

Middle School Guidance Officer

Career guidance for mental health



Being unemployed tends to be bad for your mental health. We know this from [long-term studies](#), which show that people's mental health often deteriorates when they become unemployed and can improve when they get a new job. It can be a vicious circle, since people with mental health difficulties can also struggle to get hired. When you don't have a job, it tends to reduce your access to things that nourish mental well-being: a sense of identity, a sense of purpose, structure to the day, contact with other people and opportunities to use skills. Not to mention money, which is a big source of anxiety if you don't have a decent supply coming in.

Young people are particularly at risk here, since they [tend to be](#) among the hardest hit when the job markets takes a dive. Indeed, it's [hard enough](#) for them to find work when the employment market is buoyant. And this group have more than their fair share of other threats to their mental well-being. They have to deal with the worst of social media, early heartbreaks and combustible friendships. Many will be experimenting with drink and drugs, getting into conflicts with their parents and struggling to have enough money to stand on their own two feet. In the UK, for example, around one in six people aged 17-19 [have](#) some kind of mental health condition and the incidence among young people more generally has been steadily climbing. In the US, the suicide rate among 18- to 19-year-olds [is up](#) 56% in a decade.

Living with the scars

While many big categories of illness, such as cancers or heart problems, tend to present in mid to late adulthood, mental health conditions often appear when people are teenagers or in their early 20s. In many cases, they recur, and the consequences can multiply over someone's lifetime. Though most young people experience only passing phases of unemployment, for those who experience longer periods, there is emerging evidence that it can lead to what has been described as "scarring". They are more likely to struggle to hold down jobs throughout their lives, for instance, and to earn less. There is also recent evidence from [Sweden](#) and the [US](#) of health effects well into mid-adulthood.

If this makes it obvious that we should do whatever we can to minimise youth unemployment, it's easier said than done. This is a complicated problem that doesn't lend itself to quick fixes. Yet one area that deserves much more attention is career guidance. Like any kind of one-to-one help, career guidance provides a safe space to share worries and concerns. It helps people to review and recognise their strengths, injects hope by giving them a sense of their possible study and work options, and motivates and equips them to take action. Career guidance can help you figure out who you are, what your goals are, and how to get there – and this kind of clarity can act as a buffer against stress and uncertainty. Above all, career guidance can prevent unemployment. It enables people to access life opportunities in work and education, and opens up all the benefits of participation. career guidance is about



long-term planning based on what motivates an individual. Done well, it sets people on a path that can sustain them in the long term.

Career Exploration

- Myfuture - <https://myfuture.edu.au/> is a comprehensive career and education website that help students explore career options based on their skills and interests.
- Job Outlook – <https://joboutlook.gov.au/> is an Australian Government website providing information about Australian careers, labour market trends and employment projections, covering around 350 individual occupations. It includes an interactive [Career Quiz](#) that helps to identify work styles and suggests careers options.
- [Open Colleges](https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/careers) <https://www.opencolleges.edu.au/careers> contains career information, links and resources about career pathways and relevant online learning courses.
- [myPROFILER](https://myprofiler.tafeqld.edu.au/) <https://myprofiler.tafeqld.edu.au/> is a career profiling tool developed by TAFE Queensland that uses visual responses to stimulus to suggest career choices that match talents, skills and interests.

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