

MIND TO CARE

by:

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Tililing - a movie directed by Darryl Yap aimed to discuss the different aspects of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. In the movie, three intern nurses get locked in an asylum where they meet three special patients. All of them attempt to escape the other patients and kill them. However, the said movie was criticized by the public because it misinterpreted people with mental health conditions.

Even before the pandemic, mental health issues had been a debated topic to many of us. In the Philippines, over 3,000 Filipinos have sought phone counseling over mental health issues since January according to the Department of Health. Anxiety, sadness, stressful life events, and mood difficulties are some of the causes for the call, according to the National Center for Mental Health (NCMH). Teachers and kids made up the majority of the callers.

Throughout the global pandemic, school counselors, teaching and non-teaching staff and other school employees of both public and private schools remained focused on supporting the students and continuing to do their jobs even at the four corners of their home. This includes teaching using the different modes of learning, taking care of their students and families at the same time, and continuing to work through the same challenges that anyone else is.

In times where everyone is trying to maintain a balance between work and family – teachers should not forget how important it is to stay psychologically healthy.

First, poor mental health affects job performance and productivity. Depression interferes with a person's ability to execute physical tasks around 20% of the time, and it also decreases cognitive function about 35% of the time. In the current situation, a teacher's productivity is very much important. Due to the restrictions brought by the pandemic, many schools shifted from the traditional face-to-face classes to the online and modular way of teaching. These platforms made a huge difference to the workload of teachers.

Teachers need to collect and distribute modules to every student every week. Alongside with collecting and distributing the papers, they also need to attend webinars and online classes that aims to cater the need of the students for quality learning. After that, they need to check and evaluate their students based on their output. Given the fact that teachers work for almost 24 hours a day, their productivity to accomplished tasks and deadlines given to them is very much important.

Second, poor mental health affects communication with coworkers. Communication is one of the major aspects of workplaces. Good communication between teachers can result in a more positive ambiance in the faculty as well as in the school. However, we cannot deny the fact that there are situations where miscommunication happens especially when both parties are exhausted to work all day long.

Even before the pandemic, we all have different battles that we keep deep inside our hearts. When these silent battles were not treated correctly or were not given enough attention, it might result in a more serious problem of pain. It is like a glass poured with water. When the space of the glass is not enough, the water will just spill on the ground. This same scenario can sometimes happen to our emotions. When we cannot handle it anymore and we do not know how to vent it out, we might end up lashing it out to our co-teachers or even students.

In the end, everyone is affected by the pandemic in different ways. The Department of Education together with other government offices works hand in hand to ensure the well-being of both the students and teachers. Mental health problems are already pre-existing and are triggered by the crisis affecting one's daily function. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, psychological needs is second to the basic needs and it includes rest, intimate relationships, friends, security and safety, love and belongingness. Any deficiency from this might result in deprivation and lack of motivation from people.

Moreover, public and private schools should make mental health assessment tools available to all teaching and non-teaching personnel. They may also offer free or subsidized clinical screenings for anxiety and depression from professionals. Aside from that, they must hold workshops or seminars on how to deal with depression and stress management strategies such as meditation and breathing exercises to help you focus and motivate yourself in a more productive way.

At the end of the day, tililing is not something we should be laughing about. It is a serious issue that targets everyone's vulnerability.

References:

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