

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH AMONG TEACHERS: ADDRESSING AN OVERLOOKED CRISIS

by:

Karlo D. Villanueva

Teacher II, Kabalutan Elementary School

The mental health of teachers has emerged as an alarming concern in recent years. Educators play a crucial role in shaping the minds and lives of young individuals, yet often endure the pressures of overloaded work, high-stakes assessments, administrative demands, and challenging student behavior. Teaching is a profession that demands constant adaptation, patience, emotional resilience, and dedication. However, the daily struggles faced by teachers can take a toll on their mental well-being. Unrealistic expectations, heavy workloads, limited resources, lack of administrative support, and the emotional labor involved in managing students' emotions are just a few of the challenges that teachers encounter daily.

The Official Website of DepED Division of Bataan

According to (Jimenez, 2021) when teachers suffer from poor mental health, it inevitably affects their ability to perform at their best, consequently impacting student learning and outcomes. Studies have shown that teachers with high-stress levels and burnout are more likely to exhibit reduced motivation, lower job satisfaction, and increased absenteeism, which ultimately compromises the quality of education they provide. It is therefore imperative to prioritize the mental health of teachers for the overall well-being of both educators and students.

Creation of an action plan that deals with addressing the mental health crisis among teachers requires a multifaceted approach that combines support from the education system, administrators, colleagues, and individual self-care practices (Lugue & Galicia, 2021). Here are some strategies that can be implemented to improve the mental health of teachers:

1. Create a Supportive Organizational Culture:

Schools need to foster a culture that values and prioritizes teachers' mental health. This can be achieved by providing access to resources such as mental health professionals, counseling services, and workshops on stress management and well-being. Additionally, supportive leadership that recognizes and acknowledges the efforts of teachers can go a long way in boosting morale and motivation.

2. Promote Work-Life Balance:

Teachers often find it challenging to strike a balance between their personal and professional lives. Establishing policies that advocate for reasonable work hours, adequate breaks, and sufficient planning time can alleviate stress levels. Encouraging self-care practices, such as regular exercise, mindfulness, and hobbies outside of work, can also contribute to their overall well-being.

3. Implement Professional Development Opportunities:

Professional development should not solely focus on pedagogical skills; it should also prioritize mental health training for teachers. Offering workshops and training on stress management techniques, self-care practices, and resilience-building strategies can equip teachers with the necessary tools to navigate the challenges they face in their careers.

4. Foster Collaboration and Peer Support:

Encouraging collaboration among teachers and providing opportunities for peer support can create a sense of community within the teaching profession. Peer mentoring programs, support groups, and regular team meetings can offer a safe space for teachers to share experiences, exchange coping mechanisms, and seek assistance when needed.

Improving mental health among teachers is of utmost importance for the sustainability and success of the education system. By addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by educators and implementing strategies to support their well-being, we can alleviate the pressures they encounter and create a more conducive environment for teaching and learning. Investing in the mental health of teachers is an investment in the future of education, fostering a positive ripple effect on students' well-being, academic achievements, and societal development as a whole.

References:

Jimenez, E. C. (2021). Impact of Mental Health and Stress Level of Teachers to Learning Resource Development. *International Journal of Education*, 11.

Lugue, E. D., & Galicia, L. S. (2021). TEACHERS' MENTAL WELL-BEING, CONTRIBUTING FACTORS, AND SUPPORT SERVICES AMIDST COVID-19 PANDEMIC. *Asian Journal of Educational Research*, 16.