**Negative Outcomes of Unemployment for the General Population**

Increased anxiety, depression, substance abuse.

Increased suicide attempts.

Increased physical problems.

Increased psychiatric disorders.

Increased alienation and apathy.

Decreased self-esteem and motivation.

Decreased social contacts.

So, unemployment and/or being on disability income is **worse, much worse**, for you than being employed.

1987), *Work, Unemployment and Mental Heal*

**Economic, Medical and Social Benefits of Working and School**

**Economic:**

* Monthly rate for SSI in Washington in 2023 is $914. Annualized, this is $10968, more than $3500 below the Federal Poverty Level of $14580. So, an additional disability that many people with psychiatric disabilities who are on SSI have is that they are (very) poor!
* This poverty severely limits the community options for consumers. Housing, recreation, mobility, diet, and nutrition, to name a few, are all negatively impacted.
* Limited community options add to the extreme stress experienced by consumers. Said stress can and does adversely impact symptoms and functioning in the community. So, addressing that first disability of poverty contributes to stability in the community and to recovery!
* School and/or working is a means for bettering oneself economically. Outcomes are much, much better for people working or in school than going on disability income.

**Medical:** Numerous studies are confirming that consumers who are working or are in school:

* + Experience reduced frequency and intensity of symptoms.
  + Have fewer hospitalizations.
  + Have shorter hospitalizations when they do occur.
  + Report enhanced self-esteem, greater levels of satisfaction and better quality of life.
  + Achieve greater community integration.
  + Obtain and sustain better functioning overall in the other functional domains of living, learning and social.

**Social:**

Being in a working or academic environment provides opportunities to

* + meet people,
  + develop friendships,
  + engage in more social and recreational activities,
  + cultivate romantic relationships, and
  + experience love, intimacy, and sex.

So, employment and/or education can be a means to an end such as symptom management, reducing hospitalizations, friends, recreation, and romance, not just an end. Thus, supported employment/education can and should be offered to consumers who are lonely, isolated, symptomatic, adamant about not returning to the hospital, and so forth. Remember that one does NOT have to go on SSI to get Medicaid.