



Consequences of Job Loss

-Impact on Self Identity and
Family Role

University of California San Francisco

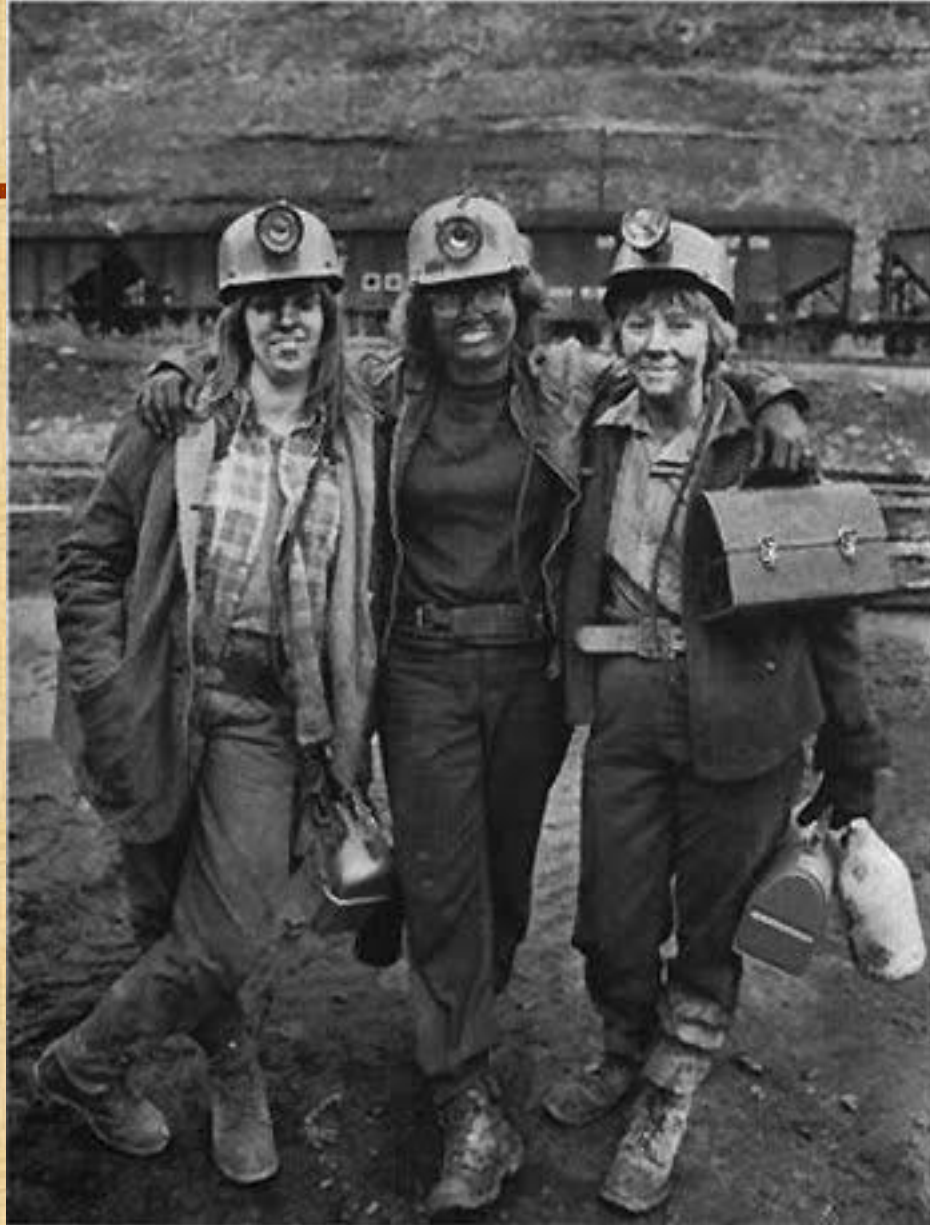
Kathleen Mullen, PhD, RN
Sigma Theta Tau International
26th International
Research Congress

Job Loss = Financial Loss



It's My Work...

MEANING.
MASTERY.
AUTONOMY.



Kathleen Mullen

Job Loss

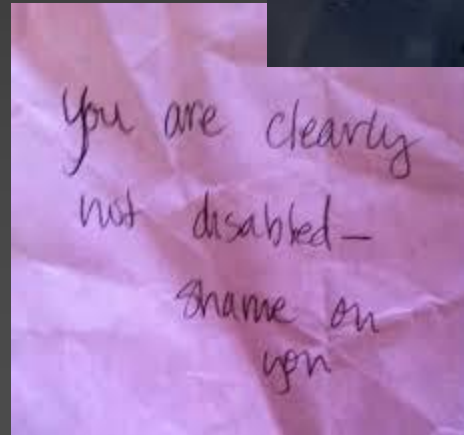


Study findings revealed 3 themes of job loss...

- 1. Role Identity –work & family***
- 2. Power shift***
- 3. Acquired Disability***

Symbolic Interactionism Theory

- Shared symbols
- Meaning emerges from social interactions
- Symbolism and meaning of role is shaped by reflection from others



What are you going to be...?



Following family traditions



Expectations



Playing work





Work becomes a *Measure of Self*

- Work Type –job or career or calling
- Job Title
- Education & Training
- Uniform –white collar or blue collar
- Self Introductions



Work...

MEANING.
MASTERY.
AUTONOMY.



Work...

MEANING.
MASTERY.
AUTONOMY.





*family
traditions*



Acquired disability... *a life changing experience*

- New symbols
- New title: “disabled”
- Pain and Disability –temp or perm
- Shift in Family Role
- Workers’ Compensation or Social Security Disability –insurance coverage or welfare?
- Medical-Legal system –help or hindrance?



Workers' Compensation



- Began in California in early 20th century
- No Fault system of medical treatment and compensation for temporary and permanent disability
- Average cost per lost work claim \$65,000
=\$8.1 billion in lost time & medical costs

(Workers' Comp Insurance Rating Bureau of California)

Study Methodology: *Qualitative Grounded Theory*

- Recruitment & IRB approval (UCSF)
- Face to face interviews with injured workers
- Taped interviews –transcribed and coded
- Memo writing –check researcher bias
- Expert checking –coding analysis



Role Theory



v.



- The stronger a family member perceives consensus in the expectations about the role they occupy, the stronger they experience role strain when they are no longer able to maintain the expected role.
- The greater the perceived role strain, the more difficult the transition into a new role.



(*Family Theories*, White & Klein, 2002)

27 y/o Software Engineer

- Family influence on career – *“I mean, I kind of knew I’d be an engineer just because my mom’s a college math teacher and my dad’s an engineer. And my brother’s been a computer guy his whole life. Like...it is kind of a techie family”.*



Asked about talking to his family



“...I didn’t....my parents didn’t really figure out what I was going through, until I got really, sort of bad...when I couldn’t do anything with my hands..”

“I tried to talk to people about it and they really didn’t want to talk about it, cause it upset them to much and they didn’t want to think about it.”

48 y/o carpenter...

“My cousin was a foreman for a construction company, he said, do you want to work for me? I was not really interested. My whole family, my father, grandfather, cousins, uncles are all carpenters. I said OK, it was just temporary -30 years ago.”



Role taking -rules one is expected to follow within the role



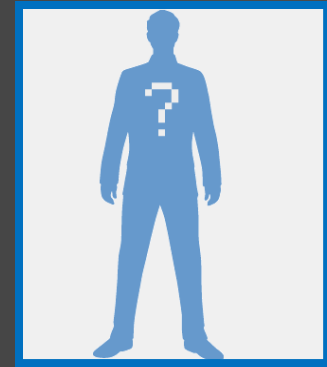
- Described himself as “family man, breadwinner”, although he admitted he had been off work for more than 2 years.
- He portrayed his 13 y/o son's adjustment to his father's stay-at-home status... “he really likes me being home more”. And later mentioned, that he need to appear in juvenile court with his son later in the week.

Role Strain



- *“My wife is really supportive. She is a real strong person, probably stronger than me. My wife has been kind of pressuring me...she has a good job. It’s important that she work for the benefits, we have a 13 y/o son. ...My wife doesn’t really need me any more. She can pay all the bills without me.”*

Role Identity



- Since work related roles are essential to our identity, the loss of one's work should not be underestimated as a measure of the loss of self.
- Work injuries alter meaningful role structures between worker and co-worker and between the worker and family.





What is lost?....

“Nothing that grieves us can be called little: by the eternal laws of proportion a child’s loss of a doll and a king’s loss of a crown are events of the same size” – Mark Twain

My Thanks to....

- **The American Association of Nurse Attorneys (TAANA)**
 - NIOSH for doctoral funding support
 - Lanctot Scholarship –Native American Student
 - Dr. Susan Kools –UCSF faculty
 - Dr. Marion Gillen –UCSF faculty (retired)
-