Experiencing stress is a normal thing for teachers due to workloads that are sometimes extended at home. During the normal classroom setting, teachers are already struggling to juggle their duties and responsibilities. Aside from teaching, they also discipline their students and supervise them with their school works. However, mental health added to the armful of new challenges as the pandemic affected lives of many people around the world. The situation causes teachers anxiety, distress, and frustrations among teachers as the new normal is approaching. There will be big adjustments when it comes to teaching approaches and practices, as well as the set up this school year.

One of the problems that teachers are facing are the unprivileged students who do have the access to equipment and stable Internet connectivity. In fact, Beteilie (2020) presented at least three serious bottlenecks such as (1) stress due to economic uncertainty, concern for the safety of loved ones, and anxiety about the future; (2) the daunting challenge of returning to schools where many students have dropped out or fallen behind — and increased pressure on teachers to ensure catch-up with little professional development support; and (3) little access to the right technologies or the skills to use them.

Schools are busy preparing their modules and other materials needed for teaching in the new normal. Since great adjustment is a must, teachers are crammed with the preparation as the opening of classes is approaching. Some of the problems encountered by public school teachers are the distribution of modules most especially to far-flung areas, as well as the printing of materials because many of them have to shell out from their own pockets to provide the materials for the students. There is still no budget given to several public schools in the country that is why teachers are also struggling financially.

In addition, Gewcrtz (2020) said that teachers find it hard to cope with the use of technology because some of them are unfamiliar with the tools that they have to utilize. This is more common to private school teachers because their classes are online. Another challenge is that they have to retool and reinvent their lessons and look for new ways to do familiar things. Gewcrtz (2020) also stated that teachers are overwhelmed with emails, texts, and calls from principals, parents, and students. They’re trying to “be there” for students and their families. Many are also juggling the needs of their own children or other loved ones while managing their own coronavirus fears.

Further, the caring nature of teachers is innate that is why it adds to their concern the situation of their students whose families are displaced due to pandemic. Also, establishing relationships and interactions with the students becomes a challenge because they will not be able to meet their students face-to-face. Virtual meeting is possible but it is not convenient most especially for the students who do not have an access to Internet connection and do not
own gadgets or computers. Some of them are also living in far-flung areas which makes it risky and tiring for teachers if they will be having home visits. This will not also be possible due to the threat of COVID-19.

The trends of the new normal is a great challenge to all of us most especially to those who are in the field of education. Teachers are known to be flexible, patient, and committed to their work despite the hardships that they encounter in their journey, but this time, it is different. All of us are now used to this situation and all of us are adjusting. However, the adaptive character and resiliency of teachers must not be taken for granted. They also need support and understanding. Their mental health must not be overlook because they also come to the verge of breaking down. As what Marshall (2020) said, it is important for them to have good boundaries, to separate work from leisure, and to be involved in other kinds of activities that are non-work related to help them reset their stress levels.

References: