The Adverse Effects of Stereotypes and Stigmas on Mental Health

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Abstract

Negative stereotypes and stigmas can adversely affect a person in their workplace, career, and family and social lives. Stereotypes and stigmas can have a damaging effect on a mental health patient's well-being. Moreover, these adverse affects can impact, cause, or exacerbate a mental health condition. Thus, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other healthcare providers should question and investigate if a patient is experiencing stereotyping or stigmas in their school, employment, or career, which may be contributing to their mental health symptoms and overall clinical picture.

Keywords: Diversity; Mental Health; Employment; Stigma; Stereotype

Introduction

In treating a mental health patient, it might be overlooked how negative stereotypes and stigmas can adversely affect a person in their workplace and career. It is helpful to take a closer look at the connection between stereotypes on employment and career advancement. Discrimination in hiring, retention, and promotion is a well-researched and documented phenomenon. People with the same skills and qualifications might be treated differently in the job market based on a stereotype. A stereotype is defined as either a positive or negative belief about the characteristics of a particular social group [1]. Stereotypes have a pervasive and pernicious influence on our responses to others and behaviors in specific situations. Gender stereotype has led to masculinization and feminization of certain occupations [1]. In job procurement and career advancement, stereotyping affects men and women of different races, ethnicities, religions, and nationalities. In workplaces, stereotyping can affect one's well-being, work performance, job procurement, and career advancement.

Discussion

One of the adverse effects of stereotypes on job procurement is that it denies people an equal opportunity to employment. In some job recruitment instances, individual companies tend to evaluate employees or applicants based on gender and racial stereotypes. Gender stereotypes in science, engineering, technology, and math are well-documented [2]. In some occupations such as engineering, which is typically categorized as a masculine job, female applicants are often rated less hirable [3]. When employed, they receive less pay compared to male applicants despite having the same qualification. Nursing is typically stereotyped as a feminine career, and male applicants are considered less desirable and less competent. During the hiring process, some organizations tend to enforce certain practices that disproportionately exclude some applicants based on their sex, race, religion, social class, or nationality, regardless of their qualifications. Despite possessing the requisite skills, knowledge, and competencies, members from the stereotyped group will still be denied an employ-

ment opportunity [4]. The same person could be viewed as more or less hirable depending on what aspect of their identity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, disability, race, and age is the focus of the hiring supervisor's or company's perception.

Another adverse effect of stereotyping is that it contributes to unequal training and promotions in workplaces. Most people strive to succeed and be recognized in their chosen careers with great hope of a fair shot at advancement [4]; however, this is not always the case. In the workplace where stereotyping exists, employees from a particular stereotyped group might be denied equal promotion and job advancement compared to other workers. Most organizations tend to fill their top management positions based on racial and gender stereotypes ather than on an applicant's actual qualifications and personality. Horváth (2016) noted that stereotyping in workplaces affects one's well-being, work performance, job procurement, and career advancement. During the promotion process, the stereotyped group might be treated less favorably. Unfair promotion creates a poor work culture, where the stereotyped employees lose focus, leave the workplace early, arrive late, or fail to complete tasks on time [5].

Organizations should consider embracing cultural diversity in their workplaces that values and appreciates all people regardless of their sex, race, religion, social class, or nationality. Such a culture might enhance productivity and promote the development of competencies among all employees [5]. Gender, sexual orientation, and cultural and ethnic diversity in a work environment can improve creativity and organization performance. It allows multiple viewpoints in decision making and facilitates new ways of solving problems.

Conclusion

In the hospital or clinical setting, psychiatrists, psychologists, and other healthcare providers are likely to see patients who might be experiencing adverse effects of stereotyping in their employment or careers, which may be contributing to their symptoms and overall clinical picture. It is helpful for the patient's care to identify such and to advise and treat accordingly.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that this paper was written in the absence of any commercial or financial relationship that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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