

Suicide cases among successful young adults

[Health & Medicine](#), [Mental Health](#)



One of the greatest German goalkeepers, Robert Enke had his first bout of depression in 2003 when a critical mistake during a game led to a Novelda 3-2 win over Barca. Since then, Robert would feel fear whenever a shot was taken towards his goal. His depression was further exacerbated when his daughter died from a debilitating disease. Enke and his wife adopted a baby girl, Leila, but Enke was afraid she would be taken away if his illness was revealed to the world. The fear of discovery only worsened his condition. Tragically, he committed suicide on 10 November 2009 at the age of 32 (the Guardian, 2009). TheoryCrook (2008) suggested that mental illness is often the cause of committing suicide and suicide was the rising choice for young adults. People who have suicidal thoughts often feel that no one seems able to solve their problem (Huddle & Schleifer, 2012) as if Robert Enke.

Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory best used to explain Robert Enke's case. As we can see, Enke was merely looking to express himself on the pitch. Meanwhile, he couldn't go out from the sadness and shadow, which he made certainly a mistake during a match between Barca and Novelda. After that, he suffered from fear of failure and completely lost confidence in catching the ball. According to Cooper (2007), cognitive dissonance is namely the inconsistency between one's expectation and experience. This statement supported that Enke may suffer from cognitive dissonance as he simultaneously holds two contradictory cognitions. Besides, a person will encounter invisible psychological tension whenever one is experiencing cognitive dissonance (Chatzisarantis et al. , 2008).

As mentioned before, Enke's daughter Lara died of heart disease when she was two. Enke had tried as he might accept the fact. However, he couldn't

get over the death of his daughter and can't stop thinking about her. It can detect that Enke's inner side was struggling as his attitude and behavior clashed. Enke's case is in line with Cooper's (2007) statement that cognitive dissonance will cause psychological discomfort (as cited in Stalder & Anderson, 2014). Enke never sought to hide the fact that he had suffered from severe depression. However, their adopted baby, Leila, would be taken away if his illness was disclosed (The Scotsman, 2009). He was afraid of losing his second daughter. So, Enke was trying to hide the fact. This is in line with the statement as Festinger suggested that the more the discomfort, the more the desire to reduce the inconsistency between two cognitive elements (Mills & Harmon-Jones, 2009). That may explain why he can't manage his cognitive dissonance well and why his depression is from bad to worse. A person who experiences failure on an important task may lead to depression (Petersen, Compas, Brooks-Gunn, Stemmler, Grant, 1993). Moreover, a person who is depressed may be more susceptible to dissonance effect (Stalder and Anderson, 2014). Therefore, Enke's case serves as an example based on these statements. Hence, Enke's case might be related to the cognitive dissonance theory. To make matter worse, his severe depression triggered his eventual suicide.

When applying Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory to Enke's case, hence one can see that there is an explanation of how he was feeling before committing suicide. Reflection I do not always get a positive response when I mention that a career in sports psychology may be a possibility for me in the future. Young athletes are often stereotyped as good-looking, competitive individuals leading a perfect life. That may explain why depression among

young athletes is often overlooked. People want the athletes they idolize to constantly perform at their best. The intangible pressure this brings gives rise to a variety of mental health problems among young athletes. From my point of view, the best example to describe this phenomenon is the aforementioned heartbreaking tragedy of Robert Enke. In my own view, many young athletes may not be sufficiently mature to handle the stress and attention that comes with their career. This tension can trigger severe bouts of depression. Due to Enke's ability, he was often required to play in teams with older players. He wanted to be the best and not let anybody down. I found a fear of failure haunted this young athlete from an early age as he was constantly afraid that he would not be able to keep up with his more experienced teammates. I noticed that Enke was damaged on the inside as his depression gradually worsened. From his case, I come to the realization that everyone needs concern, no matter how successful and outstanding he may appear to be. Robert Enke, who felt trapped and lost in his chosen field, was yearning for care and warmth.

The ways athletes learn to deal with failure are of critical importance. From my perspective, whenever an athlete is falling down, do not personalize the failure. It's natural for athletes to lose as no one can always be the winner. Another way to overcome failure is to view it from different perspectives. By applying these techniques, the cognitive dissonance in athletic hazing may be minimized. Besides, the suicide rates of athletes also may be reduced and may avert some tragedies as if Robert Enke's case. Many people tried to convince me not to work with emotionally unstable clients, as they could be menacing and working with them might do harm to my physical or mental

health. This strikes me as very unfair. Most depressed young athletes often feel worthless and confused, what they need is our ongoing support rather than indifference. It is important to really get to know the struggles inside the minds of our young athletes. During the process of completing this assignment, I particularly look forward to changing people's opinion on the issue of depression among young athletes.