

Case study on joseph wesbecker's major depression essay sample

[Psychology](#)



Depression can be a major catalyst for disrupted behavior and unusual patterns of actions which are sometimes difficult to justify. Many are suffering through mild phases of sadness brought up from the loss of a family member, a relationship break up, a job loss, or simply from hereditary components. In fact, more severe conditions can lead to clinical depression that can affect individuals psychologically, biologically, emotionally, and socially. A more particular approach of Joseph Wesbecker's case of major depression will be analyzed in this paper in which the biological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components will be described for a better understanding to why Joseph's depression led him to suicidal act.

A Brief overview of Joseph Wesbecker story

Joseph Wesbecker is a typical example of a person affected with affect disorder and also with the historical background of violence and mass killing in the workplace. "His case was also the first civil trial concerning the drug Prozac" (Meyer, 2009, p. 107). Joseph had shown severe symptoms of depression that worsened throughout his life, which were diagnosed as affect disorder, influencing his moods with intense depression, suicidal ideation, mania, and anger. He also showed evidence of mania-agitation, but seldom if ever any mania-euphoria.

Joseph Wesbecker was 47, and was divorced twice while being the father of two adult sons. He often voluntarily visited the hospital for his condition and attempted suicidal act more than three times. Because of his mental illness, he had won a determination from human rights that was discriminated against him from his employer, a good reason for his anger to rise. He eventually

suffered from blackouts, mental confusion, and fits of anger. The combination of these factors and his mental condition led his employer to give Joseph his disability leave until his health improved. Although Joseph took the situation in his own concept with a series of delusions that drove him to paranoid thoughts, thinking that the company was trying to fire him somehow.

During the time he was at his job, his delusions had already started with the idea that the company owners purposely exposed him to dangerous chemicals while putting him under stress. Thus, he blamed them for feeling mentally ill. Unfortunately, his thoughts overwhelmed him and changed his behavior making his mental condition worst, leading to start taking some prescription medicine, such as Prozac which would supposedly improve his condition. Instead, he was plotting his revenge over the next few months after his leave.

Ultimately his affect consumed him, and on September 14, 1989, Joseph “ Wesbecker walked unnoticed into the Standard Gravure printing plant in Louisville, Kentucky, where he worked for 17 years, and killed eight and wounded 12 of his former co-workers with copper-jacketed bullets from an AK-47 semi-automatic rifle. Afterwards, he killed himself with a Sig Sauer 9mm pistol “(Meyer, 2009, p. 107). Even though his act appeared to be insane, his decision on his suicide prevented any further examination of his sanity. However, the agreement on the evidence found by examining his case through his hospital visits and psychiatrists, proved that he knew what he was doing and was able to control his behavior during the event.

Biological, Emotional, Cognitive, and Behavioral Components

<https://assignbuster.com/case-study-on-joseph-wesbeckers-major-depression-essay-sample/>

His childhood took the downhill slide since his birth where evidence from family history showed that his genetics were predisposed with a degree of mental illness (Meyer, 2009). His sad inheritance was not a product of just one component, but of many throughout his life. Thus his genetics gave him a terrible start with severe disruptions such as losses of family members (father and grandparents). These events prevented him from developing a normal childhood with the necessary cognitive and personality variables that would have helped him effectively coping with emotional burdens. Eventually, these early life events were catalyst for his predispositions to depression (Meyer, 2009). His negative relationship with his mother also played an important role on his lack of emotional development to cope with distress and pain. He ultimately chose to be distant from everyone, even from his oldest son.

These factors accumulated and were a reason for acting out his pain through many influences that were model of destruction presented by the media. After the mass murder event, the police found on his kitchen counter, a magazine (Soldier of Fortune) for mercenaries where Joseph retrieved his ideas of owning guns and performing violence. Also the incident was a pure copy of other workplaces or schools shooting that were exposed to the media through the CNN or the famous Time magazine, clarifying his behavior to violent act toward others. His cognitive development through the media combined with his depression and anger led him to such insane actions.

Westbecker was diagnosed with a series of combined disorders that gradually developed throughout his life where both biological and

psychological factors were dominating his state of mind. Joseph's continuum categorized his depression to a major depression with suicidal act, with chronic, severe agitation, psychotic with delusions, paranoid thoughts, and unipolar disorder, which was a typical pattern of depression. The external and internal factors led his condition to produce self-perpetuating sequence such as:

" Negative environment condition + biological predisposition → social withdrawal + lowered information processing (cognitive) → inadequate social behavior + guilt and self blame → further self-devaluation + social withdrawal → more biological change that facilitates depression" (Meyer, 2009, p. 111).

Moreover, his behavior was also influenced by his intake of Prozac one consecutive month, which was claimed that the drug was responsible for Joseph's violent behavior. Thus his widow wife brought suit against the manufacturers Eli Lilly, which marked the first accusations that Prozac incites violent behavior (Mental Health, web).

Conclusion

Major depression is considered to be the most severe case of depression in which symptoms are difficult to differentiate from other types of depression because they are just alike. In the case of Joseph Wesbecker, his depression was a downhill from before his birth and as he grew up, his depression gradually perpetuated to a more severe degree accompanied with a variety of factors that led him to his suicidal act. Individuals like Wesbecker have

unfortunately low chances of recovering from such disorder if no adequate support is provided right from the very first signs of the depression.

Antidepressants may improve the conditions of such individuals but in the case of Joseph, his condition only worsens and led him to an unusual violent behavior. Thus licensed professionals should be aware of the kind of medications they are prescribing to their patients because each patient's reaction to medication may differ from another with the same medical conditions.

References

Mental Health from e-Notes, Retrieved November 24, 2011 from

<http://www.enotes.com/mental-health-article>.

Meyer, R., Chapman, L. K., & Weaver, C. M. (2009). Case studies in abnormal behavior. (_8th ed.). Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.