



BARNES COUNSELING COLLABORATIVE, LLC
SUPPORT • GROWTH • HEALING

Divorce Transition: Navigating Change

Compassionate inquiries and actionable frameworks for navigating loss, choosing wisely, and moving through this transition with perspective and self-kindness.

A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This workbook is intended for educational purposes and personal reflection only. It is not a substitute for psychotherapy, medical care, diagnosis, or treatment. If you are experiencing significant emotional distress or a mental health crisis, please contact a qualified healthcare professional or emergency services immediately.

Using this workbook does not establish a therapist-client relationship with Barnes Counseling Collaborative LLC or Darla Barnes, Ed.D., LPC Associate.

Understanding the Emotional Landscape

Divorce is a significant life transition, and it is common to grieve — the relationship, a shared future, routines, or a sense of identity. Emotions during this time often move in waves rather than a straight line, and may include shock or disbelief, anger, bargaining or second-guessing, sadness, and gradual acceptance. Moving back and forth between these is normal, not a sign you are doing it wrong.

Self-Compassion Check-In

What has this transition asked of you, or cost you, so far?

What would you say to a close friend going through exactly what you're going through?

One kind thing I can offer myself today:

Choosing Wisely: Values Clarification

Circle or list your top three values guiding your decisions right now:

Stability • Honesty • Children's well-being • Independence • Peace • Financial security • Fairness • Faith / spirituality • Health

My top three values:

A decision I'm facing right now:

How might my top values guide this decision?

Building Your Support System

Emotional, practical, legal, and financial support often come from different people — list who you can lean on.

Name	Type of support	How I'll reach out

Note: legal and financial questions are important during a divorce and are best addressed with a licensed attorney or financial professional, alongside your emotional support system.

Coping Strategies for Hard Days

- Grounding techniques (see the Anxiety Grounding Toolkit for step-by-step exercises)
- Journaling or voice-memoing your thoughts instead of replaying them on a loop
- Movement — even a short walk changes your physiology
- Reaching out to one supportive person, rather than isolating
- Limiting rumination by setting a "worry window" rather than all day

My go-to coping plan for a hard day:

Looking Forward

One value or hope I want to carry into this next chapter:

One small step I can take this month toward the life I want next:

Closing & Support Resources

Growth takes time, and reflection is itself a meaningful step. If any part of this workbook brought up feelings that feel too heavy to carry alone, please reach out for support.

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: call or text 988, or chat at 988lifeline.org (available 24/7).

Crisis Text Line: text TX to 741741 (available 24/7).

Texas Health and Human Services: dial 2-1-1 (option for mental health) to connect with your local mental health authority and crisis services.

For ongoing support, Barnes Counseling Collaborative, LLC welcomes the opportunity to connect. This workbook is a starting point — you do not have to navigate this alone.

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

The concepts, frameworks, and exercises in this workbook draw on the following published sources and established clinical literature. This workbook offers original explanations and exercises inspired by this work; it does not reproduce any source's text, assessments, or materials.

- Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). *On Death and Dying*. Macmillan.
Originally described five stages of coping with a terminal diagnosis (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance); later widely adapted — including here — to other major losses such as divorce. Kübler-Ross did not present these as a fixed or universal sequence.
- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (1999). *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: An Experiential Approach to Behavior Change*. Guilford Press.
Foundational source for values-clarification work, adapted here for decision-making during divorce.
- Harris, R. (2008). *The Happiness Trap: How to Stop Struggling and Start Living*. Trumpeter (first published 2007, Exisle Publishing).
Accessible overview of values-clarification exercises referenced in "Choosing Wisely."
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). samhsa.gov/mental-health/988
- Texas Health and Human Services, Mental Health and Substance Use Resources (2-1-1 Texas; local crisis lines). hhs.texas.gov/services/mental-health-substance-use