

Mental Health in Focus: Chronicles of Social Workers in Preventing and Dealing With Adolescents' Depression

Risty P. Paraiso

Abstract. This study unfurled the experiences and coping strategies of social workers in dealing with and preventing adolescent depression through a qualitative phenomenological study. The participants were ten (10) social workers in Paquibato District in Davao City. They were chosen based on the following criteria: qualified social workers with relevant education and training, possess long-term experience dealing with adolescent depression, have at least five years of experience, and are willing to participate in the study. In the study, three (3) themes have emerged as experiences of social workers in dealing with adolescent depression: social stigma, lack of trained professional mental healthcare providers, and misinformation and misconceptions. Meanwhile, three (3) themes have surfaced as their preventative method: proactive and preventive measures, mental health education awareness programs, and collaborating with families, schools, and communities. Finally, there were also three (3) emerging themes for the insights: fostering a contextually sensitive approach, collaborating with other professionals, and destigmatizing adolescent depression. Mental health is fundamental to overall well-being, affecting individuals, communities, and societies. Recognizing its importance was crucial to building a healthier and more compassionate environment for everyone. The study contributes to their academic arsenal, especially in guidance and counseling. It would be interesting to unfurl the possible factors that have massive effects on their emotion and perceptions, leading to depression.

KEY WORDS

1. mental health 2. adolescent depression 3. social workers 4. counselors

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1. Introduction

In the quiet corners of bustling schools and the serene offices of community centers, social workers stand as unsung heroes, weaving a delicate tapestry of care and understanding for adolescents grappling with depression. Armed with empathy and expertise, they navigate the intricate maze of teenage emotions, academic pressures, and family dynamics. Their approach is holistic, blending counseling with advocacy, ensuring that each young individual feels seen, heard, and supported. Their work is a testament to the profound impact of compassion and professional dedication in transforming the lives of young people facing the daunting challenge of depression. On a global scale, recent studies have highlighted the critical role social work-

ers play in addressing adolescent depression, underscoring their impact through various intervention strategies. A study by McLeod et al. (2021) examined the effectiveness of school-based social work interventions on adolescent depression. The research found that social workers who implemented cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness practices within school settings saw significant reductions in depressive symptoms among students. The study emphasized the importance of integrating mental health services within educational environments, where social workers can provide timely support and foster a sense of safety and stability for adolescents. Another significant study by Turner and Crane (2020) explored the role of community-based social workers in supporting adolescents with depression. This research focused on social workers operating in community health centers and youth organizations, demonstrating that their holistic approach—combining individual therapy, family counseling, and community outreach—resulted in improved mental health outcomes for adolescents. The study highlighted the necessity of accessible, community-oriented mental health services and the unique position of social workers in bridging gaps between various support systems, thereby ensuring comprehensive care for young people facing depression. Additionally, a study by Hernandez et al. (2021) investigated the long-term impact of social worker interventions on adolescents diagnosed with depression. The research followed adolescents over a five-year period and found that those who received consistent support from social workers experienced sustained improvements in their mental health, academic performance, and social relationships. The study also emphasized the value of training social workers in culturally competent practices to address the diverse needs of adolescents from different backgrounds. By doing so, social workers can effectively tailor their interventions, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all adolescents struggling with depression.

On the other hand, Philippine studies on the challenges faced by social workers dealing with adolescent depression reveal a range of systemic and contextual issues that impact their effectiveness. Santos et al., (2019) highlighted the insufficient mental health resources and training available to social workers in the Philippines. The research pointed out that many social workers feel under-prepared to handle the complexities of adolescent depression due to a lack of specialized training and continuing education opportunities. This gap in professional development leaves social workers struggling to provide the most effective support to adolescents in need. Another significant issue identified in Philippine studies was the high caseloads and administrative burdens that social workers face. In a study by Cauilan and Reyes (2022), the authors found that social workers in the Philippines often manage large numbers of cases, which can lead to burnout and reduced quality of care. The study emphasized that heavy workloads hinder social workers' ability to establish meaningful, therapeutic relationships with adolescents, which are crucial for effective intervention. Furthermore, administrative tasks and bureaucratic processes consume a substantial amount of their time, detracting from direct client interactions and holistic care. Cultural stigmas surrounding mental health present another major challenge for social workers in the Philippines. Delos Santos (2021) explored how cultural perceptions of mental illness affect social workers' efforts to support adolescents with depression. The research revealed that stigma and misconceptions about mental health often lead to resistance from both adolescents and their families, making it difficult for social workers to implement effective interventions. The study called for increased public awareness campaigns and culturally sensitive training programs to help social workers navigate these cultural barriers and

advocate for better mental health understanding within communities. In the local setting, Lizada, and Santos (2019) identified a significant gap in specialized mental health training for social workers. This study emphasized that many social workers in Davao City feel inadequately prepared to address the specific needs of adolescents with depression due to limited access to professional development opportunities focused on mental health. This lack of specialized training hampers their ability to provide effective and targeted interventions for adolescents struggling with depression. Despite the growing body of literature on adolescent depression and the role of social workers, significant research gaps remain, particularly regarding the specific strategies and interventions employed by social workers in diverse contexts. Additionally, Turner and Crane (2020) highlight the importance of understanding the long-term impacts of community-based interventions on adolescent mental health. However, there is limited research that comprehensively examines the intersection of these interventions with cultural and socio-economic variables, especially in non-Western contexts like the Philippines. Existing research generally focuses on more urban or generalized settings and frequently lacks the local, cultural, and regional nuances that could have a substantial impact on how social workers approach and treat depression among adolescents in this particular demographic. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive study of this problem, specifically in Paquibato District, Davao City. Such research could provide invaluable insights into the development of more contextually relevant and effective mental health support systems for this vulnerable population. The researcher hopes that this study benefits the identified sectors of the community. This includes guidance counselors, social workers, adolescents, and future researchers. Since adolescents fall into the category of high school students, the study could benefit guidance coun-

selors in getting insights about how to prevent and deal with depression among students. The study could benefit other social workers working in the same field of interest as the basis for designing interventions and strategies in order to enhance and improve the prevention of depression. Everyone can be susceptible to depression, but as the focus of the study, adolescents could benefit from the study by providing insightful information regarding depression and how they can deal with and prevent it. Finally, this would be helpful to future researchers as an additional contribution to their references for future research in the field of mental health care, more especially in dealing with and preventing depression. It can also offer them a substantial contribution to their academic arsenal.

1.1. Purpose of the Study—The purpose of this study was to comprehensively investigate the experiences, practices, challenges, and successes of social workers who play a vital role in the prevention and management of depression among adolescents. By delving into the narratives of these professionals, this research aims to shed light on the strategies, interventions, and support systems they employ, as well as the obstacles they encounter, while working with adolescents facing depression. The study also sought to uncover the unique contextual factors and cultural influences that shape the delivery of mental health services in this specific domain. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute valuable insights that can inform the development of more effective and contextually relevant approaches to address adolescent depression within the realm of social work, with a focus on Paquibato District, Davao City. The primary focus of the data collection was on the real-life experiences of social workers in preventing and dealing with depression among adolescents. The results of this phenomenological study helped us comprehend the struggles of social workers as well as adolescents as they combat depression. The insights collected from

this study have the potential to influence social workers and mental health organizations that aim to foster a healthier environment.

1.2. *Research Questions*—This study intends to explore the real-life experiences of so-

- (1) What are the experiences of social workers in preventing depression among adolescents?
- (2) What are the experiences of social workers in preventing depression among adolescents?
- (3) What guidance and counseling insights can be gained from the findings of the study?

For a more comprehensive understanding, the following terms were described operationally. **Mental Health.** It refers to the state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well, and work well, and contribute to their community (World Health Organization, 2021). **Depression.** It refers to a common but serious mood disorder. It causes severe symptoms that affect how a person feels, thinks, and handles daily activities, such as sleeping, eating, or working (National Institute of Mental Health, 2020).

1.3. *Review of Significant Literature*—

1.3.1. *Preventing and Dealing with Adolescent Depression*—Preventing adolescent depression is a significant concern due to its global prevalence and impact on quality of life. Effective prevention strategies are vital, focusing on early intervention among at-risk individuals and broad application in school settings. Depression in adolescents often leads to poor academic performance, strained relationships, and lower life quality in adulthood. Additionally, untreated depression can escalate to major depressive disorders and an increased risk of suicide in young adulthood. Preventive efforts must target both general populations and high-risk individuals to minimize new cases and mitigate symptoms (Clayborne, Varin, Colman, 2019; Mullen, 2018).

Schools play a crucial role in mental health prevention, given their extensive reach and impact on adolescents. In Australia and other de-

veloped countries, government initiatives have led to the establishment of well-being teams and mental health professionals in schools, recognizing their role in both academic and mental health (Beames et al., 2020; Victorian State Government, 2020). Programs like SEHER in India have shown the efficacy of school-based interventions in reducing depressive symptoms through both universal and targeted strategies (Shinde et al., 2020).

Mindfulness meditation has proven effective in reducing depression, anxiety, and stress by decreasing the tendency to ruminate on fleeting thoughts (Lynch, 2018). Additionally, social support is a significant protective factor for adolescents at risk of depression.

1.3.2. *Addressing Stigma and Professional Shortages*—Social stigma remains a major barrier to mental health care for adolescents, leading to reluctance in seeking help. School-based anti-stigma programs have been effective in reducing negative attitudes and fostering a supportive environment for mental health discussions (Freyhofer et al., 2021). Long-term studies have shown that early stigma reduction efforts can lead to better mental health outcomes and increased help-seeking behaviors in adulthood (Griffiths et al., 2023).

The shortage of trained mental health professionals, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, exacerbates the mental health crisis among adolescents. There is an urgent need for policy interventions to increase training and deployment of mental health professionals (Hoeft,

2018; Patel et al., 2019). Schools often lack adequately trained counselors and social workers, hindering effective support for adolescent depression. Comprehensive training programs and professional development for school-based mental health professionals are essential (Weist et al., 2020). Innovative solutions like telehealth services and collaborative care models are needed to bridge the gap in professional availability (Loades et al., 2021). Training non-specialist health workers can also be an effective approach in resource-limited settings (Kidger et al., 2019).

1.4. Theoretical Lens—The theoretical underpinning of the study was anchored on Aaron Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression (1967, as cited by Gerow and Avny, 2011). The theory rests on the assumption that negative thoughts generated by dysfunctional beliefs are typically the primary cause of depressive symptoms. A direct relationship occurs between the amount and severity of someone's negative thoughts and the severity of their depressive symptoms. In other words, the more negative thoughts you experience, the more depressed you become. The theory consists of the Negative Cognitive Triad, which is the term used to refer to the three main dysfunctional beliefs or schema that occupy the mind of a depressed person. The triad is composed of the following: I am defective or inadequate, all my experiences result in defeat and failures, and the future is hopeless. Meanwhile, as applied in the context of the study, Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression was tailor-fit to the study's point of discussion. Although

everyone can be vulnerable and prone to depression, the adolescents who are the focus of the study also have their share of factors that affect their mental well-being. These are often derived from negative thoughts like the negative cognitive triad presented in the theory. On the other hand, the study was further reinforced by Sigmund Freud's Psychodynamic Theory (1901, as cited by Mitchell and Black, 1995). The Psychodynamic theory, also known as psychoanalytic psychotherapy, helps clients understand their emotions and unconscious patterns of behavior. It also postulated that all behaviors have underlying causes and that both innate, internal processes and the external environment contribute to adult personality. Furthermore, it allows people to acknowledge their emotions and improve interpersonal relationships. With this theory in mind, social workers often work with clients with multiple difficulties, in this study, those who are suffering from depression. Psychodynamic theory in social work provides a conceptual framework for understanding seemingly unrelated symptoms or patterns of behavior. The framework of theories offers social workers a way to address all the client's issues. To synthesize, social workers hope to promote change and improvement in the lives of the people who ask them for help. Being guided by the theories can help adolescents get to the root of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. This provides a chance for self-discovery. Hence, the theory of Beck and Freud captures the focus of this study which is the social workers dealing with adolescents going through tough times.

2. Methodology

This chapter effectively addresses the study's objectives by outlining the systematic procedures and methodologies used in phenomenological research. It also explains the selected research design and my roles as the researcher throughout the study's implementation. Moreover, it offers thorough insights into the research subjects, clarifying their procedures and selection standards. The chapter concludes by exploring the data collection and analysis techniques and the strategies used to uphold ethical standards during the research.

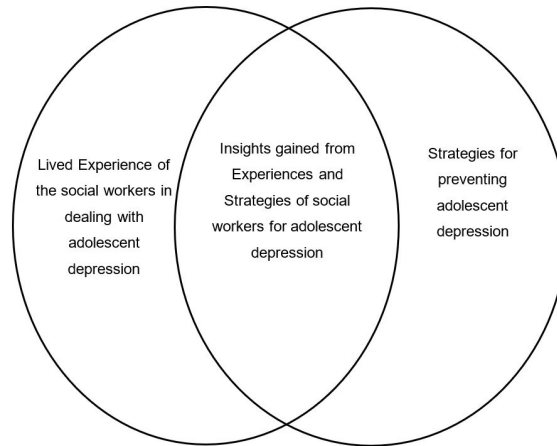


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

2.1. Philosophical Assumptions—A study’s philosophical and qualitative presumptions are vital in steering the investigation. Four fundamental assumptions—ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological—form the bedrock for comprehending qualitative research. These assumptions establish the groundwork for the research design and inform the researcher’s approach to the study. A paradigm is a broad framework or perspective that guides and shapes how researchers approach their studies, formulate research questions, gather data, analyze findings, and interpret results. It encompasses a set of beliefs, assumptions, methodologies, and theoretical foundations that influence how researchers conceptualize and conduct their research (Zukauskas et al., 2018). In this research, the paradigm guided the choice of methodology, methods, and techniques, shaping the overall research process and ensuring coherence in the study. Ontology. This study section focuses on the relationship between the problem and reality. Creswell (2013) asserts that the research participants’ perceptions of reality were varied and subjective. This study recognizes the complexity and diversity of the realities faced by social workers in dealing with adolescent depression. Every social worker’s story adds to a diverse yet collective understanding of their

experiences. It was my sole responsibility to use theme analysis to capture these various realities and provide a thorough picture of the experiences and coping strategies of social workers in dealing with adolescent depression. Axiology. It concerns the influence and importance of my values as a researcher in this study. According to Creswell (2013), acknowledging and openly discussing the researcher’s values that shape the study was crucial. The values that influenced how data were interpreted and presented were explicitly acknowledged in the research process. As a researcher, I handled each participant’s narrative with care and integrity and always respected the information they provided. This commitment guarantees that the experiences of the social workers are communicated truthfully, mirroring both their individual and research values. Methodology. According to Crotty (2020), this was “the strategy, plan of action, process, or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of the methods to the desired outcomes.” Its objectives are to explain, assess, and defend procedures (Wellington, 2015). This study explores the stories of social workers in dealing with adolescent depression using a qualitative methodology. To support the ontological and epistemological tenets, specific techniques like focus groups and interviews were employed,

enabling a thorough and sympathetic examination of participants' stories. These techniques were chosen because they could successfully convey the complexity and depth of the participants' experiences. Rhetoric. In research, rhetoric was the skillful and convincing use of language, communication strategies, and presentation tactics to effectively communicate concepts, claims, and conclusions to sway the audience's opinion and comprehension of the study (Beqiri, 2018). I utilized an engaging and respectful narrative style that honors the participants' voices while effectively communicating the significance of the findings. This method not only makes the research more accessible to read but also guarantees that the interpretations are strong and based on the participants' experiences.

2.2. *Qualitative Assumptions*—Using a phenomenological research methodology, my goal was to explore the lived experiences of social workers in dealing with adolescent depression in Paquibato District, Davao City. My objective was to gather information about their experiences, coping strategies, and insights about the phenomenon I was studying. Utilizing phenomenology as my guiding qualitative framework, I sought to uncover the essence and significance of the roles played by these individuals, emphasizing their unique viewpoints and the intricate details of their experiences. As the study's qualitative researcher, I support a level of investigation beyond cursory observations. My research aims to investigate participants' experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms concerning the phenomenon. I emphasize the significance of understanding the complexities of the human experience in light of the various perspectives shaped by unique contexts, backgrounds, and personal histories (Neubauer et al., 2019). My study strongly emphasizes in-depth interviews, reflective dialogues, and the analysis of participants' narratives to capture the profound and complex nature of adolescent depres-

sion. I hope to contribute a thorough and contextually rich understanding of the challenges, coping strategies, and educational management insights related to adolescent depression while upholding phenomenological principles.

2.3. *Design and Procedure*—Determining the precise approach used in a study was crucial to customize the best research design, data collection strategy, and data analysis approach to the study's objectives. I used a qualitative research design in this investigation. Hammer-sley (2013) states that verbal rather than statistical analysis studies are appropriate for qualitative research. Since I studied the lived experiences, coping strategies, and insights of social workers regarding adolescent depression, the qualitative design was the most appropriate. This means that I describe and elaborate on this phenomenon rather than establishing or refuting theories. However, specialized methods were used in qualitative research, including grounded theory, narrative, case studies, phenomenology, and ethnography. I explored the participants' lived experiences in this setting using a qualitative phenomenological research design. I selected this approach because, according to Asper's (2009) work, the scientific side of phenomenological research focuses on communicating the subjects' viewpoints and the importance of their experiences, then applying scientific concepts to analyze these perspectives. Furthermore, according to Creswell (2018), a phenomenological study is a method of inquiry that describes the participants' complex and collective experiences of a particular phenomenon. A key idea in phenomenology is to reduce one's interpretations of a particular phenomenon to a description that can be applied to all situations. Therefore, my goal was to identify a phenomenon that revolves around the participants' experience of adolescent depression. I collected information from people with direct experience with this phenomenon to create detailed and accurate descriptions.

2.4. Research Participants—Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most perceptions. Obtaining most or all the perceptions leads to the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when more participants are added to the study, which does not result in additional perspectives or information. Glaser and Strauss (2017) recommend the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommends 5 to twenty-five 25. There are no specific rules when determining the appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative sample size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 2002). The participants in this study consisted of 10 social workers from Paquibato District, Davao City. Five participants were for the In-Depth Interview and another five for the Focus Group Discussion. This was done to gain various and diverse responses from the participants regarding the phenomenon being studied. These participants were selected based on specific criteria: qualified social workers with relevant education and training in the field, had long-term experience in preventing and dealing with adolescent depression, had at least five years of experience in dealing with adolescent depression, and were willing to participate in the study. I utilized the universal sampling design so that the participants were chosen based on the criteria or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2013). It was also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling. The selection of the participants was purposefully done to ensure that the findings would be authentic (Marshall, 1996).

2.5. Ethical Considerations—Ethical considerations were crucial because they relate to the moral principles and guidelines that govern my conduct as a researcher. These principles ensure that I carry out my investigations respon-

sibly, treating participants respectfully and striving to generate reliable and precise information. I adhere to established ethical standards in my research practices to protect participants, maintain scientific integrity, and foster trust within the research community (Resnik, 2020). Social value. This concerns the potential benefits and favorable outcomes that research can bring to society, like addressing problems or improving people's quality of life. I evaluate the societal value of my study by acknowledging its potential impact and importance for the larger community. This ensures that resources are directed toward research that has the potential to create significant advantages for society. Informed Consent. This involves obtaining a participant's voluntary agreement to participate in a research study after they have been provided with sufficient information about the study's purpose, methods, potential drawbacks, and benefits. In this research involving students, I ensured the participants fully understood the study and their rights. This dual layer of explanation allowed them to make an informed decision about participation, thereby preserving the students' autonomy and dignity and ensuring parental consent. Vulnerability. The vulnerability of research participants pertains to their increased risk of experiencing harm, exploitation, or coercion due to factors such as age, cognitive ability, or socioeconomic status. As a researcher, I must acknowledge and consider the potential vulnerability of these participants and take appropriate measures to protect them. This involves providing additional safeguards and support, such as obtaining informed consent from the social workers, ensuring confidentiality, and carefully explaining their rights and the study's procedures in a way they can understand. Additionally, I modify research methods to minimize potential adverse effects, ensuring that the well-being of these students is prioritized throughout the study. Risks, benefits, and safety. In research, it was essential to carefully

evaluate the potential risks and benefits associated with participation in a study and implement measures that safeguard the well-being of participants. These elements involve assessing the potential disadvantages and advantages of participating in a study, along with establishing strategies to ensure the welfare of participants. In this investigation, as the researcher, I meticulously assess and balance these factors, ensuring that the potential benefits outweigh the risks. I put adequate precautions in place to minimize harm while optimizing participants' safety, particularly considering student participants' vulnerabilities. This comprehensive approach was crucial to maintaining ethical standards and protecting the participants throughout the research process. Privacy and confidentiality. Privacy and confidentiality in research are about safeguarding participants' personal information and ensuring their identity remains confidential unless they explicitly consent to disclosure. In the context of this study, I am responsible for implementing appropriate protocols to secure participants' data and maintain confidentiality. This includes anonymizing data, securely storing information, and limiting access to authorized personnel only. These measures were crucial to protect student participants' privacy and uphold the research process's integrity. Justice. This concept relates to the equitable allocation of the advantages and disadvantages resulting from research across various segments of society. In this study, I ensured that my research was inclusive, avoiding exploiting or excluding vulnerable groups. Additionally, I strive to make the research's benefits accessible to all who could benefit from it. This approach promotes fairness and equity throughout the research process, ensuring that no group bears an undue burden or is left out of the potential gain from the findings. Transparency. Transparency in research encompasses maintaining integrity at every phase of the study, from its conception and execution to reporting results.

I offer clear and truthful information regarding my research methodologies and outcomes in this study. Furthermore, I am receptive to examination and feedback. Transparency acts as a catalyst for trust, credibility, and accountability within the research community and the public. This commitment to openness ensures that the process and results of my research are accessible and understandable to all stakeholders involved. The qualification of a researcher relates to one's academic background, professional experience, and proficiency in a particular area of study, ensuring that one possesses the requisite abilities and knowledge to conduct the research competently. In this investigation, I hold suitable qualifications that showcase my capability to conduct research, analyze data, and interpret the results. My expertise and training provide the foundation to approach this study with a rigorous scientific method and critical analytical skills, ensuring the integrity and validity of the findings. The adequacy of facilities. This addresses the presence and suitability of the essential resources, tools, and infrastructure required to execute a study efficiently and securely. In this research, I guarantee access to appropriate investigation facilities, such as the GBSCO library. This access facilitates the creation of credible and consistent findings and mitigates potential risks to study participants. Having the proper facilities ensured that the data collection and analysis processes were conducted under conditions that uphold the highest research integrity and safety standards. The study was also subjected to Grammarly and Turnitin. Community involvement. This encompasses the dynamic involvement and active engagement of community members, stakeholders, or the intended study population throughout the research journey, from initial planning to sharing research outcomes. In this study, I engage the community to guarantee the study's relevance, acceptability, and potential impact. Additionally, this involvement fosters trust and

cooperation between me and the community. Engaging with the community not only helps to tailor the research to be more effective and meaningful but also enhances the overall quality and applicability of the results. Plagiarism and fabrication. Researchers should strictly follow principles of academic honesty and integrity. This entails giving proper credit to the work of others, presenting original contributions, and verifying the accuracy and authenticity of data. In this study, I employ tools like plagiarism detectors and maintain thorough documentation of my research procedures to ensure that my work is devoid of plagiarism and that all data and discoveries are authentic and reliable. By upholding these principles, I enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research community.

2.6. Role of the Researcher—As an unbiased research facilitator and promoter, I ensure the research process is conducted fairly, objectively, and without personal bias, prejudice, or influence from outside sources. I created an environment that encourages the open and honest exploration of ideas and promotes fairness in data collection and analysis. This commitment to impartiality helps to uphold the integrity of the research process and ensures that the findings are reliable, and representative of the true phenomena being studied. As an expert in qualitative methods, I am familiar with various qualitative research techniques, such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. I possess the skills and knowledge necessary to design, conduct, and analyze qualitative studies, ensuring that the research question is satisfactorily addressed, and the results are legitimate and dependable. My expertise in these methods allows me to deeply explore complex social phenomena and capture the nuanced experiences of participants, contributing to the validity and reliability of the research findings. As a data collector and keeper, I gather information from various sources, such as interviews or observations, ensuring accurate and secure storage. I

follow ethical guidelines, safeguard participants' privacy, and ensure that data is structured and available for later examination and understanding. This careful management of data helps maintain the integrity of the research process. It supports producing credible, reliable findings that can be reviewed and utilized by others in the academic community. As a data analyst, I analyze the gathered data to discover trends, patterns, and valuable perspectives by the research query. I utilize meticulous qualitative data analysis methods like coding and thematic analysis to extract significant findings and enrich the knowledge base within my discipline. This approach allows me to understand the data deeply, provide relevant insights, and contribute significantly to the field, enhancing scholarly discussions and practical applications related to the study topic. Finally, as an organizer and presenter of data, I am tasked with synthesizing and communicating the research findings concisely and coherently. This entails skillfully conveying the study's objectives, approaches, outcomes, and ramifications through written documents, presentations, or alternative means of transmitting information. I ensure the research results are easily accessible and comprehensible to the designated audience. This approach helps to maximize the impact of the findings, ensuring they are not only shared but also understood and utilized by others in ways that can further knowledge and influence practice in the field.

2.7. Data Collection—This study employed a systematic data collection procedure. Several steps were taken to adhere to the proper data collection procedure, ensuring the data collection's accuracy and objectivity. The following was the step-by-step process of gathering the data needed. I am securing endorsement from the Dean of Graduate School, the School Division Superintendent, and the Principal. To initiate the data collection process, I secure endorsements from key stakeholders, including the Dean of the Graduate School at Rizal Memo-

rial Colleges, the Schools Division Superintendent, the School Principal, and the participants' parents. This process involves submitting formal letters outlining the research objectives and methodology, accompanied by any supporting documents. This crucial step is scheduled to take place within the first week of November 2023, ensuring that all necessary permissions are in place before proceeding with the collection of data. This proactive approach facilitates compliance with ethical standards and fosters a cooperative environment among all parties involved. Asking permission from the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon receiving the endorsement, I request permission from the school's division superintendent. This requires submitting a formal letter detailing the research proposal and its significance to the educational community. Along with the letter, I attached Chapters 1 and 2 of my dissertation and the research instrument, clearly explaining the study's objectives and participant identification process. Moreover, I waited for the response from the Schools Division Superintendent (SDS) before proceeding with the data collection. This step is undertaken during the first two weeks of June 2024, ensuring that all necessary approvals are in place to conduct the research ethically and effectively. Asking for permission from the school heads. Once permission is granted, I sought approval from the school heads of the selected institutions. This step involves submitting formal request letters to each school head, outlining the research's purpose and the expected data collection timeframe. I asked for permission to conduct the study from the third week of June 2024 to the last week of the same month. Obtaining consent from the participants with the school heads' approval, I asked for consent from the research participants through informed consent forms. These forms clearly explain the research purpose, participant rights, and confidentiality measures. This process ensures that the participants are fully informed

and agree to participate. Asking for consent from both the participants and their parents or guardians will be done in the last week of June 2024. Conducting the interview. Upon securing consent from all participants, I scheduled and conducted the interviews using a structured or semi-structured interview guide to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection. The interviews took place in the first two weeks of July 2023. Transcribing the interviewees' responses. Following the interview sessions, I meticulously transcribed the interviewees' remarks, diligently taking account of non-verbal cues and contextually relevant details. This procedure used audio recordings and field notes to capture the breadth of participants' reactions comprehensively. The transcription of interviewee responses was scheduled for the third week of July 2024.

2.8. *Data Analysis*—In this study, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the gathered data. The researcher analyzed the participants' answers from the interviews using Creswell's Model, specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2012), themes in qualitative research are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database. Familiarization with the data was common to all forms of qualitative analysis. The researcher immersed herself in and became intimately familiar with their data, reading and re-reading it and noting any initial analytic observations. Coding was also a common element of many approaches to qualitative analysis, involves generating pithy labels for important features of the data of relevance to the (broad) research question guiding the analysis. Coding was not simply a method of data reduction; it was also an analytic process, so codes capture both a semantic and conceptual reading of the data. The researcher coded every data item and ends this phase by collating all their codes and relevant data extracts. Searching for themes was coherent and meaningful pattern in

the data relevant to the research question. The researcher ended this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme. Reviewing themes. The researcher reflected on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data and began to define the nature of each individual theme, and the relationship between the themes. For these, Thematic Content Analysis was employed by the researcher. Thematic Content Analysis was a descriptive presentation of qualitative data in which a detailed analysis of each theme was made by identifying the 'essence' of each theme and constructing a concise, punchy, and informative name for each theme (Andersen, 2013). In addition, to enhance validity and to create a more in-depth picture of the phenomenon, environmental triangulation was also employed by the researcher. It was a technique to analyze the results of the same study using different methods of data collection. The key was identifying which environmental factors, if any, might influence the information that was received during the study. These environmental factors are changed to see if the findings are the same across the settings (David, 2015). This type of triangulation uses different settings, locations, and other factors such as time, day, season in which the study took place. The idea was to determine which of these factors influence the information received, these factors are then changed to see if the findings are the same. If the findings remain unaltered under varying environmental factors, then validity can be established (Naeem, Saira, 2019). In this study, such triangulation was used considering that the requirement, as mentioned, was the use of environmental triangulation best suited to the environment of the research being conducted. Writing up involves weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualizing it in relation to existing literature.

2.9. *Trustworthiness of the Study*—The trustworthiness of a study is about how reliable, sensible, and authentic the research results are, ensuring that the conclusions are trustworthy and accurate. In qualitative research, factors like credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability are often used to evaluate how reliable the study is. These considerations are further described below, according to Guba (1981). *Credibility*. Building credibility entails proving that the results are accurate. Credibility is important for this study because it evaluates if the results accurately represent the realities and experiences of sophomore students who participate in extra-curricular activities. I converse with the participants for a long time to gain a thorough understanding of their experiences and to increase my credibility. I also use triangulation, gathering information from a variety of sources, including observations, interviews, and maybe questionnaires. To confirm the interpretations, I gave the social workers a preliminary version of the findings as part of member checking. *Transferability*. The degree to which the results of this study can be used in different situations or with different populations is referred to as transferability. While the insights are closely linked to social workers. I gave thorough explanations of the research context and methodology. The study's transferability is increased because this thorough, rich narrative enables others, including educators, school administrators, and researchers, to assess how well the results apply to comparable contexts or populations. *Confirmability*. It deals with the study's objectivity by making sure that the respondents, not my personal prejudices or biases, shaped the findings. I keep a thorough audit trail that details every step of the research process, from data collection to data analysis decisions, to ensure confirmability. This methodological transparency makes it possible for other researchers to evaluate the research's objectivity by following the study's development and

going over the choices made. Dependability. Dependability is proving that the study results are reliable and repeatable in similar situations. Dependability in this study was attained through meticulous documentation of the entire research procedure, including the methods used for data collection and analysis. By ensuring that other researchers can duplicate the study and possibly produce consistent results, such documentation validates the dependability of the research. By following these standards, the research not only offers valid and trustworthy conclusions regarding the effects of extra-curricular activities on sophomore students, but it also offers a framework that researchers and other educators can use to compare similar learning environments. This methodology enhances the study's standing in the academic community and provides insightful information for upcoming studies and instructional design.

2.10. Framework of the Analysis—The analytical framework in phenomenological research is a methodical and structured approach to data analysis, interpretation, and presentation. In this research study, I used Colaizzi's method to analyze data from the interviews and discussions with the participants regarding their lived experiences in dealing with adolescent depression. According to Morrow et al. (2021), Colaizzi's (1978) method features a distinctive seven-step process offering rigorous analysis, closely adhering to the data at each stage. This method culminates in a concise yet comprehensive description of the phenomenon under study, validated by the participants who experienced it. The effectiveness of this approach relies on rich first-person accounts of experiences, which can be collected through various means. Although face-to-face interviews are common, data can also be gathered from written narratives, blogs, research diaries, online interviews, and other forms. This method enables researchers to uncover emergent themes and explore their intricate relationships (Wirihana et al., 2018). Data

Familiarization. By reading and rereading the transcripts several times, I aim to fully understand the meanings conveyed by the participants and gain a global sense of the phenomenon being studied. This thorough review process is crucial for fully grasping the nuances of participants' statements, enabling a deeper analysis of their experiences. Identifying Significant Statements. I carefully identified every statement in the narratives directly related to the phenomenon I was studying. To identify and highlight phrases and descriptions that shed light on the experiences under study, a thorough examination of the gathered data—such as written narratives or transcripts of interviews—must be conducted. This step was essential to ensure that my analysis stayed on topic and provided a solid basis for future thematic development. Formulating Meanings. After carefully examining the critical statements, I determine meanings pertinent to the phenomenon. Although Colaizzi admits that complete bracketing was never possible, I must reflexively "bracket" my presuppositions to stick closely to the phenomenon as experienced. To guarantee that the analysis stays rooted in the participants' actual experiences, this process entails putting aside my interpretations as much as was practical. Clustering Themes. I ensure a rigorous analysis that remains true to the participants' experiences by grouping the identified meanings into themes shared by all accounts. Throughout this process, presuppositions must be bracketed to avoid any possible influence from existing theories. Allowing the themes to naturally arise from the data rather than being influenced by outside forces preserves the integrity of the analysis. Developing an exhaustive description. I incorporate every theme generated in the previous step into a comprehensive and all-encompassing description of the phenomenon I write. By identifying common themes from the participant accounts, this thorough description seeks to convey the essence and complexity of the

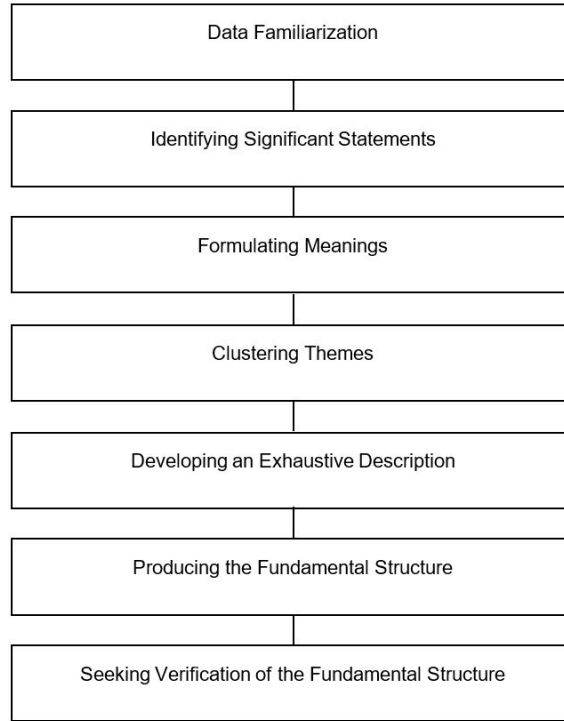


Fig. 2. Analytical Framework of the Study

phenomenon. By taking this step, it was ensured that the final representation presents a comprehensive perspective of each participant’s experiences.

Producing the fundamental structure. I break down the lengthy explanation into a succinct statement highlighting the key elements that I believe were crucial to understanding the phenomenon’s structure. This succinct synthesis effectively and concisely communicates the essence of the participants’ experiences, concentrating on the essential components necessary for comprehending the phenomenon. Seeking verification of the fundamental structure. I ask participants if the fundamental structure statement accurately reflects their experience by returning it to all participants or, in more extensive studies, to a subsample. I might go back and change the earlier stages of the analysis considering their comments. Through this iterative process, the validity and credibility of the findings are increased, and the analysis is firmly based on the participants’ perspectives. Figure 2 illustrates this rigorous process, highlighting each step to comprehensively explain the actions taken to analyze the data.

3. Results and Discussion

This part of the study dealt with the research questions and the answers extracted from the first-hand narratives of the participants. This chapter illuminates the experiences of social workers, coping strategies, and insights pertaining to dealing with adolescent depression. The emerging themes for their lived experiences are social stigma, lack of trained mental healthcare professionals, and misinformation and misconceptions. Meanwhile, the themes unfurled as coping strategies in dealing with adolescent depression are the following: proactive and preventive measures, mental health awareness programs, and collaboration with schools and families. For the insights,

the emerging themes were fostering a contextually sensitive approach, collaborating with other professionals, and destigmatizing adolescent depression.

3.1. Experiences in dealing with adolescent depression—We are in an age where great value and importance is placed upon taking care of our mental health. Now more than ever, we have learned to prioritize our well-being on a whole new different level. The recognition of our mental health comes with the recognition of the different mental health issues that everyone is prone to have. Some are diagnosed appropriately but others are not. The essence of this study was to flip open and discover more about mental health, specifically those adults who are dealing with depression.

3.1.1. Social stigma—In some societies, mental health issues are stigmatized due to entrenched beliefs about self-reliance and emotional resilience. This can result in individuals internalizing feelings of shame and guilt, further hindering their willingness to disclose their struggles or seek professional assistance. Addressing societal norms and fostering open conversations about mental health is essential in dismantling these deeply ingrained stigmas. Participants shared this as one of their experiences in dealing with adolescent depression. The answers of the participants put to light the reasons why people with depression do not ask for help from other people. Society plays a big factor in it. Social stigma instills fear of being judged by an adolescent suffering from depression. IDI1, IDI2, and IDI3 all have shared that their clients exhibit fear of judgment. Meanwhile, IDI4 has stated that they are spreading awareness about it to reduce or eliminate the stigma. In line with that, Pescosolido (2019) highlighted in his study that the social stigma surrounding adolescent depression persists despite growing awareness and understanding of mental health issues. He also mentioned enduring challenges in addressing stigma related to mental illness, including depression among adolescents. Efforts to reduce stigma must encompass education, advocacy, and creating supportive environments to encourage help-seeking behaviors and foster empathy and understanding towards those affected by depression. Social stigma remains one of the most significant barriers to mental health care for adolescents globally. Thornicroft (2019) highlighted that adolescents often fear being labeled or judged negatively by their peers, family, and community, which leads to a reluctance to disclose their struggles or seek professional help. The study calls for comprehensive anti-stigma campaigns and education initiatives to combat these negative perceptions and encourage a more supportive environment for adolescents with depression. Efforts to combat social stigma in adolescent depression require multi-faceted approaches involving education, awareness campaigns, and destigmatization initiatives. Providing accurate information about depression, its prevalence, and effective treatments helps dispel myths and reduce fear and misunderstanding. Collaboration between mental health professionals, schools, communities, and media outlets is crucial in promoting positive attitudes toward mental health, fostering empathy and support, and creating environments where adolescents feel safe and encouraged to seek help for their mental health concerns. The participants in the FGD have also acknowledged the impact society has on adolescents who are suffering from depression. The perception of society about them greatly affects them. FGD6 and FGD8 stated that some people do not really believe in depression, they sometimes treat it as a joke. Meanwhile, FGD7 and R9 expressed how necessary proper education is. Michalak et al. (2019) also indicated that adolescents who perceived high levels of stigma were less likely to adhere to prescribed treatment plans and more likely to experience wors-

ened symptoms. This study underscores the critical need for mental health professionals to address stigma in their treatment approaches, ensuring that adolescents feel safe and supported throughout their recovery process. It also highlights the importance of family and community involvement in reducing stigma and fostering a more accepting attitude toward mental health issues. Moreover, Loades et al. (2020) found that there is a strong emphasis on social harmony and family reputation, which can exacerbate the stigma associated with mental health issues. Adolescents may fear that their condition will bring shame to their families, leading to further isolation and reluctance to seek help. The study recommends culturally sensitive interventions that respect these values while promoting understanding and acceptance of mental health issues. Freyhofer et al. (2021) also focused on the role of schools in addressing stigma. The research found that school-based anti-stigma programs can significantly reduce negative attitudes toward mental health among students. Programs that incorporate education about mental health, encourage open discussions, and involve peer support were particularly effective in changing perceptions and fostering a more inclusive environment. The study suggests that schools are critical settings for early intervention and can play a major role in normalizing mental health issues and promoting help-seeking behaviors among adolescents.

3.1.2. Lack of trained professional mental healthcare providers—Since it was mentioned that mental health has been receiving growing attention now more than ever, the need for trained professionals has grown as well. However, in the interview conducted, the participants shared how they encountered a shortage in terms of trained professional mental healthcare providers who would help those suffering from depression. Participants in the study have shared how the scarcity of mental healthcare providers affects their service. Social workers

can only do certain things; a professional who oversees everything is necessary. However, that is not what is happening in the real world. Parallel to the findings is the statement of Hoeft (2018). In his study, he revealed that the demand for mental health services far exceeds the availability of trained professionals. This shortage is particularly acute in low- and middle-income countries, where resources for mental health are limited. The study emphasized the urgent need for policy interventions to increase the training and deployment of mental health professionals to meet the growing needs of adolescents. In the same light, Patel et al. (2019) found that systemic issues such as inadequate funding, limited training programs, and the lack of integration of mental health services within primary healthcare systems contribute to this shortage. The study suggested that governments and educational institutions must prioritize mental health training and incorporate mental health services into broader healthcare strategies to address the gap. In the FGD, it is realized even more that the lack of mental healthcare providers greatly affects the services and the work that social workers do. They can only do psychological first aid to the person, a trained professional is necessary in order to ensure success and to help the person in every way possible. Adhering to the above-mentioned emerging theme, according to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018, the shortage of trained mental healthcare providers is a global challenge that significantly impedes access to mental health services. There is a substantial gap between the demand for mental health services and the availability of trained professionals, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. This shortage is a critical barrier to achieving mental health parity and addressing the burden of mental disorders on a global scale. Weist et al. (2020) also highlighted that many school counselors and social workers lack specialized training in adolescent depression, which hinders their ability to pro-

vide effective support. The study recommended the implementation of comprehensive training programs for school-based mental health professionals, including ongoing professional development and access to up-to-date resources and best practices. This approach would help ensure that adolescents receive timely and effective mental health care within their school environments. The impact of this professional shortage on treatment outcomes was further explored by Loades et al., (2021). The researchers found that adolescents with depression who have limited access to trained professionals often experience prolonged symptoms and poorer overall mental health outcomes. The study underscored the importance of expanding the mental health workforce and enhancing training to improve the quality of care provided to adolescents. It also highlighted the need for innovative solutions, such as telehealth services and collaborative care models, to bridge the gap in professional availability.

3.1.3. Misinformation and misconceptions—Many individuals may lack awareness of mental health issues, making it difficult to recognize symptoms and seek appropriate help. As an emerging theme under the experiences of social workers, not everyone has an adequate understanding of what mental health or depression entails, making it harder to address it. According to the statements, misinformation, and misconceptions about adolescent depression contribute significantly to stigma and barriers in seeking appropriate mental health support. One common misconception is that depression in adolescents is just a phase or mood swings typical of teenage years, rather than a serious mental health condition. This misunderstanding can lead to trivialization of symptoms by peers, family members, and even healthcare providers, delaying or preventing timely interventions. Similarly, Klineberg et al. (2018) found that many adolescents believed depression was a sign of personal weakness or a temporary mood that

would pass without intervention. Similarly, parents often misinterpreted depressive symptoms as typical teenage angst, leading to delays in seeking professional help. This research underscores the need for widespread education to correct these misconceptions and promote a more accurate understanding of adolescent depression. Reavley and Jorm (2019) also identified social media, peer groups, and even some educational materials as significant contributors to the spread of incorrect information. The study highlighted that misinformation often perpetuated harmful myths, such as the idea that discussing depression could exacerbate symptoms or that medication was the only solution. These findings stress the importance of providing adolescents with reliable, evidence-based information through trusted sources, including schools, healthcare providers, and reputable online platforms. In the same thread of thought, Dawel (2020) investigated the role of digital media in shaping adolescents' perceptions of depression. The research found that while digital platforms can offer valuable resources and support networks, they are also rife with inaccurate and misleading information. Adolescents often encounter conflicting messages about the causes, symptoms, and treatments of depression, which can create confusion and discourage them from seeking professional help. The study called for improved regulation of online content related to mental health and the development of reliable digital resources to ensure adolescents receive accurate information. From the statements, recognizing that depression can affect people of all ages, including adolescents, and that it is not a sign of weakness or personal failure, helps reduce stigma and encourages individuals to seek help from mental health professionals. This comprehensive understanding of depression promotes empathy, support, and appropriate interventions tailored to the unique needs of individuals experiencing depression. The WHO (2019) also mentioned that a significant challenge in

addressing mental health issues is the pervasive lack of awareness and understanding surrounding mental health conditions. Stigma often arises from misinformation and misconceptions, deterring individuals from seeking help and perpetuating a culture of silence. The World Health Organization (WHO) also recognizes the detrimental impact of stigma on mental health, emphasizing the urgent need for awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and promote a more accurate understanding of mental health. In the same vein, Maravilla and Tan (2021) also examined how cultural beliefs and practices influence the understanding and treatment of depression in diverse communities. It found out that in some cultures, mental health issues are often stigmatized or attributed to supernatural causes, leading to reliance on non-medical interventions and a reluctance to seek professional care. The study highlighted the need for culturally sensitive educational initiatives that respect cultural beliefs while promoting accurate information about adolescent depression and available treatments (Maravilla and Tan, 2021). Parallel with the responses is the findings of Barry et al. (2020). They assessed the long-term effects of misinformation on adolescents' mental health outcomes. They found that adolescents who held misconceptions about depression were less likely to adhere to treatment plans and more likely to experience persistent or wors-

ening symptoms. The study emphasized the critical role of accurate information in improving treatment adherence and overall mental health outcomes. It recommended targeted educational programs for adolescents, parents, and educators to dispel myths and provide clear, evidence-based guidance on recognizing and managing depression. This research underscores the importance of combating misinformation to ensure that adolescents receive the support and care they need. Addressing the lack of awareness of mental health requires multifaceted efforts, including public education campaigns, community outreach, and culturally competent initiatives. By fostering a better-informed society, individuals are more likely to recognize the importance of mental health, seek timely assistance, and contribute to reducing the overall burden of mental health issues. All the emerging themes under the first research question rest on the Psychodynamic Theory of Sigmund Freud (1901, as cited from Mitchell and Black, 1995). External experiences play a huge part in the experiences of adolescents with depression as shared from the lenses of the social workers. In the theory Freud, he postulated that all behaviors have underlying causes. It could be innate, external, or both. He also added that the external environment contributes greatly to the emotions and patterns of behavior of adolescents.

Figure 3 shows the experiences in dealing with adolescent depression, and the three themes emerge, social stigma, misinformation, and misconception, and Lack of trained professional mental healthcare providers.

3.2. Dealing with Adolescent Depression— Preventing adolescent depression requires a multifaceted approach. It includes but is not limited to creating supportive environments, implementing mental health education, building resilience, and ensuring access to professional

support. The second research question is focused is finding out what social workers employ in order to mitigate depression and its effect on adolescents.

3.2.1. Proactive and preventive measures— Proactive and preventative measures are essential in dealing with adolescents with depression by ensuring early identification, reducing stigma, equipping adolescents with coping skills, and addressing risk factors. These measures not only enhance immediate mental

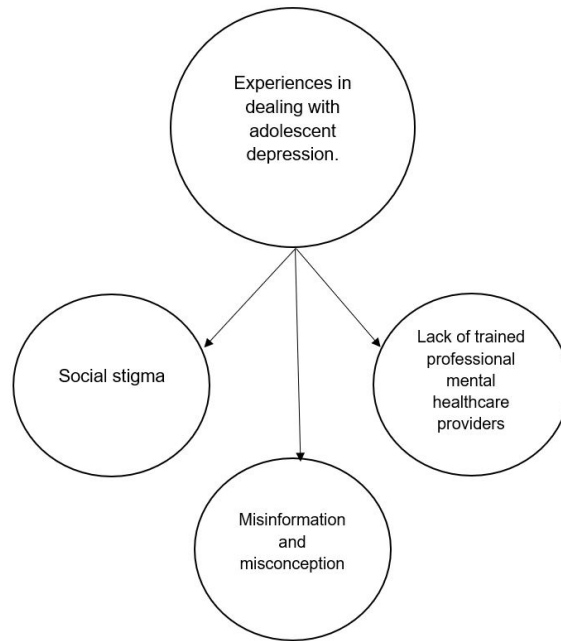


Fig. 3. Experiences in dealing with adolescent depression

health outcomes but also lay the foundation for healthier development and well-being throughout adolescence and into adulthood. Participants have shared in the interview that employing proactive and preventive measures is one of their employed strategies in order to prevent depression. According to them, proactive and preventive measures for depression are essential in promoting mental well-being and reducing the incidence and severity of depressive episodes. These measures encompass a range of strategies targeting different levels of prevention, including universal, selective, and indicated prevention approaches. Consistent with the findings is the study of O'Connor (2018). The author explored the effectiveness of school-based prevention programs designed to mitigate the onset of depressive symptoms. The researchers found that programs incorporating cognitive-behavioral techniques, social skills training, and resilience-building activities significantly reduced the incidence of depression among participants. This study underscores the potential of early intervention in educational settings to foster mental well-being and prevent the development of depressive disorders. Addi-

tionally, Werner-Seidler (2019) reviewed digital interventions aimed at preventing adolescent depression. The research highlighted the effectiveness of online cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) programs and mobile apps that provide psychoeducation and self-help tools. These digital platforms were found to be particularly beneficial in reaching adolescents who might not otherwise seek help due to stigma or accessibility issues. The study advocated for the integration of digital mental health resources into broader preventive strategies, given their scalability and appeal to tech-savvy youth. In the same vein, proactive and preventative measures are mentioned by the National Institute of Mental Health (2019) as crucial in addressing adolescents with depression due to the significant impact on their well-being and long-term outcomes. Firstly, active intervention helps in early identification and timely treatment of depression. Adolescents often face unique challenges, and early recognition allows for prompt support, reducing the risk of prolonged suffering and the development of more severe mental health issues. The World Health Organization (2018) also adhered to the statement. Preventa-

tive measures, such as mental health education and awareness programs in schools, play a pivotal role in creating a supportive environment. These initiatives can contribute to reducing the stigma associated with mental health, fostering open conversations, and providing adolescents with tools to recognize and manage their mental well-being. By integrating mental health education into school curricula, we can create a proactive approach that equips adolescents with coping mechanisms and resilience. Similarly, Beames et al. (2020) noted an increasing number of schools are adopting a proactive and preventive stance in addressing student well-being. Given that young individuals spend a considerable portion of their waking hours in school, the impact and reach of school-based delivery of prevention programs are substantial. Concurrently, there is a growing acknowledgment among school administrators and educators that schools play a pivotal role not only in academic learning and achievement but also in prioritizing student well-being and mental health concerns. They cited Australia as an example. According to them, there has been a directive from governments and policymakers advocating for the establishment of well-being teams and the presence of mental health professionals in all schools, responding to the escalating levels of mental illness in young people. Similar governmental initiatives have been proposed in other developed countries. Consequently, schools have effectively emerged as frontline settings for both the prevention and treatment of mental health problems in children and adolescents.

3.2.2. Mental health education and awareness programs—As mentioned, mental health issues like depression cannot be seen in plain sight. It is rooted deep in someone's emotions. However, it can be prevented and minimized if not mitigated. As shared by the participants, since the age group of adolescents falls under high school students, it is climactic to inte-

grate mental health and awareness programs in schools. From the statements given by the participants, it can be inferred that mental health awareness programs focused on depression play a crucial role in promoting understanding, reducing stigma, and encouraging help-seeking behaviors among individuals affected by depression. These programs aim to educate the public about the signs and symptoms of depression, risk factors, available treatments, and strategies for maintaining good mental health. By providing accurate information and dispelling myths and misconceptions surrounding depression, these programs empower individuals to recognize when they or someone they know may be experiencing depression and to seek appropriate support from mental health professionals. Yamaguchi et al. (2018) also demonstrated that students who participated in these awareness programs showed a significant increase in their knowledge about depression, its symptoms, and the importance of seeking help. This study highlights the critical role of educational institutions in raising awareness and equipping students with the necessary information to recognize and address mental health issues. Patalay and Giese (2019) inferred the same findings in their study. Their study found that students who underwent mental health education were more likely to seek help for depressive symptoms and report a more positive attitude towards mental health services even years after the intervention. This suggests that mental health awareness programs not only provide immediate benefits but also have a lasting impact on adolescents' approach to mental health. The study recommends integrating these programs into the regular school curriculum to ensure sustained benefits. Based on the statement, spreading awareness about adolescent depression is crucial in ensuring early detection, intervention, and support for affected individuals. Educational campaigns targeted at parents, educators, healthcare providers, and adolescents themselves can help dispel myths

and misconceptions surrounding depression, reduce stigma, and encourage open conversations about mental health. Kutcher et al. (2020) highlighted that when teachers are adequately trained to facilitate these programs, there is a significant improvement in students' mental health literacy and a reduction in stigma associated with depression. The study emphasized the importance of providing teachers with the necessary training and resources to effectively deliver mental health education, suggesting that this approach can maximize the reach and impact of awareness programs. The effectiveness of community-based mental health awareness initiatives was also the subject of Arango et al. (2021). They evaluated programs that engaged community leaders, parents, and adolescents in workshops and activities designed to increase awareness and reduce stigma around adolescent depression. The study found that these programs not only improved knowledge and attitudes but also strengthened community support networks, making it easier for adolescents to seek and receive help. The findings highlight the value of involving the broader community in mental health awareness efforts to create a supportive environment for adolescents. Moreover, Wei and Hayden (2022) assessed the impact of digital mental health awareness programs targeting adolescents. The research demonstrated that online platforms and mobile applications could effectively disseminate information about depression, promote mental health literacy, and encourage help-seeking behaviors among adolescents. The study found that digital programs were particularly effective in reaching adolescents who might be hesitant to participate in face-to-face interventions due to stigma or accessibility issues. This underscores the potential of leveraging technology to enhance the reach and effectiveness of mental health awareness initiatives, ensuring that more adolescents receive the information and support they need. Ahn and Choi (2020) added that digital plat-

forms and social media play a significant role in amplifying awareness efforts. Leveraging these channels helps reach diverse demographics and encourages open discussions about depression. However, it's important to ensure that online content is accurate and aligns with mental health best practices to avoid perpetuating misinformation. Overall, a multifaceted approach involving schools, communities, and digital platforms is crucial for effective awareness and education about depression, contributing to a more supportive and informed society.

3.2.3. Collaborating with families, schools, and communities—It was said that collective effort creates significant alteration in how people in a community address adolescent depression. As one of the way social workers deals with adolescent depression, they are collaborating with different bodies and the immediate environment of a people in order to create a significant change. The participants' statements mentioned above express the importance of proper information dissemination. However, to extend their reach, they require help from different organizations. This may include, but is not limited to, families, communities, and schools. This is supported by the study of Miklowitz and Goldstein (2020). Their study rested on the idea that collaborating with families is a crucial aspect of effectively addressing adolescent depression. Social workers engage with parents and caregivers to provide psychoeducation about depression, its symptoms, and treatment options. By enhancing their understanding of depression, families can recognize warning signs early, provide emotional support, and encourage their adolescents to seek professional help. They also emphasize the positive impact of family involvement in improving treatment outcomes for depressed adolescents. Moreover, social workers work collaboratively with families to create a supportive and nurturing home environment. This may involve developing effective communication

strategies within the family, setting appropriate boundaries, and fostering positive coping mechanisms for managing stress and emotional challenges. By strengthening family relationships and promoting resilience, social workers contribute to a holistic approach to addressing adolescent depression that extends beyond individual therapy sessions and encompasses the broader familial and social context. Meanwhile, Jaycox (2019) expressed the importance of the collaboration of social workers and the schools. In her study, it is significant that social workers partner with school counselors, teachers, and administrators to create a supportive and inclusive school environment that promotes mental health and well-being. This collaboration involves implementing mental health awareness programs, anti-bullying initiatives, and providing training to school staff on recognizing signs of depression and supporting students in distress. It underscores the importance of school-based initiatives in addressing mental health concerns among adolescents. Similarly, participants in the FGD and IDI have shared the same perception in dealing with adolescent depression. They have emphasized the importance of having connections with different bodies in order to create a greater impact and come up with solutions that will tackle the problem. The participants stated that social workers advocate for and facilitate access to mental health services within the school setting. They work to integrate mental health screenings, counseling services, and referrals to community resources seamlessly into the school's support systems. By reducing barriers to mental health care and promoting early intervention, social workers contribute significantly to improving outcomes for adolescents struggling with depression in the school context, fostering a culture of wellness and resilience among students. Roth (2020) further supports the theme. Collaborating with schools is essential in addressing adolescent depression comprehensively. Social workers

work closely with school counselors, teachers, and administrators to identify at-risk students and provide timely interventions. This collaboration includes implementing evidence-based programs such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or mindfulness-based interventions within the school setting. These interventions aim to equip students with coping skills, resilience, and emotional regulation strategies, thus reducing depressive symptoms and improving overall well-being. Additionally, social workers advocate for mental health awareness and destigmatization initiatives in schools. By promoting open discussions about mental health, conducting awareness campaigns, and providing psychoeducation to students, teachers, and parents, social workers help create a supportive and understanding school environment. This aligns with the findings of the study by Kellie R. Lynch et al. in "Mental Health Promotion in Schools: A Systematic Review" (2019), which emphasizes the positive impact of school-based mental health promotion efforts on students' mental well-being and academic success. Collaboration between social workers and schools is crucial in early intervention and fostering a culture of mental wellness among adolescents. The abovementioned narratives shared by the participants, who are the social workers, are in line with the idea postulated by the Sigmund Freudian psychodynamic Theory (1901, as cited from Mitchell and Black, 1995). Psychodynamic theory in social work provides the conceptual framework for understanding symptoms or behavior patterns. The framework of theories offers social workers a way to address all of the client's issues with depression. Figure 4 shows the coping mechanisms for dealing with depression in adolescents, and the three themes emerge proactive and preventive measures, collaborating with families, schools, and communities, and Mental health education and awareness programs.

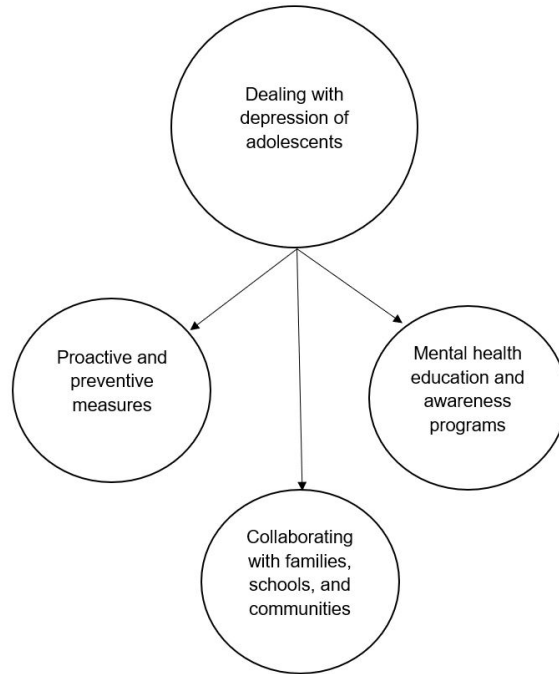


Fig. 4. Dealing with Adolescent Depression

3.3. *Educational Insights Drawn from the Study*—Effective guidance and counseling for adolescent depression require building trust, staying informed about adolescent mental health, employing a strengths-based approach, collaborating with relevant stakeholders, and incorporating preventive measures through education programs. A holistic and collaborative approach enhances the counselor’s ability to support adolescents in navigating the challenges of depression and promoting their overall well-being. The third research question focuses on unfurling various insights pertaining to the experiences of social workers in dealing with adolescent depression.

3.3.1. *Fostering contextually sensitive approach*—As a social worker, it is important to take note of the person’s background, upbringing, culture, family, financial situation, and many more. This data or information should be taken into consideration in order to employ and extend appropriate help. People also have different perceptions of what mental health is, thus it is important to understand the context of the situation. Participants have shared how pivotal this

information is because it enables them to offer help as much as they can. According to them, fostering a culturally sensitive approach to depression involves understanding and respecting the cultural beliefs, values, norms, and practices of diverse populations when providing mental health care. This approach acknowledges that cultural factors can significantly influence how individuals perceive and experience depression, seek help, and engage in treatment. Mental health professionals, including social workers, should strive to develop cultural competence by gaining knowledge about different cultural backgrounds, engaging in self-reflection, and seeking supervision and training in culturally responsive practices. Betancourt (2018) emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive interventions in low- and middle-income countries. He found that mental health programs tailored to the cultural, social, and economic contexts of adolescents significantly improved engagement and outcomes. This study highlights the need for mental health professionals to consider local beliefs, practices, and resources when designing and implementing interventions for adolescent

depression. On the other hand, Chu, and Sue (2019) also discovered that adolescents who received culturally tailored CBT reported greater reductions in depressive symptoms compared to those who received standard CBT. This research underscores the effectiveness of adapting therapeutic approaches to align with the cultural values and communication styles of adolescents, thereby enhancing the relevance and impact of the treatment. Based on the statements, providing culturally responsive interventions involves collaborating with culturally relevant community resources, traditional healers, religious or spiritual leaders, and linguistic interpreters when necessary. It also entails adapting therapeutic techniques, psychoeducation materials, and treatment plans to align with clients' cultural beliefs, values, and healing practices. By fostering trust, mutual respect, and inclusivity in the therapeutic relationship, mental health professionals can create a safe and supportive environment where individuals feel understood, empowered, and more likely to engage in effective treatment for depression within their cultural context. According to Rigby and Cox (2018), school and peer environments are integral to an adolescent's context. A contextually sensitive approach involves collaborating with educators, school counselors, and peers to create a supportive atmosphere. School-based interventions can include anti-bullying programs, mental health education, and fostering a positive school culture. Recognizing the impact of school dynamics on adolescent mental health ensures a more comprehensive and effective response to depression. In the same vein, Platonova et al. (2022) emphasized collaboration with community members, including adolescents, parents, and local leaders, to co-create programs that address the specific mental health needs of the community. The findings indicated that CBPR approaches not only increased the acceptability and effectiveness of the interventions but also empowered communities to take

an active role in promoting adolescent mental health. This study highlights the value of engaging communities in designing and implementing mental health programs. Kim (2021) also highlighted the significance of socioeconomic factors in shaping adolescent depression interventions. He found that interventions incorporating support for socioeconomic challenges, such as providing access to educational resources and addressing food insecurity, were more effective in reducing depressive symptoms. This study suggests that addressing the broader social determinants of health is crucial for successful mental health interventions for adolescents. Furthermore, Patalay et al. (2020) focused on the importance of considering gender and sexual identity in mental health interventions for adolescents. The researchers found that LGBTQ+ adolescents faced unique stressors and higher rates of depression compared to their heterosexual peers. Interventions that were inclusive of and sensitive to the experiences of LGBTQ+ adolescents, such as providing safe spaces and tailored support groups, significantly improved mental health outcomes. This research underscores the need for mental health programs to be inclusive and responsive to the diverse identities and experiences of adolescents, ensuring that all young people receive the support they need. In essence, a contextually sensitive approach in dealing with adolescent depression recognizes the diversity of experiences and tailors interventions to the specific cultural, socio-economic, and relational contexts of each individual. It emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting the unique circumstances that shape an adolescent's mental health journey.

3.3.2. *Collaborating with other professionals*—Collaboration among professionals ensures a holistic and well-coordinated approach to adolescent depression. By bringing together diverse expertise, interventions can be tailored to the specific needs of the adolescent, addressing biological, psychological, social, and aca-

demic aspects of their well-being. Participants have shared that they value interconnectedness among professionals who are also working in the same field in order to broaden the help that they can offer. According to them, collaborating with other professionals is crucial in addressing depression comprehensively and providing holistic care to individuals. Mental health professionals such as social workers often collaborate with psychiatrists, psychologists, primary care physicians, counselors, and other healthcare providers to develop comprehensive treatment plans tailored to each individual's needs. This collaborative approach allows for a multidisciplinary perspective, combining medical, psychological, and social interventions to address the complex factors contributing to depression. In the same light, Jones et al. (2018) found that adolescents receiving care through these integrated models experienced better mental health outcomes and higher satisfaction with their treatment. This study underscores the importance of coordinated efforts among various professionals to provide holistic care for adolescents. Meanwhile, Herrman et al. (2019) indicated that such collaborative approaches led to earlier identification of depressive symptoms and more effective, personalized treatment plans. The study advocates for the establishment of early intervention teams to improve the detection and management of adolescent depression, thereby enhancing long-term outcomes. From the narratives shared by the participants, collaborating with primary care physicians helps ensure coordinated care and early identification of depression symptoms, especially in primary care settings where individuals may first seek help. Social workers also collaborate with community resources such as support groups, vocational services, housing agencies, and substance abuse programs to address social determinants of health and promote overall well-being. By working collaboratively with a range of professionals and services, social workers

can provide comprehensive, holistic care that addresses the biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors contributing to depression and supports individuals in their journey toward recovery and wellness. The theme is also prevalent in the study of Weist et al. (2019). They investigated the effectiveness of collaborative care models that integrate mental health services within pediatric primary care settings. The researchers found that when pediatricians worked closely with mental health professionals, such as child psychologists and social workers, they were better equipped to identify and manage depression in adolescents. This collaboration facilitated the delivery of comprehensive care that addressed physical and mental health needs, leading to improved adolescent outcomes. The study recommends expanding collaborative care models to enhance the accessibility and quality of mental health services for young people. Also parallel to the emerging theme is Habbab et al. (2020). They focused on the benefits of interprofessional education (IPE) for healthcare providers working with adolescents with depression. The study found that IPE programs, which bring together professionals from different disciplines to learn about collaborative care, significantly improved participants' confidence, and competence in managing adolescent depression. The researchers noted that healthcare providers who participated in IPE were more likely to engage in effective teamwork and communication, ultimately leading to better patient outcomes. This study underscores the importance of interprofessional education in preparing healthcare providers to deliver integrated, collaborative care for adolescents with depression. Furthermore, in the case of collaborating with mental health professionals, the American Academy of Child, and Adolescent Psychiatry (2018), adhered to the emerging theme. They postulated that collaborating with mental health professionals such as psychologists and psychiatrists is essential

for providing specialized interventions. Multi-disciplinary teams can offer a range of therapeutic approaches, from counseling to medication management, when necessary. Interdisciplinary collaboration is highlighted as a key factor in providing comprehensive mental health care for adolescents. Finally, involving family therapists and social workers can address family dynamics and provide support at the systemic level. Family therapy is recognized as an effective intervention for adolescent depression, emphasizing the importance of family involvement in treatment. Social workers contribute to addressing social and environmental factors influencing the adolescent's mental health (Roberts Green, 2018).

3.3.3. Destigmatizing adolescent depression—There is no doubt that depression or depressed individuals are surrounded by a negative connotation in our society. People tend to have negative opinions about them and oftentimes undermine their emotions. Instead of offering them help and support, people are continually judging them. As an insight into the study, participants have shared how they are trying to shift people's perception of depression, in this case, among adolescents. The participants included in the IDI have shared their statements about how society perceives depression. R2 has shared that it is important to tap into different bodies that could contribute to destigmatizing adolescent depression. It should be addressed as a collective problem and be addressed collectively to achieve desirable results. Meanwhile, R4 and R5 expressed how people in society stigmatize those who are suffering from depression. This may lead to them hiding and not asking for help because of the fear of being judged and misunderstood. This also aligns with the findings of the study conducted by Pescosolido (2019). She expressed that advocacy efforts are also essential in challenging societal attitudes and policies that contribute to the stigma surrounding adolescent depression.

Mental health professionals, advocacy organizations, and community leaders can collaborate to raise awareness about the prevalence of mental health issues among adolescents and the importance of accessible and stigma-free mental health services. She also highlights the role of advocacy in reducing stigma and promoting positive attitudes towards mental health. Sharing the same idea, Thornicroft et al. (2018) examined the effects of anti-stigma campaigns on adolescents' attitudes toward depression. The researchers found that campaigns featuring testimonials from peers and mental health education significantly reduced stigma and increased the willingness of adolescents to seek help. This study underscores the effectiveness of public awareness initiatives in changing perceptions and reducing the stigma associated with depression among young people. Corroborating the above assertion, Pylvanainen et al. (2020) explored the impact of school-based mental health education programs on reducing stigma. The research demonstrated that incorporating mental health literacy into school curriculums led to improved understanding and reduced negative attitudes toward depression. Students who participated in these programs were more likely to recognize symptoms of depression in themselves and others and were more supportive of peers seeking help. This study highlights the crucial role of education in fostering a more accepting and supportive school environment. Creating supportive environments involves fostering open dialogue and providing safe spaces for adolescents to discuss their mental health concerns without fear of judgment or discrimination. Community initiatives such as peer support groups, mental health awareness campaigns, and anti-stigma events can help normalize conversations about depression and encourage help-seeking behaviors. By promoting positive messaging, emphasizing resilience, and showcasing stories of recovery, communities can combat stigma and promote a culture of

acceptance and support for adolescents struggling with depression. The statements above adhere to the theme of the destigmatization of adolescent depression. The participants have emphasized the importance of proper education and information about depression. R6 stated that if proper education is spread, more people who need help would come out and there would be greater access to mental health care. It is in line with the statement of R10 who also added that people who lack the proper understanding would not fully comprehend the situation of adolescents with depression. However, if one develops an adequate understanding of it, it will be addressed properly, and more help will be offered. Destigmatizing adolescent depression requires ongoing collaboration between stakeholders, including mental health professionals, educators, families, policymakers, and the media. Dawel et al. (2021) investigated the role of social media in destigmatizing adolescent depression. The researchers found that online platforms could serve as powerful tools for spreading accurate information and personal stories about living with depression. Adolescents who engaged with mental health content on social media reported feeling less isolated and more empowered to seek help. The study called for the creation and dissemination of positive, stigma-reducing content on popular social media platforms to reach a broader audience of young people. The importance of peer support in destigmatizing depression was also emphasized by Freyhofer et al. (2021). The study evaluated peer-led support groups and their impact on students' attitudes toward depression. The findings revealed that adolescents who participated in these groups experienced a significant reduction in stigma and were more likely to discuss mental health issues openly. The peer support model helped normalize con-

versations about depression and provided a safe space for students to share their experiences. This research supports the implementation of peer support initiatives as a key strategy in reducing stigma. Additionally, social workers engage in advocacy efforts to challenge societal attitudes and promote policies that prioritize mental health support. They collaborate with mental health organizations, community leaders, and policymakers to advocate for increased access to mental health services, funding for prevention and intervention programs, and initiatives aimed at destigmatizing mental illness. By amplifying the voices of adolescents and families affected by depression, social workers contribute to shifting public perceptions and fostering a more supportive and understanding environment. Studies such as "Stigma, Role of the Social and Behavioral Sciences in Combating Stigma and Promoting Mental Health" by B. Pescosolido and colleagues (2019) highlight the importance of advocacy in combating stigma and promoting positive attitudes towards mental health. The emerging themes under the insights rest on the Cognitive Theory of Depression by Beck (1967, as cited from Gerow and Avny, 2011). The theory stipulated the primary causes of depressive symptoms. A direct number of thoughts and severity of their depressive symptoms and negative thoughts generated by dysfunctional beliefs. The theory serves as a basis for social workers in implementing psychological first aid and psychoeducation. Meanwhile, the Psychodynamic Theory of Freud (1901) provides a framework for social workers to address all of the issues concerning adolescent depression. Figure 5 shows that educational Management insights can be drawn, and the three themes emerge: fostering a contextually sensitive approach, Destigmatizing adolescent depression, and collaborating with other professionals.

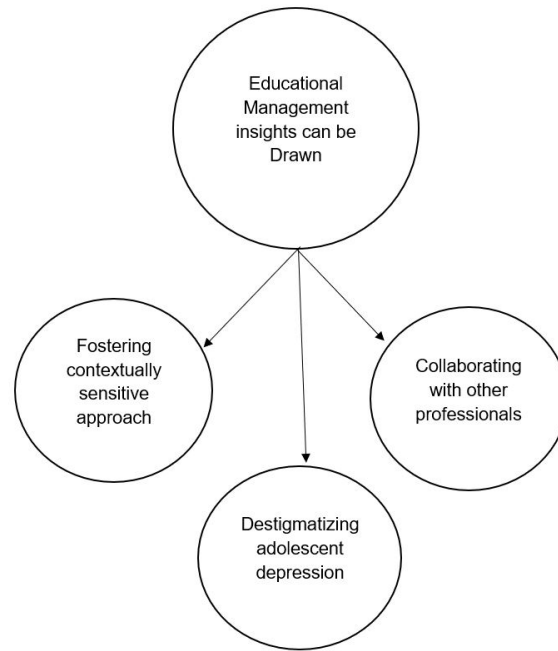


Fig. 5. Guidance and counselling insights

4. Implications and Future Directions

This chapter presents the study’s summary. From the summary of the findings, I drew the implications and future directions. The purpose of my study was to learn about social workers’ experiences in dealing with adolescent depression and gain insights that would help in providing guidance and counseling. In connection with that, I have utilized a qualitative phenomenological method with thematic analysis to ensure the achievement of the research objectives. This is done with an adherence to Cresswell’s (2006) guidelines in which open-ended interview questions were applied to get an authentic understanding of people’s experiences. Furthermore, through this interview approach, I encouraged my participants to fully and openly discuss their own definition or meaning of the phenomenon being explored which were the narratives of social workers pertaining to dealing with adolescent depression.

4.1. Findings—In light of the distinctive and authentic perceptions and experiences of the social workers, three (3) emerging themes have been formulated from the interview. The first one is the presence of social stigma. It is not undeniable that not everyone has gained an adequate understanding of what mental health is. Also, not everyone has the same perception towards people with depression. The interview has revealed that this surrounding social stigma has affected people with depression because they feel judged or misunderstood by society. The second theme for the first research is the lack of trained professional mental healthcare providers. As an experience of social workers, not every community has access to mental healthcare, more on trained professionals. They have also expressed how essential it is to have an expert in the field that would help in mitigating the negative effect of depression among adolescents. The third and last theme for the first research question is misinformation and misconceptions. As stated, there is a stigma surrounding people with mental health issues or people with depression. People have different assumptions regarding them. They also do not

receive appropriate information about mental health. Hence, it was emphasized by the social workers that people should be educated on what it is all about so that people who are suffering would not hesitate to seek professional help. Meanwhile, the second research question focuses on how social workers are preventing adolescent depression. Three (3) emerging themes have surfaced from the interview conducted. The first one is through proactive and preventive measures. They have stated that if someone is showing early signs and symptoms of having depression, it should be immediately mitigated to prevent further harm to the person. However, it is difficult to see depression because it is deeply rooted beyond the surface, it is not visible. The second theme is spreading education regarding mental health and conducting awareness programs. According to them, they have approached different stakeholders, especially the school. This is in order to conduct or spread awareness and education about mental health among today's high school students or adolescents. They also establish connections with the local government and families. The third theme for the second research question is collaborating with families, schools, and communities. Addressing depression should be a collective effort in the person's immediate environment. This allows everyone to take part in it. Moreover, collaborating with various bodies and organizations will allow for more access to mental health care and proper education and information would be spread. On the other hand, the third research was for the insights. The study has unfurled three (3) emerging themes. The first one is fostering a contextually sensitive approach. Participants have emphasized the impact of knowing a person. They have stated that the more you know, the more you can help. In this approach, they would focus their lenses on the person's background, upbringing, culture, family, financial situation, and even society. This overhaul is done in or-

der to understand the case of the person. The second theme for the third research question is through collaboration with other professionals. Previous questions have revealed how much emphasis and importance is put on having professional healthcare provided. Similarly, in the interview, participants stated that the interconnectedness of different bodies working in the field of mental health is pivotal. They have mentioned that school guidance counselors and educators are among those who are involved. Since they want students to know more about depression and to learn how to overcome it. The last theme for insights is the destigmatization of social stigma. Over the last year, mental health has gained more attention than ever. However, people still lack proper education regarding depression. Some people tend to judge those who are suffering from it and often undermine them. In return, adolescents suffering from depression develop the fear of being judged, making them decline or avoid reaching out for help. Based on the results of the thematic analysis of the responses from the participants of the study, the following findings and their corresponding themes were revealed: the experiences of social workers in dealing with adolescent depression were social stigma, lack of trained professional mental healthcare providers, and misinformation and misconceptions. Meanwhile, they prevent it through proactive and preventive measures and through education on mental health, conducting awareness programs, and collaborating with families, schools, and communities. Finally, the insights gathered were fostering a contextually sensitive approach, collaborating with other professionals, and destigmatizing adolescent depression.

4.2. Implications—The results of my analysis revealed the following significant findings. Mental health is a crucial aspect of overall well-being, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social aspects of an individual's life. It is not merely the absence of mental disorders

but involves the ability to cope with life's challenges, build positive relationships, and make informed decisions. Maintaining good mental health contributes to resilience in the face of stress, enhances productivity, and fosters a sense of fulfillment and purpose in one's life. Addressing mental health requires a holistic approach. In the context of the present study, involving societal awareness, destigmatization of mental illnesses, and accessible mental health services can help in mitigating mental health issues. Also, open conversations about mental health play a pivotal role in reducing the stigma associated with mental disorders, encouraging individuals to seek help without fear of judgment. Governments, communities, and individuals all promote mental health, foster environments that prioritize emotional well-being, and ensure that mental health services are readily available and affordable for everyone. Meanwhile, another valuable key idea in this study was dealing with adolescent depression. Adolescent depression is a serious and often overlooked mental health concern that affects a significant number of young individuals during a crucial stage of development. The teenage years were marked by rapid physical, emotional, and social changes, making adolescents particularly vulnerable to the onset of depression. Factors such as academic pressure, peer relationships, family dynamics, and hormonal fluctuations can contribute to the development of depressive symptoms. Identifying adolescent depression can be challenging, as the symptoms may manifest differently than in adults. Early intervention is crucial to prevent the negative impact of depression on a young person's life, including academic achievement, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being. Having a support system plays a pivotal role in addressing adolescent depression. Parents, educators, and mental health professionals can work collaboratively to create an environment where teenagers feel safe discussing their emotions. Additionally, rais-

ing awareness about mental health challenges in schools and communities helps reduce stigma, ensuring that adolescents are more likely to seek help when needed. Interventions may include therapy, counseling, and, in some cases, medication, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive approach to supporting the mental health of adolescents. Addressing mental health issues is of paramount importance for several compelling reasons. Mental health is intricately linked to overall well-being, influencing an individual's emotional, psychological, and social dimensions. Neglecting mental health can lead to a range of adverse consequences, affecting personal relationships, work or academic performance, and even physical health. Prioritizing mental health contributes to a more fulfilling and balanced life, enhancing resilience in facing challenges. The emerging themes gathered from the studies rest on the two theories presented in the study. The first one is the Cognitive Theory of Depression by Aaron Beck (1967, as cited by Gerow and Avny, 2011). The theory supports the statements stated by the participants regarding the experiences of adolescents with depression. It explained their experiences in dealing with depression, what caused them to feel these emotions, what causes their negative thoughts, and how they are trying to deal with it. Meanwhile, the Psychodynamic Theory of Freud (1901) provides a framework for social workers on how to deal with depression among adolescents. This guides them in formulating decisions and solutions in order to offer support and guidance.

4.2.1. Future Directions—Based on the findings of the study, it was important that the findings were properly relayed and used by the significant people for whom this research was intended. The guidance counselors. They were more informed about the narratives of social workers regarding their experiences and strategies in dealing with them, as well as the insights stipulated in this study. Once they have recog-

nized the possible impact of depression among adolescents and have reflected on it, they may implement programs, seminars, or information drives in order to appropriately educate everyone regarding the topic of mental health and depression. They may also design and create online pages so people who are undergoing depression can send a message and voice out their concerns and problems. This way may also be a great solution to offer help to a wider and bigger space. The social workers were more informed regarding the status of adolescent depression. They could find ways to offer as much help as possible. They could have awareness programs about mental health in different communities. They may also reflect on the different strategies employed by social workers as participants in this study. This can serve as their benchmark for much better strategies that they can employ. Adolescents may be more aware of where to get help when their minds are in chaos, and their emotions are uncontrollable. Other adolescents may employ the strategies mentioned to offer help to their friends who are undergoing a difficult time in terms of their mental health. Other stakeholders. Other stakeholders may provide avenues and opportunities to broaden the awareness programs and education about mental health. Psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers, and families can reflect on the findings of this study and can work hand in hand in order to offer help as much as they can. Future researchers. The study contributes to their academic arsenal, especially in the field of guidance and counseling. They may conduct this study but taking on the perspective of adolescents with depression. It would be interesting to unfurl the possible factors that have massive effects on their emotion and perceptions, leading to depression. Their stories would be a great help in order to design coping mechanisms that would be able to help minimize the chances of depression among adolescents.

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