

**Good News**  
**Department of Labor and Employment**  
**Bureau of Working Conditions**  
**26 September 2021**

**DOLE-BWC upholds mental health in the workplace**

As September is the National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, the Department of Labor and Employment-Bureau of Working Conditions (DOLE-BWC) unceasingly promotes workers' mental well-being through the Workers Organization Development Program (WODP), which took place on 15 September 2021 via Zoom.

Ms. Jennifer Obien, DOLE Senior Labor and Employment Officer, led the webinar discussion on mental health awareness. The lecture focused on the importance of mental health, the salient features of the Republic Act 11036 or the Mental Health Act, and the provisions of the DOLE Department Order 208, Series of 2020 or the Guidelines for the Implementation of Mental Health Workplace Policies and Programs.

Ms. Obien highlighted the rights of Persons with Mental Health conditions, such as the right to be free from discrimination, and access to mental health services at all levels. Also emphasized are the punishable acts as stipulated by the law. It includes discrimination against a person with a mental health condition and administering inhumane, cruel, degrading, or harmful treatment not based on medical or scientific evidence, which upon conviction may be punished by imprisonment, fine, or both, at the discretion of the court.

On the other hand, Ms. Obien also spoke about the duties and responsibilities of the DOLE and the employers as prescribed by law. For DOLE, the department must develop and issue guidelines that promote mental health and provide assistance to employers in developing and implementing workplace mental health programs and policies, while the employers' duties include the provision of the necessary training to OSH personnel and the development of a referral mechanism.

It was estimated that 4.5 million Filipinos were projected to be suffering from depression or any mental health issues. In the context of the pandemic, many, especially the workers, are having mental health-related concerns because of fear and anxiety brought about by the COVID-19 outbreak. Hence, through conducting lectures and webinars, the DOLE-BWC, along with other government offices, continues the work to uphold mental health awareness in the workplaces.

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