ROLE OF TEACHERS IN FIGHTING DRUG ADDICTION AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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The Philippine had boomed its name around the world and caught the attention of foreign media and leaders when President Rodrigo R. Duterte announced the implementation of “OplanTokhang” which means “knock and plead”. This is a police operation wherein the authorities under the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) has ordered the Philippine National Police (PNP) knock on the doors of suspected drug users or pushers and ask them to surrender.

The fight against drug addiction is not just a sole responsibility of the government officials instead it is an obligation of every citizen of this country to take part of it. With so much reports on this initiative, the end goal is to make the country drug-free and crime-free so that everyone can enjoy a happy and safer life.

According to the 2008 Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Survey-Based Profile, there are 1,718,855 users of illegal drugs and substances in the country. Age group ranges from 10-60 years old and above.

Among the illegal drugs and substances that are used are methamphetamine hydrochloride (shabu), cannabis (marijuana, brownies, seeds, hashish), and inhalants (contact cement or rugby).

In a 2009 study conducted by DOH and Department of Education in Metro Manila and Cebu, the average age of a confirmed user is 17 years old. Male to female ration is 9:1. Substance of choice is marijuana. And age of users ranges from 13-21 years
old. (http://www.gov.ph/2013/09/05/doh-ncr-empowers-youth-against-illegal-drugs-and-substances/)

With the alarming figures and the involvement of the youth on drug addiction, the Department of Education takes its part in solving the problem. DepEd will conduct a random drug testing in connection to the Republic Act 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. Under Section 36, students of secondary and tertiary schools shall undergo a random drug testing as pursuant to the related rules and regulations as contained in the school’s student handbook and with notice to the parents. (DepEd.gov.ph)

The participation of the youth especially the students on drug addiction are quite alarming. With these, there are lots of questions arise from the issue on the involvement of DepEd on fight against drugs. What is the role of the school specially the teachers in drug prevention? How they will be effective in eradicating the said problem?

According to the United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime, it is possible, and desirable, for schools to be concerned with drug demand reduction, drug supply reduction and mitigating the health and social consequences of drug use, with the major focus on demand reduction. However, education authorities should not accept sole responsibility for changing student health behaviors, including reducing drug use. Schools may well be able to influence drug use behavior and it is hoped that they will do so. However, it is the primary role of the school to teach skills, to impart knowledge and to establish a sound values base in relation to health and drug use, not to change behaviors that may be determined by factors beyond the influence of the school.

Teachers can also help develop and nurture the idea of school as a community. This creates a sense of belonging, attachment and protection for students, which counteracts tendencies towards abuse of drugs and other substances. This article by the
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health suggests the following actions teachers can take to turn a school into a community:

- Set clear classroom boundaries with clear rules and consequences
- Encourage a constructive use of time
- Foster an environment that encourages a commitment to learning
- Encourage reading for pleasure
- Praise student’s achievements and accomplishments
- Acknowledge successes and abilities
- Model a sense of optimism and a positive view of learning
- Keep the channels of communication open
- Be a good listener
- Keep an open mind
- Ask students for opinions
- Encourage participation in extracurricular activities

With the joint effort of the government, school community as well as the parents, the problem on drug addiction among youth would be probably addressed with proper talk among everyone involved and possible solutions would not be hanged so that positive results would be acquired immediately.

References:


deped.gov.ph