ACT FOR TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN

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One of trends in the field of education nowadays is the issue of trauma. Increasing interest in information about trauma management across the industry is taking place because of the fact given by some studies that show eighty percent of children and youth within the age of 13-24 have traumatic experiences in their lives. And these sector bring their lives in the school. Because of that it is really challenging for schools and teachers to adapt classroom management strategies, instructional supports and school climate to support and help them cope over time. (Cerojano, 2016) The thirteen types of violence pinpointed on that study included physical or psychological neglect, witnessing physical or psychological violence at home, overall physical or psychological violence, severe physical or psychological violence, severe sexual violence, peer violence or bullying, cyber violence and collective violence. (Cerojano, 2016)

For young students, traumatic experiences can severely impact a student’s ability to learn, function in social environments, or manage their emotions and behaviors.

What can educators do in this situation? It is very important that we have, at least, the basic knowledge about the different traumatic stresses that our students are possibly undergoing to and the different ins and outs of it. But more than the knowledge, it is also equally important that we have the skills on how to relate with them. For professional teachers, we can consider ACT as a simple helpful tips that can guide us, especially those who are handling the young Filipino students who have traumatic experiences:
1. AVAILABILITY – it is very important that teachers are always have that openness and availability to their students. Students must feel that they are nurturing and supportive and should never feel intimidated when they express their opinions, ideas and even personal experiences. It is only then that students can openly share their traumatic experiences. (Goodman, n.d.) Time is also of the essence here. Teachers are encouraged to spend time for these traumatic children.

2. CHOICES should be given – according to Alex Shevrin Venet (Venet, 2014), people who experienced traumas were controlled by others. Because of this, they should be given better and safe ways of exercising choice and control within their present situation, simple examples of this is the choice of seats, choice of books and materials, among others.)

3. TRUST must be rebuild. Children who were traumatized suffered from severe betrayal of trust especially from those individuals whom they expect security and love. Being betrayed is so devastating because these people are the responsible for their psychological welfare and are supposed to protect them. (Hosier, 2016) Accepting their feelings, patience and support, consistency and making their places a safe one are just some of the ways that can rebuild this broken trust. (Cornbluth, n.d.)

References:


Alex Shevrin Venet, 8 Ways to Support Students Who Experience Trauma retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/discussion/8-ways-support-students-who-experience-trauma, September 14, 2014.
