

IMPORTANCE OF TEACHERS' PREPAREDNESS IN ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF LEARNERS

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Why is it important to be ready in addressing mental health needs? As stated by MentalHealth.gov 2020, "Mental health can affect how we think, how we feel, and how we will act. It includes our emotions, behavior, and social well-being. Additionally, it helps us to handle stress, helps us how to relate to others, and make our choices." This is why mental health is crucial at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Moreover, the World Health Organization (WHO) describe mental health as "a state of well-being that an individual realizes his abilities and able to cope with the typical stresses of life, able to work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his community". On the other hand, Your Dictionary define readiness as "the quality or state of being prepared to act upon".

learners are struggling with mental health challenges that hinder their full potential in participation in learning, and these challenges are often affects the behaviors and become inconsistent with school or academic expectations. Who are those that needs to be addressed? It is the children suffer from drug abuse, bullying at school and cyberbullying, children with behavioral issues, children who's troubled with attention and self-regulation such as ADHD and attention deficit disorder (ADD), obesity, computer dependency, and lack of school motivation.

We all know that teachers are on its great position as mentors to intervene and support learners with mental health needs. Teachers are the frontline professional in addressing the learners' mental health by simply creating a supportive school environment. Open communication with them can make a difference. By doing so,

teachers need to be comfortable and confident in promoting and teaching for mental health because children pay more attention to what is actually doing than what is being stated by words.

Addressing learners' mental health issues must be prioritized. Learners who suffer from various forms of mental health concerns can affect their ability to perform academically and socially. Many research and studies has proven that students are engaged in the learning process when they are able to manage emotions, show empathy towards other, solve problems cooperatively, and act responsibly. Since learners spend about one-third of their daily time at school, teachers can play key roles in identifying early signs of mental health struggles in learners and provide them timely interventions. However, it is essential that they are equipped with sufficient mental health literacy. Furthermore, positive student-teacher relationships can promote academic achievement, avoid challenging behaviors, and improve self-esteem. Hence, it is important to identify who are at risk and intervene as early as possible in order to reduce the pervasiveness of mental health problems and illnesses among learners.

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