MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS OF DEPED TEACHERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

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Recently, it has been an uproar in the Department of Education in regards to different suicide cases of public-school teachers. Different speculations and allegations rose relevant to the death of these individuals. Suicide and mental illness should be taken seriously and several misconceptions concerning these health problems must be aided with an effective remedy—not toxic positivity.

As of April 2019, there are five recorded suicides and numerous unpublicized cases of depression and stress in lieu to workload inclusive of the paper works which are under the “other related works” of a teacher’s job description. Which poses a question on the demarcation line and scope of “other related works” for the teachers under the Department of Education. What are these other related works by which, a teacher is supposed to accomplish? Are they relevant to the teaching-learning process? In the process of writing and producing these paper works, are they going to depreciate the well-being of the teachers?

The aforementioned questions will be needed to undergo several researches before we could identify the statistics and answers, thus require a lot of time. Now, let’s address the elephant in the room—several misconceptions regarding mental health.

It saddens me to hear several comments and opinions regarding the suicide, depression and stress of teachers. Amongst all of those, it was painful to hear from a fellow teacher “Ang baba naman ng tolerance ng mga teacher na ‘yon. Paper works lang naman ‘yon, nagpakamatay na.” It was said with such conviction like the speaker was
utterly sure that there are no other factors with respect to those deaths. Of course, paper works could not possibly the sole reason why they bravely took their lives. There could be underlying causes beneath which are not visible to the eyes but these deaths could have been avoided only if we are more delicate with others.

Mental illness is just like those other diseases which need medication like diabetes, hypertension, cough or even a flu. People should quit underestimating mental illness as if it’s something that people deliberately want. Of course not, no one would want to be despondent with no apparent reason. People suffering from mental illness should be catered with a doctor’s appointment, medication and therapy.

It’s high time that the Department of Education should not only focus to the improvement of students’ statistics in mastery of the subjects but also, to the current state of mental health of their teachers because they are the front liners of the said sector. INSETs and seminars should be conducted to raise awareness concerning mental health so that, these fallacies which surround the death of those brave teachers who took their lives and those who are suffering right now will no longer prosper.

It doesn’t cost anything to be delicate and caring to other people. As Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in his story The Little Prince, “And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is, only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

References:

https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1014615