The Disease of Worklessness

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Check List
- Acceptability
- Value to society
- Measurable
- continuum
- User friendly
- Useful
- Feasible
- Reusability

A healthy working environment is one that continuously provides various opportunities to work with the support of skills, ability, and experiences that are required for work. It is an environment where individuals can experience their health and well-being.
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Learning Objectives

- Define Worklessness
- Define Disability Epidemic
- Define adverse effects
- Provide suggestions for improvement
Personal Status

Status determined by having a job and the level of that job

Your job (jobless) level determines your life expectancy

Your job (jobless) level determines how long you will survive the same medical condition
Workers have lower death rates than retirees!

Death rates for males

- Age 50
- Age 55
- Age 60
- Age 65
- Age 70

Workers
Retirees
Death Rates Higher for Disability Insurance Recipients Than for General Population

Source: CBPP based on data from the Social Security Administration
What is work?

**Purposeful Activity**

1. Paid activity
2. Self-employment
3. Voluntary work
4. Care Giver
5. Homemaker
6. Child Rearing
7. Full-time / Part-time
8. Community Activities, clubs, church
Purposeful activity is beneficial to society and the individual provided they have enough money.

“I’ve tried all the different antidepressants. The only one that seems to work is money.”
Disability

We are experiencing a disability epidemic:

This is occurring in spite of:
1. Greater emphasis on safety
2. Shorter work week
3. Intensive labor saving equipment

Our workforce is experiencing:
1. Increasing rates of disability
2. Increasing rates of sick time
3. Increasing anxiety levels
Explosive Growth of Social Security Disability Benefits
Increased Almost 3x the Amount of Recipients

- Disability Benefit Payments
- Disability Benefit Recipients

Source: OMB Historical Tables, Social Security Administration
Major Increase:

Number of Disabled Workers

- Millions
- 1957 to 2011
Causes of Disability

### Diagnosis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disorder</th>
<th>Number of Applications (thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disorders of muscle, ligament, and fascia (7280)</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malignant neoplasm of prostate (1850)</td>
<td>IU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic ischemic heart disease (4140)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes mellitus (2500)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteoarthritis and allied disorders (7150)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective disorders (2060)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorders of the back (7240)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety-related disorders (3000)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Disabling Conditions Receiving Social Security Disability in 2011

- mental disorder
- musculoskeletal diseases
- nervous system and sense organ diseases
- respiratory system
- circulatory system
- respiratory system
- musculoskeletal diseases
- nervous system and sense organ diseases
- circulatory system
- respiratory system
- mental disorders
- other


Chart created by www.nickertlaw.com
Late 1990s Back Pain no longer treated with bed rest

Better to stay active & work
Disability Pension

If candy available, people will nibble

20% who retire early because of PERMANENT disability return to work
Worklessness is the single most important cause of health inequality, social exclusion, deprivation and mortality.
Health Risks of Worklessness:

Equals smoking 10 packs of cigarettes/day

Young males out of work for > 6 months 40X higher suicide rate

General population long-term unemployment 6X suicide rate

Affects life expectancy more than "killer diseases"

Greater health risk than high risk jobs like construction/oil rig work
What we know about being out of work

1. Loss of income
2. Destructive on self-respect
3. Risk of Illness
4. Psychological Scar
5. Multiple Generation Effect
Loss of Income

Disability Income less than regular pay

Loss of economic identity
Destructive on Self-Respect

Searching sense of failure

Doubts of future place in the world

Develop helplessness
Psychological Scar

A period of worklessness leaves a permanent scar even if employment is resumed

Lingering fear that there is something wrong with me

Loss of psychosocial assets
Risk of Illness

Decline in psychological and physical well-being
High risk of depression and anxiety
High risk of substance abuse
Increased risk of suicide
Increased obesity
Increased risk of diabetes
Multiple Generation Effect

- Poor parenting
- Family Disruption
- Disruption of family ties
- Lower life success of children affecting two future generations
Psychosocial Aspects
Behavioral Factors

- Expectation
- Beliefs
- Catastrophic thinking
- Fear
- Perceived injustice
- Lack of coping skills
- Passivity
External Social Factors

- Culture
- Education
- Language
- Family
- Legal
- Political and Belief system
Medical Factors

- Pain
- Opioids
- Use of Diagnostics
- Medicalization

Pain

- Anxiety
- Tension
- Depression
- Pain focus

- Happiness
- Optimism
- Distraction
- Concentration
Narcotics:

- Promote disability
- Safety sensitive issues
- Re-injury at work
**COMORBID ANXIETY**

67% increase in monthly health care expenditures for those with chronic conditions and comorbid anxiety.

- Without Anxiety: $870/mo
- With Anxiety: $1460/mo

**COMORBID DEPRESSION**

54% increase in monthly health care expenditures for those with chronic conditions and comorbid depression.

- Without Depression: $840/mo
- With Depression: $1290/mo
Chart 3
Factors Behind Increase in Disability Insurance Recipients

Less than half of the increase in the number of disability insurance recipients is due to observable factors, such as the increase of women in the workforce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased retirement age</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging of the population</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's increased labor force participation</td>
<td>16%–29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNEXPLAINED</strong></td>
<td><strong>44%–57%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At age 60:

15% have high BP
7% have diabetes
7% have cancer
50% have arthritis
4% will have memory loss
50% obesity
It's not normal to be normal

2/3rds of working people have 1 or more chronic conditions

We all having something wrong with us

What important is not what is wrong with you- but what you can DO
TELL ME ONCE AGAIN WHY YOU CAN'T WORK.
A healthy working life is one that continuously provides working age people with the opportunity, ability, support and encouragement to work in ways and in an environment which allows them sustain and improve their health and well-being.
**Employer Role:**

- Wellness
- Ergonomics
- Pre-employment fit for duty evaluations
- Drug testing
- Education

**Once Injury occurs:**

- Concern for worker
- Accommodate injured worker
- Correct work site problems
Once Injury occurs:

- Concern for worker
- Accommodate injured worker
- Correct work site problems
Employee Role:

- Maintain physical and mental wellness
- Safety Education
- Report near misses

Post Injury:
- Know company protocol
- Honest with medical provider
- Follow up comp form
- Proactive in healing process
- Fill out all worker’s comp forms quickly
- First place for injured worker

Avoid Disability:
- Poverty
- Substance abuse
- Depression
- Trauma
- Generational
- Early death
Post Injury:

- Know company protocol
- Honesty with medical provider
- Treatment compliance
- Pro-active in healing process
- Fill out all worker's comp. forms quickly
- Best place for injured worker
Avoid Disability

- Poverty
- Substance abuse
- Depression
- Trans-generational
- Early death
Medical Provider Role:

- Occupational Medicine Philosophy
- Ergonomic advice
- Injury tracking
- Safety Education
- Outline findings clearly
- Workability
- Medications and job safety
Questions??