PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID

by:
Charlene D. Repol

The eruption of Taal Volcano this January has caused a lot of devastation in the personal, material, financial, and psychological stability of many thousands of people around the radius of the said volcano. Until the day this article is written, the total lockdown within several kilometers radius stands – all kinds of people suffered. One of them are the children.

The learning communities within the affected areas are laid waste. Tons of ashes and volcanic dust covered a lot of areas. The schools within the areas have to be renovated as several volcanic earthquakes trembled the vicinity. In short, aside from the disruption in the academic life of the students, many aspect of the lives of the learners had been affected. These sudden and dramatic changes in the lives of the learners must be very quick and outsmarted the wit of many. In these case, a fast intervention must be done by the government to contain and secure that the effect of the panic and tremor is fast eliminated.

The intervention in the psychological state of a victim, in our case the learners affected by the eruption, is called Psychological First Aid. Standard operating procedures and programs are available in many sites like the apps.who.int, www.omicsonline.org, victimsupport.org.uk, and deped.gov.ph conducts the RM 648, s. 2019 among others. Most often than not, these interventions can be applied in the Philippine context. Studying what is included in the program are various activities that teachers are trained to – drama-play, poetry reading, puppetry, and story-telling among others.

The learners must get out of the fear of the eruption – the fear that they felt that caused them to tremble, panic, cry, and shout. To do this, the activities are lively and full
of creativity. In drama-play, the teachers may use funny jokes and facial expression so to make the children smile and ultimately laugh at their characters. Teachers may also use nursery rhymes and poetry that entertains and make the children jest in happiness once again. Some teachers are more creative and used puppetry to show a story of courage, strength, bravery, and hope among others. Puppets are cool, colorful, and excited children with how they ‘talk’ with funny and creative voices. Teachers must exhibit their prowess in all the showcase skills to engage with the audience and to absorb them with the narration and the flow of the story. Teachers must take the guts to exhibit their prowess in acting, dancing, and singing.

There are various ways of working with this psychological first aid. The teacher may work on different activities to be conducted by the learners individually or in group. For example, art works like coloring book materials, dance games, Who Got Talent events, and Trip to Jerusalem among others may be considered. Volunteer teachers may continue the lessons of the learners in the evacuation areas too if permitted by the authorities.

The heart of the teachers is for the students. That is the very essence of the Para Sa Bata motto of the Department of Education. The Psychological First Aid promotes volunteerism as well as develop teacher’s prowess in various art of teaching in a creative and amazing ways. These artistic exhibit of talents by the teachers is an effort to eliminate the psychological inhibitions of the children victims of Taal.
References:


