

Have your children grown up, left for college/university or left home?

Feeling redundant? Feeling sad?

Or are you feeling that this may be the time to make changes just for you?

Empty Nest Syndrome is an actual condition which can affect parents when their children leave home, go to college or university or get married. These events can trigger feelings of sadness, and that you are no longer needed to provide day to day care for your teenagers.

It can be a difficult time, just as you had to prepare yourselves for the tremendous impact of your children's arrival; the end of this stage of parenthood requires an equally dramatic, but possibly more heart-wrenching adjustment.

Self Esteem

Your self esteem may be affected now that you have more time to reflect on your lives as individuals, rather than just as parents.

Empty nest syndrome can result in you evaluating your life, achievements and even your relationships.

This could be the time to get back in touch with who you are, what you want and to enjoy your new found freedom.

Tips for moving forward

- Provide your son/daughter with pay-as-you-go mobile phone vouchers to enable them to keep in contact.
- Try to agree a time once a week when you can spend time on the phone chatting to each other without interruptions.
- Keep in contact via email.

Some of the difficulties you may be facing

- Lacking in confidence
- Unsure what direction to take
- Worried that your skills are out of date

Improve your confidence by exploring your strengths and recognising all the skills you have gained whilst raising your family.

Embark on voluntary work as this can improve confidence levels, increase experience and help you to gain new skills.

Help and Support

- Call upon friends, partners and family
- Find out about events, activities at local leisure centres, community centres and libraries

Help is available:

Below are some courses and organisations aimed at increasing confidence and exploring Empty Nest Syndrome.

Bournemouth Adult Learning	01202 451950
Life Coaching, assertiveness courses and confidence building workshops.	
Dorset Rural Skills	01747 811099
Building confidence through art & craft workshops.	
Learning Champions	01202 847609
Courses to develop confidence, listening, awareness and presentation skills.	
nextstep	0800 138 5550
nextstep offers information and advice on work and learning across Dorset:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploring skills, interests and goals• Advice on looking for work• Learning and training across Dorset• Interview Skills Coaching• Advice on returning to work• Redundancy• Help with career options• Filling in job applications• Building your CV• Improving confidence• Disability and employment issues• Information on courses available locally	
They can also offer in depth support on career change, course choices or work related queries.	
Poole Adult Learning	01202 262305
A free 8 week Steps to Employment course concentrating on confidence building, interview skills, presentation and CV.	
Women's Wisdom	0800 781 8597
A networking group for women looking to start up in business.	

Useful Websites

www.direct.gov.uk/over50s/working
www.dfes.gov.uk
www.parentingteens.about.com
www.forbes.com/forbeslife/health (aimed at fathers)
www.women-returners.co.uk
www.learndirect.co.uk
www.womenswisdom.co.uk

Books

Everything's a Mountain by Dolores Dahl and Frank Lohan
(A revealing look at Empty Nesting Syndrome)

133 Ways to Avoid Going Cuckoo When the Kids Fly the Nest by Lauren Schaffer and Sandy Fleischl.

BEST Training & NextStep provides information and advice on work and learning to adults 20+ across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

Telephone 0845 450 8600 www.bestpoole.co.uk iag@bestpoole.co.uk