out.*

– forestry worker

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the forestry workers and families impacted by job loss for graciously sharing their stories, the service agencies for their support, and Barbara Perrey, M.S.W. (interviewer) and Kimberly Vance-Lundsbye, BTR (content writer) for capturing the materials for this guide.

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This document has been edited from the original document created by the District of 100 Mile House and the Province of British Columbia. The City of Prince George thanks them for the permission to alter the booklet to better serve the Forestry Employees who lost their jobs in Prince George.





## RESOURCE DIRECTORY

### St. Vincent De Paul Society

Food hampers  
1180 3rd Avenue Prince George, BC  
250-562-5136

### St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store

1180 3rd Avenue Prince George, BC  
250-562-5136

### Salvation Army

Food Hampers, formula, diapers, clothing  
77 Ospika Blvd Prince George, BC  
250.564.4000 ex 227

### Axis Family Resources

185 Quebec St. Prince George BC  
250-564-9064  
<https://axis.bc.ca/prince-george/>

### Bridging to Retirement

For information about the Bridging to Retirement program, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/supports-for-forestry-workers/retirement-bridging-program>

For a current list of other support programs, eligibility requirements, and more, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/supports-for-forestry-workers>

### Canadian Mental Health Association – Northern BC

Free services include connecting people with mental health services available in the community, domestic violence counselling, and support to navigate accessing community and government services.

1152 3rd Ave, Prince George, BC  
250-564-8644

✉ [inquiries@cmhanorthernbc.ca](mailto:inquiries@cmhanorthernbc.ca)

### Partners for Literacy

They provide free help to support people with computers/technology, filling out government forms, upgrading math or English courses for continuing education, and more.

[locprincegeorge@gmail.com](mailto:locprincegeorge@gmail.com)

### South Fort George Family Resource Centre

Free services including counselling, parenting support, infant supplies, and more. The staff can direct you to other child and family supports in the community and province.

1200 La Salle Avenue Prince George, BC  
250-614-9449

[www.sfgfrc.com](http://www.sfgfrc.com)



## Government

### City of Prince George

250-561-7311

[www.princegeorge.ca](http://www.princegeorge.ca)

### Regional District Fraser Fort George

#### Find your area director by:

1-800-667-1959

[www.rdffg.bc.ca](http://www.rdffg.bc.ca)

### Provincial representative

Local MLAs advocate to the Legislative Assembly for the needs and interests of their constituents. Find your local MLA at:

[www.leg.bc.ca](http://www.leg.bc.ca)

### Federal representative

Local MPs advocate to Parliament for the needs and interests of their constituents. Find your local MP at:

[www.ourcommons.ca](http://www.ourcommons.ca)

## Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

The centre helps families across the province navigate the mental health system, connect with peer support, and access resources and tools to support well-being. Learn more about mental health for children at:

<https://keltymentalhealth.ca>

## Mental Health Supports

Canadian Mental Health Association Northern BC  
1152 3rd Ave, Prince George, BC  
250.564.8644

### Community Counselling Centre

1811 Victoria St #206, Prince George, BC  
250.562.6690

## KidSport

A family of four that earns less than \$51,000 is eligible for up to \$400/per year per child to cover registration costs of a sport/activity.

#### Apply online at:

[kidsportcanada.ca](http://kidsportcanada.ca)

<https://kidsportcanada.ca/british-bolumbia/prince-george/>

✉ [pgkidsport@sportbc.com](mailto:pgkidsport@sportbc.com)

## Mental Health Supports

### Teen Mental Health

<https://www.ventureacademy.ca/ppc/>  
Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions

<https://wellbeing.gov.bc.ca/>

Foundry Youth Services [foundrybc.ca](http://foundrybc.ca)

### St. Vincent De Paul Society

#### Food Hampers

1220 2nd Ave Prince George, BC  
250.564.7871

### St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store

1180 3rd Avenue Prince George, BC  
250.562.5136

### Salvation Army

#### Food Hampers, formula, diapers, clothing

777 Ospika Blvd Prince George, BC  
250.564.4000 ex 227

### Active Support Against Poverty (ASAP) Community & Family Services

Helps distressed people with emergency food, clothing.

7775 Ospika Boulevard  
250.563.6112



## RESOURCE DIRECTORY

### Mental health

Read more about how unemployment impacts kids and how to help:

<https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/parenting/helping-kids-deal-with-parents-unemployment/#gs.4vtel1>

Read more about signs that you or a loved one may need **support with mental health**:

<https://northmemorial.com/10-signs-that-you-or-a-loved-one-may-need-mental-health-support>

Read more about how job loss impacts mental health, and strategies to bounce back at:

<https://cmha.bc.ca/documents/unemployment-mental-health-and-substance-use>

Read more about mental health for all ages at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/mental-health-support-in-bc>

### Psychology Today

This is the beginning of the path forward. Read about a different perspective on job loss as being an opportunity to re-evaluate and re-imagine the future:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-new-resilience/201012/why-the-loss-your-job-could-be-gain-your-life>

### Retirement planning checklist

This resource will help you to take steps to manage your financial well-being, including things like budgeting, insurance, taxes, and pensions.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/retirement-planning/retirement-checklist.html>

### Seniors First BC

Retirement is personal and there are a lot of considerations. For links to credible guidelines for retirement costs and considerations for Canadians, check out:

<https://seniorsfirstbc.ca/getting-help/retirement-planning>

### Service Canada location

1363 4th Ave, Prince George, BC

### University of Northern BC

Check with the local university to find out what training opportunities may be available. They can also let you know what programs they are offering and what prerequisites you need to enter. You do not need to have completed secondary school to enter post-secondary. There are entrance exams and upgrading courses offered instead.

3333 University Way, Prince George BC

250-960-5555

[www2.unbc.ca](http://www2.unbc.ca)

### College of New Caledonia

3330 22 Ave, Prince George, BC

250-562-2131

[www.cnc.bc.ca](http://www.cnc.bc.ca)



## Winter checklist for homeowners

Taking care of things at home before the snow flies makes life easier, especially when working away. By planning ahead, losing heat during a cold snap is less likely and everyone will feel more comfortable. Read about ways to prepare your home for winter at:

<https://blog.renovationfind.com/winter-maintenance-checklist-for-canadian-homeowners>

## Winter checklist for vehicles

Vehicles require a lot of care to carry your family safely to work, school, and sports in the winter. Taking steps to get ready is a way a person who finds themselves working out of town can care for their family and their assets. It also might mean there is less work to do around home on your days off. Plan ahead and prepare your vehicles for winter by looking at:

<https://www.carhelpcanada.com/winter-maintenance-checklist-vehicle>

## WorkBC

The local centre offers free help with resumes, job search, skills assessment, and training.

1600 15th Ave, Prince George, BC  
(236) 601-9111  
[princegeorge@workbc.ca](mailto:princegeorge@workbc.ca)

## Working as a family unit

Learning to operate as a family unit in a new way while working away takes some “buy-in” from everyone in the family. The Metlakatla Development Corporation (near Prince Rupert, B.C.) published an excellent BC Work Camp Survival Guide for families in 2017. Check it out here for tips on how to thrive as a family and as an employee while working away:

<https://workcampsurvivalguide.ca>



