

https://dspace.org/

Men's health, masculinities and work : the psychosocial effects of unemployment on black men from Soweto.

Selebano, Naledi

2014-09-04
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/15399

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

ABSTRACT

The provider-role continues to be strongly linked to ideas of manhood even in the era where family and work roles have changed. This is mainly because society continues to esteem notions of hegemonic masculinities that reduce men to a single role of providing. Such a discourse is problematic however, especially during the quandary of unemployment that South Africa finds itself. With this in mind, men find themselves battling not only with the stigma arising from their inability to perform manhood (providing) but also with the harsh labour market that refuses them the means to perform this role. As a consequence, men suffer often undiagnosed depression leading to suicide, harmful behaviour and loss of hope for a better future. Through the qualitative research approach, this study adopted the Social Identity Theory, the Eco-systems Approach as well as the Functionalism Theory towards exploring the effects of strong identification with the idea of man as provider on the psychosocial wellbeing of black men during unemployment. Individual interviews were conducted with twenty-two young men aged between 18 and 35 from Soweto as well as three social workers who were previously placed as student social workers with the Ipelegeng Youth Leadership and Development Programme. Through the use of the thematic content analysis, this study found that young men identified with the provider role and therefore participated in informal work under hazardous conditions in order to fulfil this role. Where the men failed to fulfil the provider role, communities often ridiculed and shamed them leading them to feeling stressed and depressed. The study also found that the young men were not utilising psychosocial services; owing to the notions of traditional masculinities; general lack of services and perceived ineffectiveness of programs. This report thus concludes that interventions that are tailored to tackle men's problems should be developed and be made widely available, being stringently cognisant of contextual cultural dynamics however.

Key words: masculinities, provider role, unemployment, psychosocial wellbeing, black men.