



What are life events?

A life event is a significant experience that happens in an individual's life. These events can be expected (like leaving school) or unexpected (like an accident). They can have positive or negative effects on a person's growth, development, health and well-being.

Types of life events

Family

- **Becoming a parent:** Can support intellectual development (learning to care for a child) and social/emotional development (new relationships).
- **Birth of a sibling:** Promotes emotional connections and social skills like sharing and resolving conflict.
- **Leaving home:** Supports independence by learning new life skills like managing money (cognitive) and forming new friendships (social).
- **Marriage/civil partnership:** Can promote well-being through love, affection and shared experiences.
- **Divorce:** Can negatively affect well-being due to feelings of loss, anxiety and stress from practical impacts like reduced income.
- **Becoming a carer:** Can develop new skills but may cause stress and negative health impacts.
- **Bereavement:** The loss of a loved one can cause loneliness, grief and anxiety, negatively impacting health and well-being.

Education

- **Starting school:** Supports social and emotional development by forming new friendships and relationships.

- **Further/higher education (e.g. college, university, apprenticeships):** Promotes intellectual development through learning, and social/emotional skills through independent and group work.

Health

A significant change in physical or mental health can have both positive and negative impacts.

- **Positive impact:** Recovery from illness or injury can bring a new sense of optimism and positive self-concept.
- **Negative impact:** A sudden health change can lead to a sense of grief for one's previous life, loss of resilience and lower self-esteem.

Employment/unemployment

- **Starting employment:** Promotes all aspects of development, providing income, new social connections and a positive self-concept.
- **Redundancy:** Losing a job can have a negative impact due to loss of income and purpose, leading to low self-esteem. For some, it can be a positive change if a new job is found quickly.
- **Retirement:** Leaving work can be positive if an individual has enough income for new interests and time with family. It can be negative if income is insufficient or it leads to a sense of loss and loneliness.

Life factors, lifestyle choices and life events

Life factors (like income), lifestyle choices (like diet) and life events (like redundancy) are all connected and can affect development.

For example, **redundancy** leads to **unemployment**. This may lead to lifestyle choices like a **poorer diet** due to less income, which in turn have a **negative impact on physical and emotional health**.

Support to reach developmental milestones

When life events happen, individuals may need support to continue their development. This support can be formal or informal.

Formal care

Provided by trained professionals.

- **General practitioner (GP):** Provides healthcare for common medical conditions.
- **Nurse:** Cares for individuals in four key areas: adults, mental health, learning disabilities and children and young people.
- **Social worker:** Protects and supports individuals and families to improve their lives.
- **Care worker:** Provides daily support with tasks like personal care, mobility and mealtimes.
- **Allied health professional (AHP):** Includes roles like dietitians and paramedics who provide holistic healthcare.

Informal care

Provided by an individual's social network.

- **Family/carers:** Provides love, belonging and practical and emotional support.
- **Friends:** Promote independence and development through shared experiences and values.
- **Neighbours/community:** Can provide practical and emotional support.
- **Volunteers:** Donate their time to provide companionship or practical help.

Types of services

Organisations and services can also provide support.

- **Advocacy:** Helps an individual express their views and be involved in decisions about their life.
- **Financial support:** Advice and practical help with managing money, benefits and paying for care.
- **Mental health services:** Support from professionals like counsellors and psychologists.
- **Equipment and resources:** Items that promote independence, such as walking sticks or memory aids.
- **Support groups:** Groups where people with shared experiences (e.g. an illness or bereavement) can give and receive support.

Developmental milestones

Support roles help individuals reach developmental milestones across life stages.

- Infants (0–2 years) and children (3–10 years) with poor nutrition need formal care (GP, health visitor), informal care (family, community) and services (financial support, social groups).
- Adolescents (11–19 years) and adults (20–64 years) gaining independence need social workers, carers, family/friends and advocacy.
- Older adults (65+) facing social isolation and depression benefit from GPs, carers, family and mental health or social support services.