DETERIORATING MENTAL HEALTH OF TEACHERS: A THREAT

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The whole world was not prepared to COVID-19 pandemic. Many nations experienced economic loss, struggles in the health care system, and challenges brought to educational system. However, the Department of Education decided to push through the academic year 2020-2021 for they believe that there are different learning modalities that could be applied in order for the students to continue learning even without face-to-face classes. The Department gave different alternatives such as using radio, television, modules, and online learning. According to the survey released by DepEd, majority of the parents prefer modular learning, while online learning is being pushed through in private schools. The said set-ups will remain as long as there is a threat of the pandemic.

Pushing through the academic year using different modalities is a good thing. There are challenges such as producing and distributing modules on communities as well as trying to reach those learners in far-flung areas. However, there is one dilemma that is being overlooked, and that is the mental health of teachers. The new normal setting is a great challenge so big adjustments are being done. Aside from adjustments, many teachers also experience anxiety due to threat of the virus. Since it is in the nature of the teachers to care for their students, some of them as worried as well if their students will be able to continue their learning.

According to Ramos (2020), a psychologist said that it is a must for the teachers to be given an opportunity to vent and to have support system to battle with their mental health issues. It was said that teachers’ coping mechanisms with the said issues are different. Aside from dealing with their problems and stress at work, the teachers have to deal with their personal dilemmas as well.
Willemsen and Cohen (2020) pointed out some ways in their research on how to ensure that teachers are being supported all the way. One of these is that, teachers must be equipped with the connection to their families and to the available resources in the community because they also need support system. Social and mental support must also be given for they believe that teachers must also receive the same support that their students have. In the study of Willemsen and Cohen (2020), they reiterated the importance of prioritizing teachers’ mental health because they are also one of those who are in the front line during the pandemic crisis.

Teaching is the noblest profession, as the adage says. We cannot deny the fact that this adage is agreeable because aside from nurturing students who are soon to be engineers, teachers, doctors and other professions, teachers are those who go extra miles just to find ways to make their students learn. Teachers do not usually express what they feel because they are viewed as strong and resilient people, and their students and the society depend on them, so the support system being given to them must be robust. Just like any other human beings, teachers have their struggles too, and every now and then, it is a must to prioritize their mental health because mental health issues could be the next world’s pandemic.

References:
