

Making Mental Health Known: A Duty Tasked to Everyone

To the Editor,

A recent study published in your journal shows that mental health issues are being neglected by many, especially the parents who were raised without the idea of the effects of mental health problems. In an assessment of the mental health concerns in a university in the Philippines, 84.4% of the 634 university students have severe levels of depressive symptoms while 76.4% reported severe levels of anxiety after COVID-19 pandemic.^[1] Mental health has been seen as an issue that needs to be addressed because it has deteriorated since the beginning of the pandemic caused by COVID-19.^[2] With a large number of responding schools and students, it has become very helpful in assessing the depression and anxiety of the students, especially those who are in the secondary school. In the field of mental health, it is, of course, a public health issue that needs to be focused on because of the increasing number of youths experiencing mental health issues like anxiety, depression, and the like.

In the Philippines, most of the time, those who suffer mental health issues were tagged as having a weak personality, “kill-joy,” and, sometimes, attention-seekers. The way older generations tagged the young generations as weak people makes it more depressing for the youth to survive life without being judged and forsaken. This stigma led the youth to distrust their parents and avoid talking about their problems and challenges in life. It is also a problem on the side of the government to have a limited structure and processes for professionals, facilities, and fundings.^[3]

With this situation, it is very alarming to see how the younger generations suffer while being mocked in the Philippines. Hence, it is heartwarming to see how many individuals and organizations are pushing to have hotlines for accompaniment using social media and other communication applications. The call to action is intended not only to those who are professional mental health practitioners but also to those who are capable of accompanying the victims of this “unseen” suffering in the country. Much more, it is fitting for schools and local government units to knock on the doors of the parents to educate them about mental health and how to handle it. Our hope in the Philippines is to change the mindset of the older generations to become approachable and more understanding in this issue, which they have been through unknowingly in their younger days.

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There are no conflicts of interest.

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