

National statistics show unemployment leads to stress

National statistics are pointing to greater numbers of unemployed. The effects of the economic slow down are felt in all areas and states. People

tend to think in terms of finances when unemployment is mentioned, failing to consider the emotional stresses of unemployment to individuals

and families. Marcelle Straatman, OSU Extension human development specialist, offers the following thoughts to

families coping with unemployment when unemployment or layoffs occur, all phases of family life are affected. To many Americans

unemployment rates are simply statistics, but within those statistics are families suffering severe material and emotional needs.

There are no basic remedies for dealing with the emotional problems brought on by unemployment because each family is in its own unique

situation and has its own methods for coping with crisis. However, there are pitfalls to be avoided by all families that will guide them

toward a more positive attitude in a basically negative situation.

There is no doubt that unemployment can have critical financial repercussions on families that are deeply in debt. Emotional repercussions, however, can have far more serious and far-reaching effects. In every known society in the world, men learn from childhood that their role is to provide for their wives and children. Work is their most important task. It is their admission to responsible adulthood and defines their feelings of self-doubt, rejection, and betrayal. It may cause sleeplessness, anxiety, and family tension; often over seemingly trivial matters.

Modern women have similar identity ties to their work role along with their responsibility as the heads of households or as the second essential earner. People will usually always experience a loss of self-esteem and doubt their effectiveness when unemployment occurs, no matter how blameless they are for the layoff.

The first few days after the loss of a job are the most painful. Along with the financial and emotional stresses, there are physical ones. Tension energy used in thinking about the situation often leaves individuals physically drained and unable to muster enough energy to accomplish small tasks or get out to look for a new job. Individuals worrying about their unemployment often slip into depression or withdraw from social contacts where explanations are necessary. There are feelings of embarrassment and anger about the situation. Many unemployed persons feel as if the whole world is pointing at their incompetence. Under these conditions, it's easy for many to fall into a 'poor me' attitude.

Families play an important part in the healing process of unemployed workers. Personal interactions are often difficult. During unemployed periods a person's inner uncertainties about employment are often reflected in emotional instability. Feelings can fluctuate from warm and loving to cold indifference with no warning. Hostility and anger might hover close to the surface of thinking and actions.

Family members can experience much growth and strength in periods of crisis. A positive attitude does not mean ignoring the seriousness of the situation. It does mean taking hold and controlling realistic approaches to resolving the problem.

The first step to take is to accept the fact that the parent or spouse is hurting and may continue to be emotionally unpredictable as long as the unemployment lasts. More than caring and encouragement is needed. Families must express in word and action their belief in the unemployed member even when there is no response or appreciation for this vote of confidence.

The time an unemployed family member spends waiting to be rehired can be a devastating period, or it can be a period of growth when families find out what it's really like to pull together.

Flood damage reduction eyed at Stanfield

At the request of the city of Stanfield, the Portland District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is studying ways to reduce flood damage adjacent to the Stage Gulch drainage way through that town.

The Stage Gulch drainage way has a history of flooding. Two major floods of record occurred in 1949 and 1964. The latest flood, in 1979, caused the city of Stanfield to request the corps to study the problem.

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