THE ROAD TO OVERCOME DEPRESSION

by:
Jennifer N. Cruz
Teacher II, Dinalupihan Elementary School

Do you often feel sad? Do stressful events in your life make you helpless and restless most of the time? Have you stopped doing your activities and interest due to negativity and hopelessness that succumb on you? If that is your situation you’re suffering from depression. Depression is a brain disorder that affects your thought, mood, feelings, behavior and physical health. Depression varies in degree depending upon the problem an individual is encountering.

Papastylianou et. Al (2008) on their study about teachers’ burnout, depression, role ambiguity and conflict revealed that the mental health of teachers has been globally studied to investigate the results of professional stress in this field of work. The findings of most studies indicate that teaching is one of the high stressed social professions, since it involves close relationships with other people, requires speed in decision-making and the decisions taken might have a serious economic, social or other impact on the lives of those involved (Guglielmiand Tatrow1998; Kantas1995; Kyriacou 2001).

In addition, stress is a common reaction that most people experience when they face disturbing events and it is considered pathological when the individual can no longer function in everyday life, nor can he/she achieve goals, since his/her emotional balance is disturbed. As such, it could be diagnosed as an anxiety disorder (Kleftaras 1998). Studies in the field of teachers’ mental health underline that many teachers experience negative emotions such as fear and anxiety, which are related to various psychological, physiological and behavioral factors and are caused by teachers’ perception of their job situation. All the above factors are considered as threatening their self-esteem and personal prosperity (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe 1978).

It is therefore on the onset that might make the teachers to retire ineffectual and retire early due to mental disturbances such as depression caused by overloads of task expected them to
undertake in performing their duties and responsibilities inside the school and in their personal life as well.

Most of the times in our lives, we can’t handle things that happened along our way and the overload of work. Depression and anxiety ruled on us. We can’t think clearly, and we even make unwise decision that often result to failure, thus, decrease our productivity. As educators, we have to be energetic, alert and active. We have great responsibility to tackle with and that is molding and shaping of the minds of these youths for them to become successful and well-rounded individuals in the future. We are the role models for them. They looked upon us and admired us therefore we should be very careful in everything we say and do.

Hence, if depression attacks us, we must arm ourselves with strong positivity and determination that we can handle and resolve any hindrances, perplexities in life that we will encounter. Furthermore, with strong faith to God everything will be taken care of. Just remember this famous adage “In everything we do put God first and He will crown all our efforts with success.”

In addition, you can have this depression self-assessment test for you to become aware and seek for spiritual guidance/medical care.

Answer the following question with Yes or No.

1. Are you in good spirits most of the time?
2. Do you feel full of energy?
3. Have you lose interest is some of your regular activities?
4. Do you often feel helpless?
5. Do you feel you are overload compare to other people?
6. Do you feel worthless that way you are now?
7. Do you feel that your life is empty?
8. Do you feel that is seems no one will tend to help you?

Finley (2018) on his article “Teaching with Depression” stated that there are teachers reported to have several symptoms of depression, including a feeling of shame. He further added that, insomnia and feelings of dread are additional symptoms. He also emphasized the tactics that may also help teachers to overcome depressions, the following are his road to recovery:

**Time away:** If you think you must leave the profession through the advice of your doctor, then, you must move a way for the mean time. If you already gain your confidence and the spirit to drive you away with your everyday task as a teacher, then, you must come back as renewed and emancipated individual ready for everyday challenges and real life of a teacher. Then, if taking a break would have not helped you at all, maybe, you must try other profession instead.

**Professional help:** Seeking professional help would mean a lot, having time to open up with your school head about what you are experiencing at the moment will be an avenue to release your anxiety. Openness is the key for you to be understood even by your co-workers. Sharing your thoughts, feelings and emotions even with your personal and family life would brighten your day. Consider that most of all your fellows are professionals, build trust and confidence with them so they will do the same to you, when you do, you can open even the smallest thing that may make you insane and you can get professional advice from them, remember, you have the same nature of job, so definitely, you can understand the pain and glory that each other have.

**Informing others at home:** Communication within your family members is vital, especially when most of them are not part of your teaching career, they can’t fully understand what you are going through, your agony and your fears resulted from burdens of work from school that you even brought in your home. Prioritizing the needs of your family, especially of your children is your primary concern when you are at home, be a full time mother or father after school work, but let them know if sometimes you are uneasy, it just because you are worrying at something related to your work, they may comfort and cool you down.

**Calming rewards:** After a struggling week, pamper yourself with what will satisfy your cravings, you may do it alone, with your fellow teachers, or with your family. Leave your work at school, spend your time wisely and have quality time with yourself and with your family. For some
reasons, teachers suffer from depression when they worked overtime, comprising precious time that should be spent in other daily activities would make them feel bored and burn out. Taking time into your favorite movie, concert, spa, massage, boutique, simple conversation and dining in a restaurant would cool you down.

The task of being a teacher is endless, our influence affects eternity, the secret of being a happy teacher and away from depression is right preparation of ourselves and confidently manage each task given to us, when we do it, we will be able to enjoy the essence of being a teacher.

References:

Todd Finley, “Teaching With Depression” August 17, 2018 retrieved from https://www.edutopia.org/article/teaching-depression
Antonia Papastylianou, Maria Kaila, Michael Polychoronopolous “Teachers’ burnout, depression, role ambiguity and conflict” January 14, 2009 retrieved from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11218-008-9086-7