

How Unemployment Causes Mental Illnesses?

1. Introduction

An individual can severely deteriorate due to lack of occupation. However, mental illness can develop before someone loses their job. There have been cases where people developed a mental illness while still working or studying and thus had to interrupt or stop their working life due to a mental health condition. Those mental health conditions can develop due to:

- Stress from high work load,
- Fear of the work that needs to be done (dangerous jobs),
- Fear of losing a job due to competition,
- Fear of making a mistake,
- Not getting along with other staff,
- Fear of not being able to complete the work due to limited time, experience and knowledge,
- Fear of not being able to complete goals (sales targets, investments),
- Fear of not passing the courses that are required for work,
- Fear that the manager or employer might find employee personal information via social media or word of mouth that will affect their future career and employment prospects within the company,
- Uncomfortable working conditions (no air conditioning, low temperatures, harassment, poor ventilation, unsafe buildings, dangerous working environments).

Yet this article describes the mental illnesses caused by employment termination, business failure, unsuccessful educational outcomes or simply lack of occupation in late teens or early adult life.

“Long-term unemployment is when workers are jobless for 27 weeks or more.” [1].

2. What is Occupation?

Occupation is what the individual does apart from eating, sleeping, personal care, chores and entertainment. An individual must have a purpose in life. This purpose could be:

- Employment,
- Business,
- Study,
- Volunteering,
- Marriage/fatherhood/motherhood,
- Philanthropy,
- Old age retirement.

3. How Many People Are Unemployed?

A relatively old study suggests that 40 % of world unemployed are youth [2]. A more recent study found that there are 192 million unemployed individuals in the world [3]. Nowadays many businesses are looking for young employees. However, the average age of employed individuals was just under 40 in 2017 and will increase to 41 by 2030 [3]. This could be due to businesses refusing to spend money on training of unexperienced young university or diploma graduates.

4. Discrimination Towards Unemployed

If an individual is older than 25 years of age and applying for a job, most employers would want to know your previous occupation. When citizens apply for a passport, visa or fill in immigration forms there is always a question about your occupation because lack of employment could be a sign of mental illness or a sign that the individual could cause trouble and thus should not allowed to cross any international borders.

Only one month of unemployment can severely affect one's employment prospects [4]. Employers believe that someone who is long term unemployed is no longer qualified or has out of date skills [4].

After about ten months one's chances of finding a job are half of your chances of finding a job when they first become unemployed [5]. Long term unemployed also earn less when or if they find new jobs [6].

5. Deterioration Due to Unemployment

Unemployment can result in lack of motivation. An individual might have poor energy, not wake up early and suffer from depression. Lack of having something to do might cause the person to spend more time lying in bed and thinking. Too many thoughts and procrastination can affect your performance in life [7]:

"1. Feeling Guilty.

2. Thinking You're a Failure.

3. Being a Perfectionist.

4. Living with Regret.

5. Comparing Yourself Negatively With Others.

6. People-Pleasing."

6. Why Unemployment Is Bad?

Communities with higher levels of unemployment have more crime and violence than communities with lower levels of unemployment [6].

Unemployment in parents results in more domestic violence and child abuse due to financial stress [6]. The children of unemployed are less likely to have a successful education and career [6].

Other effects of unemployment include [8]:

“Research studies have shown that job loss can take a psychological and biological toll as well, leading to depression, anxiety disorders, increased somatic symptoms, such as fatigue or headaches, and higher rates of medical illness. This toll may be worse for men, who are socialized to evaluate their self-worth in terms of their financial and career success. Suicide attempts also rise with unemployment.”

Unemployment affects relationships [8]:

“Increased stress can also increase marital arguments or lead to lack of communication if one or both spouses shuts down & withdraws emotionally. Job loss can evoke shame and regret, which can lead to depression, with further negative relationship impact. Lack of money for babysitters or date nights can decrease opportunities for having fun together, which is a key element of romance.”

Stress caused due to unemployment has the following side effects [8]:

“In addition, many people deal with stress by increasing alcohol intake or converting stress into anger, potentially leading to increases in spousal arguments, domestic violence, health and legal problems. Increasing financial stress or transition also exacerbates pre-existing marital and relationship problems.”

7. Recovery

Finding a job will lead to recovery of mental illness caused by unemployment. Working individuals are not isolated, feel that they have a purpose in life and a job that will distract them from various disturbing thoughts that could be present in a mentally ill individual. Those thoughts could be psychotic, ideas of depression, loss of hope, thinking about the bad experience or thinking about past failures in life.

However, an individual must hold on to a job to stay well. Some people with mental illness is fired only a few days or a few weeks after obtaining employment for the following reasons:

- not getting along with fellow staff due to possible anxiety and paranoia issues,
- not being able to concentrate on their work,
- being disorganised,
- coming to work late due to medication side effects,
- not producing enough work or not working fast enough due to depression,
- having to take time away from work to mental health appointments (hospitalisation, psychiatrist, psychologist, occupation therapist or counsellor) and respite.

The problem is that their employer might not be aware that they have a mental illness because presence of mental illness might prevent the individual from obtaining employment.

8. Conclusion

There solutions to high unemployment among people with mental illness might not necessarily have to be finding full time employment or starting a business. People with mental illness can:

- Volunteer,
- Work part time,
- Run a small business,
- Join social groups,
- Create art work (music, stories, poems, paintings, drawings, sculptures, textiles).

At time it is the fear of knowing that someone has a mental illness that can lead to fear and lack of communication that might trigger or worsen the effects of once's mental illness. Therefore, mental health database security is important as well as eventually deleting past information on:

- Hospitalisation,
- Appointments,
- Respite,
- Videos
- Photos,
- Art work,
- Bank accounts,
- Government databases,
- Certificates.

A mentally ill individual must plan their recovery. Set goals of when they:

- Stop taking medication,
- Stop mental health appointments,
- Undertake sporting activities,
- Stop other mental health support (respite),
- Resume study,
- Resume work or start a business,
- Start volunteering if they have spare time,
- Resume driving (if one has a car and not driving),
- Resume relationships with friends,
- Resume personal relationships,
- Plan on what to do when they have a relapse,
- Plan on informing family and friends about past mental health conditions,
- Start investments.

9. References

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