

## H-1B RTW LTU SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT SERIES WEBINAR Focus on Mental Health July 14, 2015

**Moderators:** Megan Baird, H-1B RTW Policy Lead, DOL Division of Strategic Investments; Jen Swidler, H1-B RTW Technical Assistance Coach

**Topic:** Supporting H-1B RTW grant participants for the long-haul by addressing the mental health challenges that arise from unemployment and underemployment.

**Presented by:** Dr. David Blustein, Professor for the Counseling, Development, and Educational Psychology Department at Boston College

**RESOURCE LINK:** <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/5001517542890729901/info>

### The Long-term Unemployed Experience

*"All your relationships are touched by it. You're never your normal happy-go-lucky person. Your countenance, your self-esteem goes. You think, 'I'm not employable.'" – NY Times, 12/14/09*

*"Every time I think about money, I shut down because there is none. I get major panic attacks. I just don't know what we're going to do." – NY Times, 12/14/09*

*"I never thought I'd be at this stage now because I, I thought I'd throw in the towel, but I've always been a fighter. I come from a strong family. I know strong people and I can't let myself down. Society has let me down but I can't let society define me. I can't let unemployment define me." – Boston College Unemployment Project participant*

### Creating the Foundation for Evidence-Based Practice: What does it tell us?

- **Marie Jahoda:** proposed that work provides five important life needs: time structure, social contact, collective purpose, status, and activity.
- **Paul and Moser's Meta-Analysis:** studies show that people who lost their jobs experienced an increase in mental health problems and once they became employed again, their mental health improved. Mental Health problems are more pronounced among male blue collar workers who have been unemployed for a long period.
- **William Julius Wilson:** studied urban Chicago, found that the loss of work increases family problems and breaks down communities which can lead to increased crime and substance abuse.
- **Price and Vinokur:** designed a structured reemployment program that combined social support and specific job strategies. Found that social support can be as critical to successfully re-entering the workplace as skill building and job searching strategies.

***"Regular employment provides the anchor for the spatial and temporal aspects of daily life. In the absence of regular employment, life, including family life, becomes less coherent." – William Julius Wilson***

## Evidence-Based Strategies to Support Our Clients

### ASSESS

- ✓ Assess the mental status of your clients.
- ✓ Normalize the inclusion of a mental health history and assessment in your initial sessions.
- ✓ Understand that research shows that loss of employment is often akin to bereavement.
- ✓ Evaluate for risk of self-injury or assaultive behavior.
- ✓ Recognize when the best intervention is a referral.

### INTERVENE

- ✓ Recognize that social support often starts in the counseling relationship.
- ✓ Help clients structure their days with job search activities, skill-building, stress reduction, and social connections.
- ✓ Provide clients with means of experiencing new accomplishments.
- ✓ Help clients find ways to actively engage in their non-work lives to reduce depression.

### ACCESS

- ✓ Learn about the mental health support networks in your area and help clients connect with them.
- ✓ Help clients identify and prepare for job fairs, job clubs, and networking events.
- ✓ Connect clients to sources of training and skills development.

### EVALUATE

- ✓ Continually monitor what's working, and replicate. Understand what's not working.
- ✓ Explore literature to learn about evidence-based practices.
- ✓ Share your wisdom, insights, and experience with the career counseling community.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[National Career Development Association](#): Access to a list of master career counselors, career development guidelines, and other important resources.

[Stress in the workplace](#): This is a useful overview of some tips on managing stress related to job insecurity and unemployment.

[Exploring the link between unemployment and mental health](#): Discussing the impact of unemployment and mental health.

[Help for the unemployed](#): Proposal to expand a program to fund education and training for psychologists who work with jobless Americans.

## Follow-Up Roundtable Discussion

### LTU Subject Matter Deep Dive!

Hosted by Dr. Blustein

**July 22, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. Eastern.**

- Bring your questions and comments in a lively follow-up discussion on the information presented during today's webinar.
- Hear from fellow grantees with robust mental health programs.
  - Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation
  - Jewish Vocational Services

## Contact Information

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