THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS’ MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

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Teachers are the unsung heroes of the educational system. Today, the role of teachers is expanding to include more duties and responsibilities than ever before. In reality, they tend to be overworked. Studies show that teachers face a high turnover rate in schools due to burnout. Stressors at work and in their daily lives may impact their ability to be responsive and effective in the classroom.

The emotional atmosphere in a classroom setting is important to the experiences of all pupils. That atmosphere is affected by the emotional stability of the teacher. A teacher with personal mental health problems can have a detrimental effect upon all of those pupils who are associated with him or her. For this reason, it is not just enough to determine the teachers’ physical health but so as their mental health and wellness as well.

With reference to www.centerpointeinc.com (2014) mental health refers to how people think, feel and act as they face life’s situations. Mental health affects how an individual handle stress, relate to one another and make decisions. It influences the way individuals look at themselves, their lives and others in their lives. Like physical health, mental health is significant at every stage of life. All aspects of people’s lives are affected by our mental health,

Khan (2017) stated that mental health is just as important as physical illness. Most people seek medical attention and treatment for any form of physical ill or disease but neglect mental illness. One major reason is the stigma associated with mental illness, which can be social stigma. Being a liberal society, we have a responsibility to eliminate the stigma, which can be achieved by improving people’s attitude towards mental health, and increase the willingness to talk about
mental health problems. Stigma in any form, around mental illness would only worsen the problem and it can change perceptions and will make one feel vulnerable.

Furthermore, Thomas (2017) revealed that 78 percent of teachers express devastating levels of stress. Teachers who have higher levels of stress are more likely to be burnt out, less effective in teaching and classroom management, less connected to their students, and less satisfied with their work. If a teacher is stressed out and unhappy, she or he will not be able to deliver the best possible instruction to students—regardless of whether the teacher has created a lesson that is differentiated, cross-curricular, and standards-aligned. Researchers have found that teacher anxiety, stress, and depression negatively affects student achievement.

In 2018, the Department of Education (DepEd) investigated cases of teacher suicides following allegations that these have been caused by heavy workload. According to Education Undersecretary Annalyn Sevilla, DepEd will also work to ensure that the mental health of teachers and other education stakeholders are recognized and well taken care of. Sevilla further added that professional advice and guidance are needed to provide assistance to teachers when they are depressed or have anxiety.

Over and beyond mental health, wellness is also a concern among teachers. As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), wellness is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not just the absence of disease or infirmity. The National Wellness Institute defines it as a self-directed and evolving process of attaining full potential.

The promotion of teachers’ mental health and wellness is important as it may lead to a more positive and effective learning environment overall. Maintaining an ideal level of wellness is crucial to live a higher quality of life. Wellness matters. It affects our actions and emotions therefore, it is important for everyone to achieve wellness in order to subdue stress, reduce the risk and illness and ensure positive interactions.
References:

http://www.centerpointeinc.com/resources/mental-health-information/importance-of-mental-health.html


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