



## Chapter Eleven: Self-Care is the first step to surviving a break-up

There is no simple road map for getting from heartbreak to happy. However, there is a lot you can do to move through this painful loss and gradually recover your equilibrium and joy. Try this four-pronged plan to take care of yourself, learn what you can from the past relationship, successfully maintain your other relationships, and handle other people's reactions

“Self-care” covers a lot of territory. It can mean reaching out

to friends and family for support, joining a support group, or going to counseling. It could involve making art or music, playing sports, spending time in nature or taking a vacation. For some people, taking a class or learning a new skill is healing. Others may find great comfort through nurturing themselves with a massage, a nice dinner out, a new haircut, a weekend ski trip, or new carpentry tool. Just keep asking yourself, “What would make me feel better right now, until I get through this?”

One therapist offered a distraught poly client some good advice about surviving a poly break-up: “Reach out to friends for support, ask them to include you in social activities, lunches, going out to clubs, and parties. Try not to rely too heavily on your other lovers to help you through this. They are probably really tired of hearing about this partner that dumped you, and they probably don't particularly want to spend their dates with you holding your hand while you cry about this other guy you are so in love with who has done you wrong.”

Some poly people make the mistake of jumping back into dating new people when they are not really in any condition to start a new relationship. For some people, a few casual dates can be a lot of fun and help you feel desirable again when you are feeling rejected. However, you may not be thinking clearly and it can be challenging to make good choices about who to date and what kind of relationship to have with them. And no one wants to feel like they are being used as a crutch while you are “on the rebound,” only to be dropped once you have recovered from the break-up and realized that you have nothing in common. Pia said, “I had been with both of my partners literally for decades, and then Rich dumped me because his other lover demanded monogamy. I didn't have a clue about OK Cupid or Tinder or any other way to meet people besides going to a party or bar. I got a dating app and I was like the kid in the proverbial candy store, dating random people that were all wrong for me. I ended up hurting a few people by dating them once or twice and then not knowing how to call it off. I had to get help from my 23-year-old daughter to learn modern dating etiquette. She taught me terms like ghosting and, as she put it, 'how not be a douche, Mom.'”