Howto handle your mental health this school year

50 percent of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14

Philippine Daily Inquirer · 11 Aug 2018 · C1 · By Niña Rodriguez Student correspondent University of Santo Tomas Senior High School

A new school year means new lessons, new classmates and more. But it's also a time to take care of one's mental health.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Health, United States, "50 percent of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, and 75 percent by age 24."

Meanwhile, an ABS-CBN News article, "Mental health of Filipinos" (based on studies by the World Health Organization and the Department of Health) reported that 3.3 million Filipinos suffer from depressive disorders, while another 3.1 million suffer from anxiety disorder.

The same report said that 17 percent of high school students have attempted suicide at least once, 12 percent said they seriously considered attempting suicide, and 11 percent have made plans on how they would commit suicide.

Unaddressed mental health concerns can affect every aspect of a student's life—from his or her performance in school to relationships with classmates and family, to attitudes and behavior.

Thus, it is important to be prepared not only physically, but also emotionally and mentally when going back to school.

Here are some tips on how to take care of your mental health this school year:

1) Learn to rest.

Being a student myself, I know that this can be very difficult, especially when you have a lot of homework or are studying for an exam. But when you have no rest, you won't be able to perform tasks properly. Your brain will have a hard time absorbing and processing information, and you might even suffer from mental block during the test or exams. You also won't have enough energy to finish your homework or do school projects.

Whenever you feel tired, take a break. Take short study breaks. Listen to music, go for a walk, watch videos, take a nap —do anything that relaxes you. Then, when you regain your energy, go back and finish your tasks.

2) Get enough sleep.

I know this, too, can be very difficult, but getting enough sleep is essential and will make you more attentive and active. Lack of sleep can lead to mood changes and lower body resistance, which makes you vulnerable to illness.

Avoid having sleepless nights by not procrastinating. Study for your test a day or two in advance and