

# SCAR: The Emotional Journey of Separation and Divorce

It is normal to go back and forth between the stages.

## STAGE 1: SHOCK

- Starts when thinking of separation or told of separation
- Hanging on to identity as married
- Bargaining to save marriage
- Mood swings, inability to function, difficulty sleeping, unhealthy coping
- Try to avoid negotiation during this time

## STAGE 4: RELIEF

- Begins to live their new life with peace and contentment
- Established a new identity
- Relief, they have let go the past and learned from the experience
  - Feel free, stable, secure use healthy coping strategies
  - Best able to negotiate an agreement

## STAGE 2: CRUMBLING

- Take action toward divorce: tell spouse, talk to professionals, friends
- Shattered sense of own identity
- Justify their own role in marriage, blame spouse, gain information, build allies
  - Anger, sadness, blame, guilt, self-justification, fear, shame
  - Try to avoid negotiation during this time

## STAGE 3: ACCEPTANCE

- Envision a new future, new relationships and new identity
  - Feel "I'm going to be OK."
- Able to consider how other are impacted, seek resolution, abandon shame
- Experience more positive emotions but still some sadness
- Best able to negotiate an agreement

