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Mental Health Awareness for Community Development among Parents towards Responsible Parenting

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Abstract:

Extending community extension programs at present is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic hence, the College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology embraced new strategies in extending learnings to the community in accordance with the strict implementation of health protocol. With the advent of technology, the College was able to materialize its first webinar extension programs in partnership with the Parents Teachers Association of Basic Education Department of Occidental Mindoro State College. The extension program aims to educate the parents on the importance of their mental health as well as ways of guarding their children's mental health. The conduct of the extension activities covered various methods of interventions using an online platform.

The intervention program covered different topics that focus on mental health specifically with the integration of experiential learning to give the audience the opportunity to know exactly how to understand Student's Stress Anxiety and Depression (SAD), Positive Parenting, and Mindfulness of Parents. The intervention program was conducted through lectures, discussion, question and answer, and experiential learning methods. As a result, the overall training evaluation obtained an overall mean of 4.73, which means it is very highly effective. Furthermore, to sustain the program, it must be extended with other organizations to improve service delivery.

Keywords: Mental health, Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Positive Parenting, Mindfulness

Introduction

State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) are mandated to render extension services with instruction, research, and production. The vital role of the institution in the development of communities, especially the underserved and the depressed. SUCs advocate instruction, research, extension, and production as their significant functions that extend knowledge and skills to the students (Chua, 2014).

Republic Act 7722, otherwise known as The Commission on Higher Education Act of 1994 (Republic of the Philippines, 1994), mandates institutions of higher learning like State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to respond to the call for societal transformation(A. Labrador & O. Alderite, 2020). Accordingly, the Philippine Higher Education systems mission is to help improve the quality of human life, respond to societal change based on needs and conditions, and solve problems of the local community, regional and national levels(*CMO-No.46-S2012.Pdf*, n.d.).

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) in the Philippines defined extension services as an "act of communicating, persuading, and helping specific sectors or target clientele to enable them to effectively improve production, community and instructions, and quality of life(CMO-No.08-S2008.Pdf, n.d.). Therefore, the delivery of extension service is measured based on the extent and efficiency of its indicators based on the assessment implemented by the CHED and quality assurance organizations.

CHED supports the conduct of RDE which is aimed at generating, adapting, and transferring or applying new knowledge and technologies for improving poverty reduction and rapid, equitable, and sustained economic growth. CHED took steps to reform the higher education system to provide quality education and produce globally competitive graduates; provided scholarships and financial assistance. In addition, CHED supported Research and Development and Extension (RDE) initiatives of higher education institutions

(HEIs) that developed/adapted, and transferred knowledge/technologies for improving productivity and quality of life (Ched Memorandum Order NO.1 Series of 2015, 2015).

Part of the current strategies in community development by educators - is the task to empower the people through proper education. This is supported by RA 8250, otherwise known as the General Appropriations Act (AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THE OPERATION OF THE, 1997) mandates SUCs to conduct extension activities to initiate, catalyze, and sustain the development of various communities, using expertise and available resources.

The study of Faure, Davis, Ragasa, Franzel, & Babu (Faure et al., 2016) defines extension as a series of embedded communicative interventions that are meant, among others, to develop and induce innovations that help to resolve problematic situations.

School governs the extension of knowledge to the community and plays a significant role in spreading awareness, specifically on things that contribute to everybody's advantage. Today, many issues occurred concerning mental and emotional stress experienced by the students, parents, and teachers. Mental illness is the leading hazard to young people's health, survival, and future potential all around the world. There are some hints that there is an increasing tide of vulnerability and care needs, a tendency exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic(McGorry et al., 2022).

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic affects people in many ways. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forces teenagers to stay at home, has an impact on their behavior by limiting social connection, leading to boredom (Children et al., 2022). Although there are paradoxes, increasing research supports the hypothesis that the pandemic is a multifaceted stressor on mental health, with certain communities appearing to be more vulnerable than others(Wirkner et al., 2021).

Some are disturbed due to health issues; others are due to scarcity of their daily needs. Mental health issues are becoming more widespread, and the physical health, mobility, and social isolation are all at danger. the community-based measures are a primary focus of public health strategy, and they have the potential to lessen the effect of these hazards while also protecting mental health and boosting wellbeing(Health Social Care Comm - 2021 - Lee - A Systematic Scoping Review of Community-based Interventions for the Prevention of Pdf, n.d.).

Another concerns that arises at present is the access of the students to education. Commonly to schools and institutions adopt the modular mode of learning. In this new normal setting, the parents are the direct facilitators/teachers of the children during their online classes. Many youngsters with mental health issues do not receive treatment from a specialist. Despite the widespread use of digital health interventions (DHIs) such as websites or web-based service navigation platforms, the impact of these tools on parents' mental health literacy, assistance seeking, and professional treatment uptake is unknown(Peyton et al., 2022).

Many are anxious due to the unexpected changes in learning. These situations may affect the parents' routine as well as their loads of work that, some of them feel uneasy. The parents have a greater role in the mental stability and recovery of their children. The advantages of communicating with parents about their children's strengths and weaknesses and for mental health recovery, the importance of parental self-determination in preventive treatments for children is critical (Goodyear et al., 2022).

The parents of the students must be knowledgeable enough and be well-oriented on ways to handle such circumstance. Children and adolescents experienced negative mental health symptoms and health behaviors as a result of school closures as part of social lockdown tactics. School closures could not be distinguished from larger lockdown tactics in terms of health effects and behaviors (Viner et al., 2022).

Occidental Mindoro State College, as a leading institution of higher learning in the province should influence and contribute to the development of an empowered citizenry. Therefore, the institution is committed to carrying out its extension service function, with the primary goal of achieving a sustainable partnership with the community to alleviate poverty. Through its different development programs, the College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology organized and implemented extension service programs that aim to uplift the helpless to become self-reliant, increase awareness, and promote positive involvement and commitment. In addition, it has become clear that the systematic transfer of technology, innovation, or information generated by HEIs and their partners to seek solutions to specific developmental concerns (Commission on Higher Education, 2016).

In connection to the institution's goals, the college extension unit organized an intervention program that aim to enrich the participants' knowledge about the situation at present. The college fulfills its core function by contributing to and extending a program/activity for parents through skill enhancement and technical assistance. The program is about Mental Health Awareness focusing on three topics: Handling Stress, Anxiety and Depression of the students in Educational Setting; Positive Parenting; and Mindfulness for Parents brought by New Normal Setting in Learning. These activities were timely and relevant because we are experiencing challenges brought on by the pandemic; thus, it was notable to the respondents and other audiences because they could grasp new ideas on mental health awareness. Enhancing parental and family literacy, particularly when combined with mechanisms to encourage open communication, as well as the development of stand-alone treatments targeted at younger generations. Improving mental health literacy (MHL) at the individual and population level can be a useful tool for improving and preventing mental illness(Brooks et al., 2022).

The program includes lectures as well as information sharing through experiential learning. Furthermore, the IEC materials containing the course lectures and exercises were distributed as a supplement to the extended learning and for future reference.

The program was designed to help parents understand their children's emotional states as they faced one of the most significant changes in education, online learning. Furthermore, the program aims to mobilize knowledge in order to improve parents' mental development and stability. To assist them in becoming responsible, well-rounded parents for their children.

Objectives

This paper presents the extension approaches and strategies used to enhance the parents' awareness regarding Mental Health. Specifically, this intends to:

- 1. Determine the number of participants served on each activity.
- 2. Describe the approaches used in the conduct of extension activities;
- 3. Enumerate the interventions conducted and technologies promoted to address the needs of the parents;
- 4. Enumerate the problems encountered and actions taken; and,
- 5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the program conducted.

Methods

This extension activity used a strategy suited to the participants: a webinar with an experiential learning approach. The program is in collaboration with the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) of the Basic Education Department of OMSC. The Principal, Faculty, CAST extensionist, and the Lifeline Rehabilitation Center were involved in the planning and crafting of the activity to venture into activities that would help and appreciate the importance of mental health awareness for the parents to understand the situation of their children.

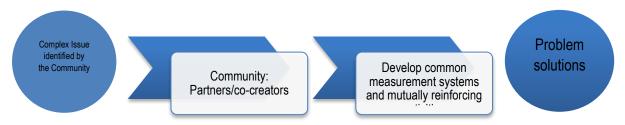
The linkage between the PTA President, Principal, and the college focal person was materialized upon the request of the partner agency of an activity to accommodate the parents need. The Extension Coordinator of CAST prepared a Training Design and program of activities that suited to the need of the participants. The participants were the parents, faculty of the Basic Education Department. Initially, the activity targets 200 participants from the Basic Education Department of Occidental Mindoro State College.

Dialogue and meetings undertook to discuss important parts of the implementation from its request, date of implementation and the tasks of the faculty to execute the program of activities properly. In addition, the study employed observation, documentary analysis, and consultative meetings with the persons involved.

The collective impact theory has been used to describe work in adult education intended to strengthen communities and is consistent with engaged models for Cooperative Extension(Niewolny & Archibald, 2015). This theory explains how communities solve complex social issues involving multiple parties and provide for social change that cannot achieve through individual organizations' limited activities. According to Kania & Kramer (Kania & Kramer, 2015), five conditions necessary for achieving collective impact are "a common agenda, shared measurement systems, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support organizations." In addition, the strong local connections and

networks of resources help communities develop solutions. Finally, responsibilities for identifying the problem and solution are shared.

Figure 01: Engaged Model of Program Delivery Based on Kania and Kramer's Collective Impact Theory



Discussion and Findings Number of Participants served

The program participants were the parents from the Basic Education Department of Occidental Mindoro State College. The parents actively participated in the activities facilitated by the respected speakers from Lifeline Rehabilitation Center. The activity utilized the question and answer strategy on accommodating queries and clarification from the participants.

The webinar was subdivided into three different groups of participants. The first group of participants who participated in the training webinar in Understanding Student's Stress Anxiety and Depression (SAD) consists of 88% female, and a total of 11% male. The participants who attended the webinar training on Positive Parenting consist of 88% female, and male participants was 12%. For the topic mindfulness of parents, 11% male and 88% were female.

Table 1 shows the number of participants served in each activity held online using the zoom platform. A total of 1,214 participants attended the webinar series. Mental Health Awareness for community development leads them to appreciate their role as parents. The webinar series is an excellent opportunity for parents to understand their children better, which was proven of the total number of participants who showed interest on the different topics concerning mental health awareness.

Table 1. Number of participants served on each activity

Activity	Participants		Total
	Male	Female	
1. Understanding Student's Stress Anxiety and Depression (SAD)	38	307	345
2. Positive Parenting	52	384	436
3. Mindfulness of Parents	50	383	433

Approaches used in the conduct of the extension activities

The Parent-Teacher Association of the Basic Education Department expressed interest in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology's extension programs. The organization requested a mental health awareness intervention program tailored to the needs of the parents. The college met with the PTA President, Principal, Faculty, and Lifeline Rehabilitation Center to develop workable plans, estimate project duration, and set budgetary allocations for each webinar training. The extension activities were carried out in collaboration with the Basic Education Department's PTA. The college prepared and provided the facilities, equipment, and tools.

The CAST extension coordinator planned the activities, and the opening program took place in September 2020. The primary goal of the extension program, as well as the training content and objectives, were all addressed and presented to the participants. In addition, the moderator introduced the college's key officials, including the faculty extensionist. Similarly, the program's lecturers and facilitators were introduced one by one.

The collaborating agency was responsible for selecting participants, providing a venue, and providing a sound system for the training. Because the majority of the participants are parents, trainers were guided by a

set of objectives tailored to their level of learning. The trainers used lecture-demonstration, question-andanswer, and experiential learning strategies to help students and parents understand and follow the lectures. Throughout the webinar series, the assistant guided them through the presence of support staff, who filtered all of the participants' questions and queries in the Zoom and Facebook pages. The activities were carried out online, and the participants appreciated the demonstration and sharing.

The Research, Development, and Extension (RDE) Unit of the College provided the standard evaluation tool, which the college utilized as a part of the documentation purposes of its effectiveness, timeliness of the program, and the overall rating of the extension activities conducted. A good extension educator strives to promote teamwork and collaboration among local agencies, development partners, and the private sector during program implementation (Sulaiman & Davis, 2012). The stronger the partnership, the more effective extension program is.

Table 2 shows the use of an interagency connecting mechanism from networking to collaboration. A network is an association of people or organizations with commitment and willingness to achieve specific development goals. The partnership aims to accomplish a particular task in an organized manner. The membership of the organizations or groups has a clear responsibility among partners. Collaboration is the long-term commitment within the organization to pursue a complex development initiative (Brown & Reed, 2000). Sharing resources and responsibilities and follow joint decision-making practices on significant project activities and initiatives.

Table 2. Number of participants served on each activity

	Networking	Coordinating	Cooperating	Collaborating	
Purpose	Exchanging information	Alternating activities	Sharing resources	Enhancing capacity of each agency for common purpose	
Agenda	Improve relationship	Avoid duplication	Divide up new resources, share resources	Develop integrated service system: - Joint decision making - Common forms - Common training	
Example	Attend	Coordinating	Availability of	Joint responsibility	
	meeting	time	resources		

Interventions/activities Implemented

Table 3 shows the different interventions introduced to the participants of the extension program, particularly the parents. The parents' experience piqued their interest in learning about the importance of mental health awareness for their children, as well as acquiring necessary skills and competencies to combat the ever-changing educational setting.

Many institution is familiar with the delivery of an extension program via webinars. As a result, the College of Arts, Sciences, and Technology has also requested that the most recent extension activity be made available to the community via a webinar series. The "Mental Health Awareness" program consists of three activities.

Table 3. Interventions conducted and technologies promoted/services rendered.

Intervention Extended	n	Technologies promoted/services rendered		
Understandi	ng	Understanding Student Stress, Anxiety, and Depression was held on		
Student's	Stress	September 16, 2020, and the discussant was a registered		
Anxiety	and	psychometrician from Lifeline Rehabilitation Center of Indang Cavite.		

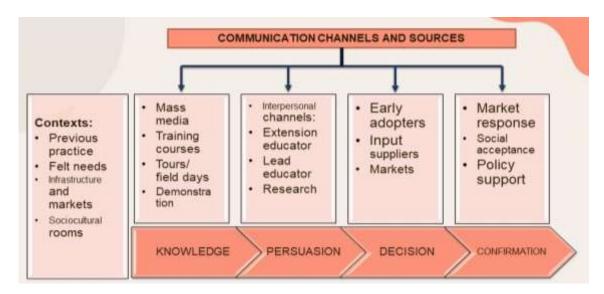
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Depression (SAD)	Understanding people's emotions is a great way to relate to their situations. Understanding students' stress, anxiety, and depression is critical for parents to provide appropriate and attentive care for their children. The speaker provided advice on how to deal with the mental stress that their children are experiencing, as well as the causes and effects of that stress. They presented scenarios to which parents can relate when dealing with their children's stress and anxiety. During the open forum and question-and-answer session, the speaker asked the parents to share their experiences with stress and anxiety management.
Positive Parenting	The next series was held on September 24, 2020, which was about Positive Parenting. The discussion bounded at guiding the children positively through being a positive parent in every activity amidst pandemic. The speaker confidently answered questions raised by parents, which resulted in a good understanding between the speaker and participants. The discussion with the participants is a two-way process, and the interaction is smoothly done while the participants freely share their experiences in handling their children's problems. Nevertheless, the discussion was done comprehensively and proven by the participants' feedback during and after the discussion. Parents must provide adequate care and attention to their children. Parents are responsible for their children's well-being.
Mindfulness of Parents	The last session focused on Mindfulness for Parents. A registered psychometrician and a professional from Lifeline Rehabilitation Center presented the topic. The discussion centered on knowing how to cope with anxieties in order to be aware of everything as a parent. Following the discussion, an open forum was held. The speaker provided useful information on how parents can be mindful of their children's activities. Furthermore, through a variety of examples, provided lectures on the realization of the parent's role. The speaker also provided examples, situations, scenarios, and video presentations of ways for parents to appreciate their role, duties, and responsibilities as parents to their children, particularly during this pandemic. This webinar session educated parents on how to properly engage and interact with their children.

The theory of communication and the innovation-decision process is essential for extension educators to promote the extension activities effectively to the participants. The innovation-decision process involves several steps: an individual passes from first knowledge of an innovation to forming an attitude toward the innovation to a decision to adopt or reject it (Maunder, 1972)(Rogers, n.d.). After accepting the decision, the next step is implementing the new idea and confirmation of the decision.

Figure 2 shows the innovation-decision process model with four main stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, and confirmation. Knowledge is the person involve in decision-making aware of an innovation and gain an understanding of its functions. Persuasion is the person's attitude toward innovation, either favorable or unfavorable of the decision. Finally, while the decision chooses to adopt or reject the innovation, the confirmation is a person who evaluates the results of an innovation.

Figure 02: Model of innovation decision process (Rogers, 2003).



Problems Encountered and Actions Taken

The webinar sessions were the first ever extension programs of the CAST that were conducted through webinar yet, can be called as one of the best experiences for the CAST extension unit and for the extensionist who experienced it for the first time. A good start for more fruitful extension activities and an excellent way to cope with the gap brought by the COVID 19 pandemic.

Technical hitches are part of the learning experiences in the conduct of live webinar sessions. The participants experience audio disturbance and intermittent internet connectivity. The CAST extension coordinator made some adjustments to the schedule of the speakers from Lifeline Rehabilitation center to accommodate the training/s. The final schedule was crafted that suited the availability of both the speakers and the participants. Parents request training engagement with the organizer in providing more fruitful information about parenting. Additional time exposure to have sufficient quality output.

Effectiveness of the Intervention Program

Table 4 reveals the effectiveness of the interventions of the program conducted among participants. The measurement used was the evaluation tool provided by the OMSC-Technical Advisory and Services unit. Evaluation needs to be undertaken after the conduct of the training webinar for extension activities.

Training on Positive Parenting got the highest weighted mean, garnered 4.77, interpreted as highly effective. The respondents appreciated the usefulness and value of the training because it is related to their daily activities and engagement with their children. The training opens an excellent opportunity for parents to reflect on how they engage with their children. The process of relating their management skills and capabilities to understand their children is greatly appreciated.

On the other hand, the training on Mindfulness of Parents acquired the following higher weighted mean, which was 4.75, interpreted as highly effective and the results only expressed the parents' eagerness to handle and dealing with their children properly.

Parents appreciated the scenario provided by the speakers, including the tips on how will their children appreciate their manner of dealing with them. In addition, the activities were helpful for parents in dealing with their children experiencing problems and anxiety with their studies and personal life.

The training on Understanding Student's Stress Anxiety and Depression (SAD) obtained a result of 4.68 which is equivalent to highly effective in dealing with student's stress. The parents relate with the situation expressed by the speakers on the different types of stress, anxiety, and depression currently faced by the students. The overall weighted mean is 4.73 which is corresponds to a highly effective. All the indicators obtained very highly effective results, showing that the program's training contents, designs, and trainers are practical, relevant, and enhance parental skills.

Table 4. Effectiveness of the interventions of the program.

Intervention Program	Mean	Interpretation
Understanding Student's Stress Anxiety and Depression	4.68	Highly Effective
(SAD)		
The program is interesting and engaging	4.69	Highly Effective
The program content was organized and easy to	4.69	Highly Effective
follow		
The program provided information on student's stress anxiety and depression (SAD)	4.70	Highly Effective
The lecturer demonstrated knowledge in the subject matter	4.68	Highly Effective
The training was very timely and relevant	4.62	Highly Effective
I am satisfied with the Training Service Program availed.	4.69	Highly Effective
Positive Parenting	4.77	Highly Effective
The program is interesting and engaging	4.77	Highly Effective
The program content was organized and easy to follow	4.73	Highly Effective
The program provided information on positive parenting	4.81	Highly Effective
The lecturer demonstrated knowledge in the subject matter	4.79	Highly Effective
The training was very timely and relevant	4.73	Highly Effective
I am satisfied with the Training Service Program availed.	4.79	Highly Effective
Mindfulness of Parents	4.75	Highly Effective
The program is interesting and engaging	4.79	Highly Effective
The program content was organized and easy to follow	4.74	Highly Effective
The program provided information on mindfulness of Parents	4.76	Highly Effective
The lecturer demonstrated knowledge in the subject matter	4.77	Highly Effective
The training was very timely and relevant	4.70	Highly Effective
I am satisfied with the Training Service Program availed.	4.76	Highly Effective
Overall Mean	4.73	Highly Effective

Conclusions

It has been proven that parents possess a broad repertoire of knowledge and skills that simply need to be recognized and enhanced in order for their abilities to be improved considerably at a very short period of time. The intervention, approaches introduced to the students such as lecture, discussion, question and answer, and experiential learning were responsive to their needs. The college should be persistent in extending their extension service programs with commitment to share their expertise and abilities to the parents.

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