

Symposium | Local minority : [Symposium 98] Strengthening mental health support for young people in the Philippines

📅 Sun. Sep 28, 2025 1:10 PM - 2:40 PM JST | Sun. Sep 28, 2025 4:10 AM - 5:40 AM UTC 🏢 Session Room 7 (Conference Room C)

[Symposium 98] Strengthening mental health support for young people in the Philippines

Moderator: Maria Lourdes Rosanna E. De Guzman (University of the Philippines)

[SY-98]

Strengthening mental health support for young people in the Philippines

Maria Lourdes Rosanna E. De Guzman², Hiromi Yamauchi¹, Rose Anelyn Visaya-Ceniza³ (1. Hiroshima University (Japan), 2. University of the Philippines (Philippines), 3. Davao Oriental State University (Philippines))

[SY-98-01]

Empowering School-based Behavioral and Mental Health Program in the Philippines

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[SY-98-02]

Harassment at the University Campuses in Mindanao: What is Happening and How to deal with it

*Hiromi Yamauchi¹ (1. Hiroshima University (Japan))

[SY-98-03]

Catharsis, Healing, and Recovery: Approaches to Helping Sexually Abused Children

*Rose Anelyn Visaya Ceniza¹, Fraulein Bosch Silva² (1. Davao Oriental State University (Philippines), 2. University of Southeastern Philippines (Philippines))

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Keywords : Young people、 School mental health、 Philippines

The formative years of children and young people are unique and a pivotal phase in their development. Physical, emotional, and social changes, including exposure to poverty, sexual abuse, harassment, or violence, can make children and young people vulnerable to mental health problems. Global estimates indicate that mental health conditions affect one in seven (14%) of 10-19-year-olds, yet they often go unrecognized and untreated. In the Philippines, the latest national survey on mental health and well-being revealed alarming statistics: 3 out of 10 adolescents in the age group 12–19 have a mental health problem, with suicide being the third-leading cause of death among youth aged 15–19 years.

The enactment of two significant laws, the Mental Health Act of 2018 and the Universal Health Care of 2019, marked a significant advancement in establishing a comprehensive mental health framework to improve access to mental health services at all levels of care. Since young people under the age of 24 make up almost 40% of the population, the law requires the education sector to integrate mental health through age-appropriate content into curricula at all levels; develop policies and programs to raise awareness about mental health; identify and support young people at risk and establish referral mechanisms; and have mental health professionals included as part of the education workforce. The symposium addresses these challenges of providing mental health and psychosocial support services: emphasizing the importance of protecting children and adolescents from stigma and discrimination, promoting socio-emotional learning and psychological well-being through school mental health initiatives, ensuring access to mental health care for survivors of sexual abuse, and providing guidance and support for addressing harassment in schools, all of which are crucial for their health and well-being.

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[SY-98-01] Empowering School-based Behavioral and Mental Health Program in the Philippines

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Keywords : School based mental health、Mental health of young people、Mental health interventions

The 2021 Philippine National Survey for Mental Health and Well-being estimated that 1 out of 5 (21.5%) of children and adolescents have a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder, which are higher than the reported global prevalence rates (De Guzman, 2021). School-based interventions are crucial for promoting mental health and providing support for developing problems. They are ideal settings in which to deliver mental health interventions, as schools are in position to create a supportive community and environment, which can build young people's sense of worth. This project aims to create a capacity building program for multiple stakeholders (e.g. guidance counselors, school administrators, teachers and parent leaders) focused on promoting mental health and well-being activities, enhancing mental health literacy among stakeholders and providing interventions. Interventions should target risk factors and promote change across home and school environments.

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[SY-98-02] Harassment at the University Campuses in Mindanao: What is Happening and How to deal with it

*Hiromi Yamauchi¹ (1. Hiroshima University (Japan))

Keywords : Harassment、Violence、University Campus、Mindanao、Philippines

Mindanao is known for its cultural diversity and history marked by violence, including armed conflict and drug-related crime. In this region, universities play a crucial role in enlightening and supporting not only their students but also the broader community. While previous research has explored the conflict and violence in Mindanao within the fields of history, politics, culture, and peace, there is a lack of research specifically focused on universities. Research questions are: what kind of violence and harassment issues exist at universities in South and West Mindanao, how are they expressed in the cultural context of the region, and how is the university responding to these issues?

This is a qualitative, hypothesis-generating research based on a pilot study conducted in 2023. The researcher conducted interviews and focus group discussions in March 2025. Participants were faculty, staff, and students involved in preventing and resolving harassment issues on campus, such as guidance counselors, gender focal persons, deans, officers, and student council members.

The research findings are summarized in four key points. The first point addresses violence from outside the university, influenced by armed conflict, inequality, clan feuds, drug issues, and family violence. The second point highlights the influence of family and community. The behavior of victimized students is significantly shaped by norms such as family shame, gender ideology, and victim-blaming. The third point focuses on cyberbullying, reflecting a culture of passive aggression that uses memes as a form of resistance. The fourth point addresses the university's response, including consultation and complaint procedures, as well as connection with off-campus problem-solving processes.

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[SY-98-03] Catharsis, Healing, and Recovery: Approaches to Helping Sexually Abused Children

*Rose Anelyn Visaya Ceniza¹, Fraulein Bosch Silva² (1. Davao Oriental State University (Philippines), 2. University of Southeastern Philippines (Philippines))

Keywords : Psychosocial Support、Filipino Women、Culture-based Therapy

This presentation explores evidence-based and indigenized psychosocial support interventions for 23 sexually abused female survivors, aging 18 to 25, referred by the social workers from different local government units to the Reception Study and Diagnostic Center (RSDC), situated in Davao Oriental, Southeastern Mindanao. It is a government-operated residential care center dedicated to supporting disadvantaged children, women, elderly people and families who have experienced abuse. Its mission is to ease their suffering and offer services that help rebuild and improve their lives. Using documentary analysis, participant observation, focus group discussion and key informant interviews, this research study investigates the impact of various therapeutic strategies on survivors' healing and recovery during their stay in the facility for three months. Findings highlight that cathartic approaches-such as dancing, storytelling, and dramatization are particularly effective in facilitating emotional release and healing. Such therapeutic technique is centered on Filipino Psychology constructs such as "*kapwa*" and "*pakiramdam*" which are translated as shared inner perceptions, emphasizing interconnectedness and collective identity. It balances scientific, humanistic and community-oriented practices and values collective over purely individual experiences. Additionally, music and art therapies contribute significantly to maintaining mental wellness. These interventions are framed within the Filipino cultural context, emphasizing indigenous concepts of healing and resilience. Specifically, it highlights Mindanao culture, language and social practices. Recovery is further supported by integrated services, including family and peer support, education, livelihood training, spiritual guidance, and healthcare, which collectively foster resilience and renewed sense of hope among survivors. This presentation underscores the importance of a strong support system and culturally relevant interventions, aligning with broader evidence that psychosocial support, community involvement, and tailored therapeutic approaches are critical for the recovery and reintegration of female sexual abuse survivors in Mindanao, Philippines.