ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES DURING PANDEMIC

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The DepEd recognized the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental wellbeing of personnel and learners. Responding to such, a series of webinars had been conducted for teaching and non-teaching personnel to promote mental wellness as well as responding to the mental health issues among learners under the new normal in education.

In this wake of this global pandemic, millions of millions of people around the world had been practicing social distancing, home quarantine, or self-isolation. Such situations pave the way for people to experience mental health issues, e.g., cabin fever, anxiety, depression, etc. (Pecson, 2020). External support for the teachers and learners is indeed essential to keep them less anxious in dealing with the challenges of education in times of pandemic.

Such calls to make the delivery of education responsive to the mental health needs of the teachers and learners, mental health and psychological support has been introduced via the issuance of DO No. 14, s. 2020. Such support includes a range of activities that aims at protecting and promoting the psychological wellbeing of individuals and communities in the affected environment and/or prevent or treat any mental disorder that may arise during these times.

A key aspect here is the early detection of symptoms or behaviors that may lead to mental disorders. Understandably, people’s behavior and societal functioning are quite disturbed at this time of the pandemic. However, there are a lot of people who are not able to handle anxiety, extreme loneliness, and isolation. In such difficult times, psychological support and intervention are highly needed, especially for those learners who have confined in their houses for the months of lockdown or community quarantine.
Partnering with mental health providers/professionals, government, and private agencies, the DepEd oriented its employees on how to report, handle, and facilitate interventions to the needy learners and the teachers as well. High emphasis is given on the fact that during these times, it is okay not to be okay. Such a statement signals an empowering message for everyone that it is normal in this pandemic to feel anxious, lonely, depress, and generally not feeling okay. It also opens doors of opportunities to extend and receive help from one another.

References:
