

Capitalized Self-Prosperity: Crossing Detention Center through Meaningful Self-Education Corridors

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ABSTRACT

Adolescents in the Special Children's Development Institute (LPKA) face psychological problems such as loneliness, lack of confidence, stress, uncontrollable emotions, and overthinking. These problems can lead to depression, anger, obsessive thoughts, paranoia, psychosis and increase the risk of suicide. The purpose of this study is to find out the subject's knowledge before and after the seminar and training in counselling and behavioral techniques. In addition, the purpose of this study is to help subjects overcome psychological problems with the presence of peer counsellors. This research method uses a mix method which involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data collection employs the empathy scale and the Automatic Thought Questionnaire. Qualitative data is gathered through analyzing the results of worksheets and monitoring sheets during the training. The results of this study are (1) there is an increase in knowledge after the counselling seminar, (2) there is an increase in knowledge after the behavioral technique seminar, (3) there is a difference in the level of empathy after the empathy training, and (4) there is a difference in the level of negative thinking after the thought stopping training.

Keywords: Behavior, Counselling, Foster Children, Peer Counsellor.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a problematic age and the most difficult to overcome. Adolescents' inability to overcome problems makes them look for other solutions that do not always lead to positive things. This shows that the process of self-development in adolescents is a complex thing that requires more attention. Because if adolescent behavior is not handled properly, it can lead to juvenile delinquency which has a risk of deviation or criminality (Saputro, 2018). Juvenile delinquency can make an individual fall into negative things that tend to be dangerous and violate the law. Juvenile delinquency has increasingly manifested as behaviors that formally and legally violate the regulations established in the Criminal Code (KUHP) (Tjukup et al., 2020).

Adolescents who commit criminal acts are also called children in conflict with the law (ABH). Furthermore, ABHs will be fostered at the Special Children's Development Institution (LPKA). At the time in LPKA, ABHs are also known as fostered children. The fostered children will get education and skills so that later when their sentence is over, they can adjust to society. The common cases of ABHs are theft, child protection, drugs, and murder (Purwaningsih & Bhudiman, 2021).

According to an interview between the researcher and a correctional officer at LPKA, it was revealed that many ABHs experience loneliness due to infrequent visits from family and friends. This is attributed to a lack of trust resulting from the crimes they committed, leading to a decline in their confidence to improve themselves. This lack of confidence can cause stress and uncontrollable emotions among the fostered children. Furthermore, many of them struggle with overthinking about their families at home, their future, and how they will be accepted back into society.

This opinion is in line with research conducted by Yuningsih et al., (2019) who state that when a person lives in a correctional institution they will be isolated from social life, especially adolescents. Isolation has a psychological impact on adolescents, including worsening depression, anger, obsessive thoughts, paranoia and psychosis, as well as increasing the risk of suicide (Whitley et al., 2022). The psychological impact of isolation can lead to the development of disorders such as

addiction, psychosis, and affective disorders, which can result in self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and substance dependence (Borschmann et al., 2020; Brandt et al., 2022). A similar finding was reported by Kusumaningsih (2017), who stated that the psychological burden experienced by adolescents as foster children in LPKA sometimes leads to unnatural behaviors and thoughts about themselves. This includes exhibiting withdrawal behaviors and avoiding interactions with other individuals in the prison, except for employees.

The presence of the previously mentioned issues makes it evident to researchers that fostered children need to manage their psychological problems independently, as a psychologist is not available daily to assist them. To address this, the researcher has devised a program that includes training in basic counselling techniques, such as empathy, active listening, and positive thinking. Additionally, the program offers training in behavioral techniques like thought stopping, butterfly hug, and progressive muscle relaxation, which are beneficial for fostered children in coping with overthinking, anxiety, and other distressing emotions.

The hypotheses that the researcher made in this paper are as below:

1. H0: There was no increase in knowledge after the counselling seminar.
H1: There is an increase in knowledge after the counselling seminar.
2. H0: There was no increase in knowledge after the behavioral seminar.
H1: There was an increase in knowledge after the behavioral seminar.
3. H0: There was no difference in the level of empathy between after the empathy training.
H1: There was a difference in the level of empathy after the empathy training.
4. H0: There was no difference in the level of negative thinking after thought stopping training.
H1: There was a difference in the level of negative thinking after thought stopping training.

2. METHODS

In this study, we opted for a mixed method approach, which entails gathering and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. This method takes into account philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks, offering deeper insights than relying on a single type of data alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). We chose this method due to its effectiveness in gathering and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. Mixed method research offers a more comprehensive understanding of our research problems and questions by comparing perspectives from both data types, using quantitative data to bolster and clarify qualitative findings, and evaluating both the process and outcomes of our program.

The measuring tool used in this counselling training is the empathy scale. Empathy is a fundamental and straightforward technique that can be practiced by most people. Therefore, for affective measurement in counselling training, researchers use the empathy scale as a reference. The empathy scale, originally developed by Davis (1983) and later modified by Wulandari (2012), includes aspects of perspective taking, fantasy, empathetic concern, and personal distress. The assessment on this scale indicates that the higher the total score obtained by the subject, the higher their level of empathy; conversely, a lower total score indicates a lower level of empathy.

The measuring tool used in behavioral training is the Automatic Thought Questionnaire (ATQ) made by Kendall and Hollon (2006) to assess individuals' ability to control negative thoughts. The assessment of this questionnaire is that the higher the score obtained by the subject, the higher the subject's ability to control negative thought and vice versa. This questionnaire aims to measure the ability of the subjects to control negative thoughts and their affective by comparing the results from before to after the thought stopping training.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Community Service activities at the Children's Special Development Institution (LPKA) in one of the East Kalimantan agencies were conducted over 2.5 months, from May to July. The participants in this activity were 16 fostered children aged 17-19 years, chosen for their adequate intellectual and psychosocial maturity necessary for the material they would receive (Icenogle et al., 2019). This Community Service activity involved an educational program and training in counselling and behavioral techniques. The counselling techniques included empathy, active listening, and positive mindset, while the behavioral techniques comprised of thought stopping, butterfly hug, and progressive muscle relaxation. The characteristics of the subjects are as follows:

Table 1. Subject Characteristics by Age

No	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	17 Years	2	12.5 %
2	18 Years	13	81.3%
3	19 Years	1	6.3%
Total		16	100%

Based on Table 1 above, it is evident that the subjects in this study include 2 individuals (12.5%) aged 17 years, 13 individuals (81.3%) aged 18 years, and 1 individual (6.3%) aged 19 years. Thus, it can be concluded that the majority of the subjects in this study are 18-year-old fostered children.

Table 2. Summary of Score Data and Classification of Counselling Knowledge

Subject	Pre-Test	Classification	Post-Test	Classification	Status
AA	5	Low	9	High	Increased
AI	6	Medium	12	Very High	Increased
DA	9	High	12	Very High	Increased
IM	6	Medium	14	Very High	Increased
PU	3	Very Low	8	Medium	Increased
IN	10	High	12	Very High	Increased
HD	11	Very High	13	Very High	Remain
AL	3	Low	6	Medium	Increased
AR	3	Low	7	Medium	Increased
MUM	6	Medium	9	High	Increased
HA	7	Medium	14	Very High	Increased
NA	11	Very High	14	Very High	Remain
RA	6	Medium	11	Very High	Increased
THE	9	High	11	Very High	Increased
SB	9	High	12	Very High	Increased
WS	7	Medium	13	Very High	Increased

In this study, it was found that the subjects experienced an increase in knowledge after the counselling seminar. Based on the results of the pre-test and post-test counselling, it was known that 14 out of 16 subjects experienced an increase in knowledge of counselling, while 2 other subjects did not have any changes in terms of knowledge, but experienced an increase in scores. This indicates that counselling seminars are effective in enhancing fostered children's knowledge of counselling techniques. These findings are corroborated by Ferdian et al., (2024), who discovered that education or the delivery of health-related materials increases understanding of the definition, basic techniques, procedures, and positive impacts of counselling.

Table 3. Summary of Score Data and Classification of Behavior Knowledge

Subject	Pre-Test	Classification	Post-Test	Classification	Status
AA	5	Low	12	Very High	Increased
AI	12	Very High	15	Very High	Remain
DA	10	High	14	Very High	Increased
IM	13	Very High	15	Very High	Remain
PU	8	Medium	12	Very High	Increased
IN	13	Very High	14	Very High	Remain
HD	12	Very High	15	Very High	Remain
AL	6	Medium	7	Medium	Remain
AR	6	Medium	12	Very High	Increased
MUM	9	High	13	Very High	Increased
HA	12	Very High	13	Very High	Remain
NA	14	Very High	15	Very High	Remain
RA	8	Medium	14	Very High	Increased
THE	12	Very High	15	Very High	Remain

SB	13	Very High	15	Very High	Remain
WS	11	Very High	15	Very High	Remain

The results of the study also found that the subjects experienced an increase in knowledge between before and after the behavioral seminar. Based on the results between the pre-test and post-test behavior, it was known that 6 out of 16 subjects experienced an improvement in their knowledge of behavioral techniques, and the other 10 subjects remain in the same category, but experienced an increase in scores. This shows that the provision of behavioral seminars is very effective in increasing the knowledge of fostered children about behavioral techniques. These results are supported by Amalia et al., (2023) similar research from which found that psychoeducation regarding techniques for controlling emotions in the form of butterfly hugs, positive affirmations, and breathing relational practices had a positive and significant impact on improving subjects' knowledge and ability to handle their emotions.

Table 4. Summary of Score Data and Empathy Scale Classification

Subject	Pre-Test	Classification	Post-Test	Classification	Status
AA	57	Medium	60	Medium	Remain
AI	64	High	65	High	Remain
DA	60	Medium	62	High	Increased
IM	62	High	68	High	Remain
PU	65	High	68	High	Remain
IN	55	Medium	61	High	Increased
HD	57	Medium	65	High	Increased
AL	54	Medium	61	High	Increased
AR	59	Medium	63	High	Increased
MUM	53	Medium	58	Medium	Remain
HA	59	Medium	59	Medium	Remain
NA	57	Medium	57	Medium	Remain
RA	68	High	64	High	Remain
THE	58	Medium	56	Medium	Remain
SB	61	High	58	Medium	Decreased
WS	61	High	60	Medium	Decreased

Additionally, the research revealed differences in empathy levels before and after empathy training. The pre-test and post-test results indicated that 5 out of 16 subjects showed an increase in affectivity, while the remaining 10 subjects remained in the same category but had improved scores. This demonstrates that counselling training significantly enhances the affection of fostered children. This finding is supported by Cathlin & Salim (2024), who found that psychoeducation programs effectively increase confidence and empathy, with significant changes in the knowledge and attitudes of subjects after participating in the program.

Table 5. Summary of Score Data and Classification of Automatic Thought Questionnaire

Subject	Pre-Test	Classification	Post-Test	Classification	Status
AA	7	Very Low	8	Low	Increased
AI	14	Medium	18	Medium	Remain
DA	18	Medium	14	Medium	Remain
IM	13	Medium	16	Medium	Remain
PU	19	High	18	Medium	Decreased
IN	18	Medium	18	Medium	Remain
HD	15	Medium	23	High	Increased
AL	18	Medium	7	Very Low	Decreased
AR	3	Very Low	12	Low	Increased
MUM	21	High	17	Medium	Decreased
HA	24	Very High	14	Medium	Decreased
NA	10	Low	21	High	Increased
RA	19	High	22	High	Remain

THE	10	Low	6	Very Low	Decreased
SB	8	Low	15	Medium	Increased
WS	10	Low	23	High	Increased

The study also found a difference in the level of ability to control negative thoughts before and after thought stopping training. The pre-test and post-test results showed that 6 out of 16 subjects improved in controlling negative thoughts. Meanwhile, 5 out of 16 subjects showed no change, indicating they already had good control over negative thoughts before and after the training. This contrasts with the findings of Hardayati et al., (2020), who found thought stopping effective in helping subjects control negative thoughts. However, the results of this study align with field observations, which show that only some subjects found the thought stopping technique suitable, while others preferred different behavioral techniques. This indicates that thought stopping training has not been sufficiently effective in reducing negative thinking tendencies among fostered children.

The results of this study are also found based on the results of counselling techniques worksheets and observations made by researchers. In the results of the positive mindset worksheet, the subject can describe what are the negatives, positives, strengths, and shortcomings of themselves with a statement. One of the subjects with initials DA wrote the sentence "I often not feeling confident with myself" and then was able to reply with the sentence "I understand that everyone is created differently and I have my own strengths". Subject SI seemed to have difficulty in replying to some of the negative statements which they wrote in the worksheet, so the researcher helped the subject to understand more about it. The results from the active listening worksheet indicate that the subjects are quite capable of acting as a counsellor. One of them is NA subject who seems to be able to listen to the WS subject's story and repeat the story and able to reflect WS's feelings. As for the results of the subjects' assessment of muscle relaxation techniques, all subjects said that they felt comfortable and relaxed after carrying out roleplay by giving assessment scores before and after roleplay.

Additionally, the thought stopping worksheet results revealed that 15 out of 16 subjects were able to identify their negative thoughts and transform these negative statements into positive affirmations. For example, subject IM wrote: "why I can't do it when others can" they convert it to "I will try to learn by paying attention to my friends at work so that I can do it too". Subject PU wrote: "I'm afraid that my younger siblings will follow my bad behavior" and change it to "I will explain to my two younger siblings that the actions of their older sibling were against the law, and I will educate and take care of them as my parents' wishes". Subject NA wrote "[I'm] afraid of being left far behind in any way" and reply it with "[I] will try to follow any activities while [I'm] here, making plans for the future and hone my abilities to be even better, [I] want to create something while here, one of the things I am working on is making a novel". Subject RA wrote "[I'm] scared of being looked down by the surrounding community" and change it with "I'm ready to the activities and good things here so that [I] can be seen even better by the community".

Moreover, the subject monitoring sheet results showed that 12 out of 16 subjects reported frequently practicing thought stopping over the past week. One of the 12 subjects stated that they practiced this practice almost every day because they became calmer and more confident than before. Then, it was found that 10 out of 16 subjects stated that they rarely practiced butterfly hugs in the past week even though they previously admitted that it feels relaxing when applying butterfly hug. Then, it was found that 7 out of 16 subjects stated that they had never done progressive muscle relaxation in the past week because they did not remember the practice instructions.

Based on the results of the behavior monitoring sheet, it can be concluded that the three behavioral techniques have different impacts on the subjects. The thought stopping technique was the most common technique used by the subjects, the butterfly hug was rarely done by the subjects, and progressive muscle relaxation had not been done by most of the subjects in the past week. Finally, there were 7 out of 16 subjects who stated that they had shared seminar knowledge with other fostered children who were not training subjects and received various feedback from the fostered children.

Furthermore, the results of the counselling and observation monitoring sheets carried out by all subjects concluded that 6 out of 16 subjects were adequate to act as counsellors or were able to empathize, listen actively, and provide positive affirmations. Then, 7 out of 16 subjects were barely adequate of acting as counsellors and due to a mismatch between the counsellor and the client they were paired with. Then, 3 out of 16 subjects were inadequate to act as counsellors due to lack of interest in listening to vents.

Based on the counselling monitoring sheet results, it can be concluded that the three counselling techniques had varying impacts on the subjects. The empathy technique was effectively used by nearly all subjects, while active listening and positive mindset techniques were also applied. Additionally, 10 out of 16 subjects reported that over the past two weeks, stated they had listened to the confessions of other fostered children as presented in the weekly worksheet.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of the research, it was concluded that (1) there was an increase in knowledge between before and after the counselling seminar, (2) there was an increase in knowledge between before and after the behavioral technique seminar, (3) there was a difference in the level of empathy between before and after the empathy training, (4) there was a difference in the level of negative thinking between before and after the thought stopping training was conducted. In addition, based on the results of the evaluation of the implementation of the activity, most of the subjects stated that the material presented was in suitable with their needs and/or curiosity. Then, all subjects easily understood the delivery of material by the speakers. Then, all subjects easily understood the committee's explanation during the group practice session.

Based on the results and discussion of the research, the following conclusions were made: (1) there was an increase in knowledge after the counselling seminar, (2) there was an increase in knowledge after the behavioral technique seminar, (3) there was a change in empathy levels after the empathy training, and (4) there was a change in negative thinking levels after the thought stopping training. Additionally, the evaluation of the activity's implementation showed that most subjects felt the material presented met their needs and/or curiosity. All subjects easily understood the material delivered by the speakers and researchers' explanations during the seminars and group practice sessions.

Our advice to Children's Special Development Institute (LPKA) in East Kalimantan to consider and try to improve the mental health of the fostered children by providing more accessible counselling services. These services could be offered by peer counsellors among the fostered children themselves or by correctional officers who receive counselling training, enabling them to serve as counsellors for the fostered children at the Institute.

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