

Life... Changing therapists

Situation:

I found out this morning that my therapist is leaving. He told me at the end of our session. Next time I go, I'll be seeing someone else in the same office.

Symptoms:

As I was walking to go out of the building I was feeling lost and abandoned. I knew where I was going but I felt disassociated from everything. I was confused. I pressed the up button on the elevator instead of the down button. I thought, "Here we go again. I have to start all over with someone else. It's so uncomfortable seeing a new therapist. It's not fair. Why is Mr. Gregory choosing to move away? I know, I just won't come back. Ever. Then they'll be sorry! Why didn't he tell me at the beginning of the session?"

Solution:

When I got home I was still upset and confused. I tried to watch TV, but that didn't help. I tried to read the newspaper and all the stories I read were gloom and doom. That made me feel worse. Finally I decided that I need to do something constructive to get in touch with what I was thinking. The longer I pushed the issue aside, the longer I was going to feel bad. So I went through my Taking Charge handouts.

"This is distressing, but not dangerous." I didn't believe that for a second. But I kept repeating it to myself, because that's what I was supposed to do. After I kept it up for a few minutes I started thinking straighter.

Feeling lost and abandoned was a feeling, not a fact. There was a change going on. A change, that's all. No one was abandoning me. Mr. Gregory was choosing to move away because he got a better job. Period. People move to different places all the time. And I was going to have a new therapist. Period. He's not wrong, he's average. Period.

I knew that my earlier thought that "I just won't ever go back to the office" was an overreaction. "My" overreaction. It was just an overreactive thought. I could accept it or reject it and replace it. I didn't have to follow through on it.

I'm not wrong I'm average for not liking the change. I can have an original, first response to the situation, and it's up to me to work at working it down and dropping it. Anybody would feel insecure at first having to change professionals. And Mr. Gregory isn't wrong, he's average for telling me at the end of the session. I probably wouldn't have felt any better if he told me at the beginning.

In the past:

This same thing happened to me about three years ago, I had to change psychiatrists. I felt totally lost and helpless. Totally hopeless. Everything that

happened to me was an emergency, a big deal that I couldn't handle. My thinking was what made everything a huge deal.

It was little things like this that built up and built up until I thought suicide was the only alternative. Things can be rough sometimes, but now I know there's absolutely nothing bad enough to end my life over. Nothing!

