SHIELDING TEACHERS’ MENTAL HEALTH AMIDST PANDEMIC

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One of the major sectors that was affected by COVID-19 pandemic is the educational institution all around the country, from kindergarten to tertiary. The global pandemic has affected many Filipinos and worse, some of them were displaced from their jobs. The situation has caused panic, anxiety, and fear among people, and even teachers became vulnerable because of the distress bought by the quick spread of virus. In this view, experts say that mental health could be the next pandemic due to emotional burdens as well as having limited recreational activities that could be done because most of the people are only staying at home.

Last September, DepEd chief Leonor Briones stated that mental health of students and teachers is a big challenge amidst pandemic because they documented some of the psychosocial problems that emerged which are closely related to the pandemic. In fact, one student died because of suicide, and there are few teachers who have also been reported to commit suicide due to pressure at work. This is one of the reasons why DepEd seeks to reinforce its psychosocial support program with the support of the Psychological Association of the Philippines.

Moreover, Vivas (2020) said that now is the time to talk about mental health because considering the effect of the pandemic crisis to education sector, it is high time to discuss the mental health condition of the teachers. Added to their distress is the demand with regards to the use of technology given the fact that some of them are not knowledgeable enough with the use of technological tools and not everyone has the access to Internet connectivity. Adjusting to the new set up is also hard because they are
not used to with the alternative learning modalities that are applicable without the presence of face-to-face interaction.

Aside from this, since it is in the nature of teachers to care for their students, they also think about their situations if they could still continue to study during the pandemic crisis because some of the students do not have someone to guide them with their studies because not all the parents are literate enough to teach them. Mental health expert Dr. Yayco (2020), recommended that teachers “be provided with an environment that would promote and sustain good mental health, or avenues where they could talk about their feelings and emotions.” This should also call for the support system needed for the teachers in order for them survive the mental health challenges that they may encounter.

Indeed, everyone could be vulnerable to mental health issues that is why we should support each other and check on each other from time to time. Mental health issues are real, they are not just in our minds, that is why we should not invalidate the feelings of others because it can worsen the situation. Kindness and consideration are also big help. Understanding each other and addressing these issues are important because we could actually save lives even by just listening to others about their sentiments.
References:
