THE TOUGHEST OPPONENT

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“But in the end, one needs more courage to live than to kill himself.”

— Albert Camus

September 27, Thursday, while the rest of the world was busy with their usual routine, a 17-year old student in Manila decided to call it quits, ending his life by jumping off from the 14th floor of his condominium unit.

July 14, Saturday, while most people were spending quality time with their loved ones on the weekend, a newly-hired teacher committed another case of suicide due to the tons of paperwork and requirements.

Different people, same scenario - both decided to succumb to pressure and to halt their short stay in this beautiful world.

Two cases of suicides in two months (and counting) and maybe, just maybe, Albert Camus was right - that we need more courage to live because dying is easy and living is hard.
Two people ended their lives because of losing their battles against the silent killer: depression. And from these two cases, we can conclude that our toughest competition is not the brightest student in the class or the best teacher in school.

Our toughest opponent is the mind.

Thus, the importance of mental health should be well-taught in school and that both teachers and students should recognise their roles in improving one’s state of well-being.

As the number of suicide cases in Philippine schools gets murkier, educators and students alike must work hard in raising awareness on mental health issues as it greatly impacts learning and achievement and our ability to cope up with the normal stress in our lives.

Every stakeholder of the academe must be observant, mindful and considerate of one’s behaviour. A little change in one’s action such as not doing their homework, withdrawing themselves from people, not speaking up, should be given immediate assistance by reaching out to them and assess their issues. This is a simple yet significant aid we can provide to people struggling with their mental health - by talking to them and offering them a company in times of their battle with their mind.
Meanwhile, it is now time for every educational institution to include mental health awareness in their function and curriculum to cater services and programs that will enhance their well being and help build good relationships and a friendly environment for students and teachers.

Other countries have taken their steps towards raising mental health awareness in school. There is no reason for us not to follow suit. The time is now.

References: