AN OPEN LETTER TO THE HARDWORKING TEACHERS BATTLING ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

by:
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First, let us skip the technical terms. Let’s get real and personal.

To you dear teachers who have been working hard these past years and now, apparently, don’t have the right amount of push and energy to make it out of your beds; I know it is hard to bear the weight of emptiness and weariness. Most of the things we encounter every day are quite tiring and we can’t deny the reality that we are humans—capable of the feeling that we’re on the edge of things, slowly falling into the abyss. As much as we want to get a hold on things, to not let it out of our control, to teach children what they deserve to learn and to do our part on that learning, there are times where everything just falls out of place. First we lose focus, and then we lose control. We’re bones, we’re fragile, we work hard, we get tired, and basically we’re just like other ordinary people. I know how it feels and sometimes it becomes a toll we carry. We are responsible for these children, to shape them to be a better version of themselves, to help them build a brighter tomorrow—for them to be the hope of this nation. Yes we are taking responsible for them, but then, let us also consider the fact that we are also responsible to ourselves. There’s another ball game outside the four corners of a classroom, there’s a life outside the school we are spending most of our hours of everyday in.

Presently, it is alarming that the rate of those who are having anxiety and depression are fast rising. We, teachers, are not exempted from these. Actually, we are very prone to these. Just like them, we also feel vulnerable, lonely, mad or worse, to feel everything at once. We experience anxiety attacks, we feel depressed, and we feel lonely. I am writing this letter to remind all of us that although they call us heroes without capes, we are also entitled to rest, to take a break, to breathe. Even heroes in movies don’t work
24/7, they rest too and we should too when our mind and body start telling us we need to. We should listen to our body because it will only get worse if we overwork ourselves and we push ourselves to our limit. Many still don’t understand how depression takes away thousands of lives, how they still associate it with loneliness. Yes, depression is feeling lonely but more. There’s more to loneliness and it’s not just loneliness, it’s many other more emotions rummaging all at once or nothing at all.

Here are some of the many tips out there:

1. Find time to engage yourselves in any activity you find enjoyment. Be it a hobby, an exercise, traveling or having pets.

2. Have someone in your workplace to know your condition so there will be someone to help or calm you when you have panic or anxiety attacks.

3. Take a break for a day to allow yourself to breathe from all the work that overwhelms you, or file a leave for a short vacation if you badly need it. The results will be promising when you get back; you are more refreshed and well rested.

4. Organize yourself. Write it all down if you must. Think how arranged and planned you were when these all started and slowly go back to that.

5. Even though there is still a strong stigma against seeking help from a psychiatrist but we owe it to ourselves to visit one if we think it’s getting serious and out of hand.

Getting over depression or any other mental illness is a process; you have to be patient with your developments and improvements. Just like how we take good care of ourselves when in times of physical illness, mental illness is no different.
This open letter is for us everyone who is experiencing mental illness and for those who know someone who is experiencing such. This is for us to know that we are not alone in this battle. Mental illnesses are not supposed to be fought alone, anyway.

References:

Tips to Manage Anxiety and Stress

https://adaa.org/tips-manage-anxiety-and-stress

You Can’t Fight Depression Alone

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