I CAN’T BREATHE

by:
Ronaldo C. Cambil Jr.
Teacher I Culis Elementary School

Wait… need a break… please stop!!! These are some of the words we shout in our head ever since year 2020 begins. 2020 is the year of challenges that test the limits not only the people of the Philippines but also the whole world. One of the most tragic happens is the rise of the new Coronavirus which is known as the COVID 19 that dramatically called a worldwide pandemic. World Health Organization (WHO) defined Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. And because it is a virus, people are paranoid because there is still no found cure or any vaccine to fight this unseen enemy.

With this global pandemic, the life of people had turned up side down. Everyone stays at home, mandatory wearing of facemask and face shield, and from time to time spraying of alcohol that seems it is the number one choice of perfume. Having this instant change in the lifestyle of people, much more mental health related issues arises… anxiety, stress, tantrums, and worst depression. People are sociable by nature and limiting this can trigger different mental health illness due to unplanned changes and many of us are still coping with this new normal situation.

Teachers are one of the professionals who do most social interactions with other and removing this set up has a great effect to us especially if we are used to do this kind of setting. According to Dave Speck 34 percent of teachers were currently stress and anxious about their mental health and wellbeing as well as that of their families. The percentage is not that high since teachers are not yet required to report to school. But as the opening of the school year is near the percentage starts to rise and more and more teachers are susceptible to stress and anxiety.
We are aware that teaching is one of the stressful professions in the field of work but usually they can easily manage it due to blending the workplace. But adding another stress of pandemic worrying about their personal health, risk, and families.

Most often teachers would say “I can’t breathe” due to the too much stress that they are accommodating and adding another stress by the pandemic can really affect the performance of the teachers in their work.

To address this rising problem, the Department of Education launched Psychosocial support and webinars for teachers. This somehow help the teachers to cope easily with the situation and can rewire their self and can back to the system.

The webinars are helpful by giving tips and advises to our current situation. But the essential thing to do is to assess yourself and help yourself to avoid burn out from work and situation.

Kisha Walker cited in her article the importance of mindfulness meditation. Having at least 10 – 15 minutes of mindful meditation can improve the teachers to refocus the attention from work. This helps to improve the capability of the teacher to work without the feeling of burning out.

She also added a work-life balance. Teachers must set time for work, home and the so called me-time. This will eventually cut the stress of working from home because of the pandemic.

Another important tip to avoid additional pandemic stress is to be kind with yourself. If you feel that you did not do enough, breathe deeply, and relax. Always think that you have done your best and always have time to do you what you want like gardening, painting and many other recreational activities that helps to you escape from work.
Taking care and prioritizing yourself is not an act of being selfish. This just shows that you value your own life. So, the next time you feel stress, exhausted, burn out and cannot breathe. Just stop, inhale, exhale and relax. Always think positive and do not look into the shadows.

References:

World Health Organization https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1


