

Employment insecurity, economic insecurity, layoffs and mental health in the workplace:

The World Health Organization and other researchers have proposed organizational and managerial strategies to address layoffs and economic uncertainty. Not only can labour market insecurity cause increased stress for some workers, it can be especially difficult for those employees with mental health issues such as depression or anxiety. In addition, according to some research, workers accumulate a significant proportion of the wealth that will finance their retirement in the 10 years preceding their retirement. For these workers, the concerns around job loss may be more life altering. (Gallo, Bradley, Siegel & Kasl, 2000).

The following matrix outlines the preventative, ameliorative and restorative strategies identified by some researchers in this field that may be useful to addressing employment insecurity among employees with and without mental health issues. Organizations may wish to consider some or all of the following measures:

Preventative Strategies	Ameliorative Strategies	Restorative Strategies
1. Monitor and review labour market trends to be aware of changes and potential impact. Share this information, where appropriate with employees through a posting or memo system.	1. Give as much advance notice to affected staff as possible.	1. Communicate about the potential for future layoffs, where applicable, in order to maintain a sense of trust.
2. Use temporary employees for short-term demand to increase security of existing staff.	2. Engage in consultations with unions and employee representatives, if applicable, about the selection of affected individuals, decision criteria for layoffs, compensation levels, and position shifting for remaining employees.	2. Work with unions and employee representatives where appropriate, to increase the sense of job security in the post-layoff period. Communicate consistent messages to employees
3. Retrain existing staff with the goal of developing a broad skills base in preparation for shortages and shifts in employment roles	3. Provide placement counseling, information about alternative job opportunities in the community as well as information about how to obtain economic assistance.	3. Increase investments in workplace health programs, if applicable, for employees to seek support for grieving the loss of colleagues and establishing a sense of balance and security once again.
4. Develop a layoff communication strategy/policy and share this policy with all staff.	4. Provide support for remaining employees to manage potential ongoing anxiety for future layoffs through workplace health programs (EAP, counseling services, links to community	4. Be sure to acknowledge the contribution that those who got laid-off made to the organization.

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	support services).	
		5. Invite remaining employees to provide feedback on the layoff process, respond to the employee's feedback with detail about how the feedback will be used.

References and Read More Items:

Gallo, W.T., Bradley, E.H., Siegel, M. & Kasl, S.V. (2000). Health effects of involuntary job loss among older workers: Findings from the health and retirement survey. *Journal of gerontology*, 55B (3), S131-S140.

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