

Mental health issues needs to be addressed urgently, says MEF

By [Farah Solhi](#) - July 1, 2021 @ 10:13pm



MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said they was alarmed by the high number of suicides as earlier reported, as the pandemic and lockdown measures had led to serious mental health issues apart from other socioeconomic problems such as crimes and homelessness. -File pic

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has urged the government to address mental health issues urgently following reports of suicide cases amid the pandemic and the ongoing socioeconomic burden on the people.

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said they was alarmed by the high number of suicides as earlier reported, as the pandemic and lockdown measures had led to serious mental health issues apart from other socioeconomic problems such as crimes and homelessness.

"Depression was not only caused by the (effects of) pandemic but also linked to financial problems and difficulties in businesses due to prolonged lockdowns.

"We can't look at the situation based only Covid-19 cases, with the lockdown being the solution. What we need to do quickly is tackle the issue of people's mental health, because the loss of a human life is also a loss to the nation," he said.

As Malaysians are now forced to find other ways to survive and generate income, he said, they should be allowed to move in a conducive environment to spur creativity.

"People should not be deprived of various ways to make a living. We appreciate the government's assistance and the #benderaputih initiative to assist those falling into destitution as well as efforts given to those suffering from mental issues.

"However, having a peace of mind is about having money in hand to manage one's affairs without any handouts."

Syed Hussain said MEF supports the move to open up economic sectors in areas not in red zone, to help manage the socioeconomic crisis.

"As mental health and safety of employees are a major concern for employers, companies should also address mental stress among their workers," he said.

Bukit Aman Criminal Investigations Department (CID) today reported that on average, two individuals committed suicide every day from 2019 to May this year.

Its director Datuk Seri Abd Jalil Hassan said investigations found that the three leading causes of suicide are family dilemma, emotional stress and financial pressure.

Most victims, he said, were women, from the age group of between 15-18 years old.

Abd Jalil said in 2019, 609 suicide cases were reported, with 631 cases in 2020 and 468 reported between January and May 2021.