

## MODERN COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH OF SCHOOL PERSONNEL

*by:*

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In today's education landscape, modern communication technologies have become indispensable tools in the Department of Education's mission to deliver quality service and ensure smooth coordination across offices. Digital platforms such as email, chat applications, video conferencing tools, and online learning systems have transformed how teachers and non-teaching personnel communicate and perform their duties. These innovations have accelerated information flow, enhanced accessibility, and created a more connected workplace. However, beneath these advancements lies a growing concern about their influence on the psychological health and overall well-being of education workers who are often expected to be available almost all the time.

The digital transformation within DepEd has undeniably improved efficiency. Messages that once took days to deliver now reach recipients in seconds. Meetings are held virtually, reports are submitted electronically, and coordination between divisions happens instantly. Yet, this convenience has also blurred the line between professional duties and personal life. Many teachers and administrative staff admit to feeling perpetually "online," checking messages even during rest days or late at night to meet deadlines or respond to instructions. While connectivity has its benefits, it has also created an unintended culture of constant work and mental strain.

This new digital environment has brought about several psychological challenges. The continuous influx of messages, notifications, and virtual meetings often leads to stress, anxiety, and fatigue. The pressure to stay responsive contributes to restlessness and a

persistent sense of being on duty. Prolonged exposure to screens and multitasking between digital platforms reduce focus and heighten exhaustion. According to the World Health Organization (2020), “occupational stress arises when work demands exceed an individual’s ability to cope.” This statement reflects what many education employees experience today—an overwhelming sense of pressure from constant digital communication.

Teachers often find it harder to sustain enthusiasm in lesson delivery, while non-teaching staff may experience irritability and declining motivation. Emotional exhaustion, once rare, has become more common as online work becomes the norm. Although technology helps people stay connected, it sometimes replaces genuine social interaction with brief, impersonal exchanges. This paradox—being connected yet isolated—creates emotional fatigue that undermines workplace morale and performance.

To address these issues, schools must promote digital wellness and healthy boundaries. Employees should be encouraged to disconnect after office hours and limit non-urgent communication during weekends. Supervisors and school heads play a vital role by modeling these behaviors, showing respect for rest periods, and reinforcing that productivity does not depend on being online 24/7. Simple steps—like turning off notifications or setting specific “quiet hours” — can go a long way in restoring balance and focus.

Moreover, building digital literacy with mindfulness can help personnel manage technology in healthier ways. Being digitally literate means not only knowing how to use tools but also understanding their emotional impact. Schools can organize learning sessions or mental wellness activities to teach staff how to manage notifications, organize online communication, and practice short “digital detox” breaks. Mindfulness habits, such as deep breathing or taking brief pauses between tasks, can also reduce stress and promote mental clarity.

DepEd's Mental Health and Wellness Program under Department Memorandum No. 078, s. 2022, provides an excellent opportunity to integrate digital wellness into existing initiatives. Schools and division offices can include "Digital Well-Being" topics in professional development programs to help staff recognize and manage digital-related stress. Counseling services and peer support systems can likewise offer guidance to employees experiencing burnout due to technology overload. Recognizing these issues validates the department's commitment to holistic employee welfare.

Balancing the advantages of modern communication tools with the need for rest and emotional well-being requires collective effort. Technology should empower people, not exhaust them. As DepEd continues to modernize its systems, it must also ensure that empathy and care remain central to its goals. A workforce that is both digitally competent and emotionally resilient is key to sustainable excellence in education.

Ultimately, the goal is not to move away from technology but to use it wisely and responsibly. Teachers and non-teaching personnel deserve moments to rest and recharge without guilt. When employees feel supported, they work better, think clearer, and inspire others. By nurturing a culture of respect, mindfulness, and balance, the Department of Education proves that progress is best achieved when innovation and well-being grow together.

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